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I'll Take Manhattan

by Howard Mandel

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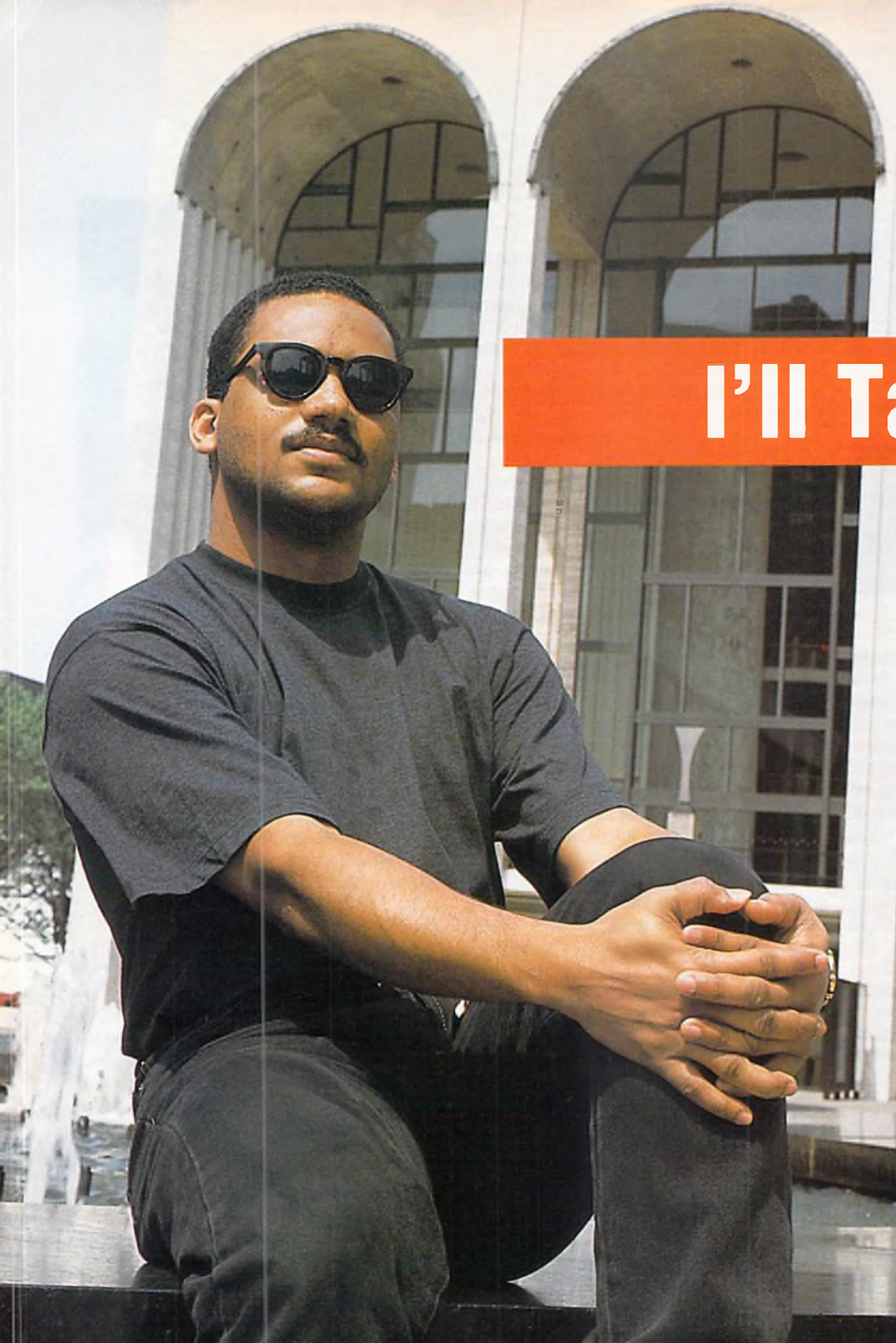
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M

I'll Take

The substantial resources of Lincoln Center and Blue Note Records cut through a myriad of red tape to bring Cuban pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba into the United States. Was it worth it? You bet.

Gonzalo Rubalcaba at Lincoln Center

By Howard Mandel

In the U.S., Rubalcaba may be the man with *too* much country. A graduate of Havana's renown Amadeo Roldan Conservatory and its university-level Institute of Fine Arts; the son of several generations of well-regarded Cuban classical and popular (*danzon*) musicians; a child prodigy whose teen gigs were sponsored by the Cuban Ministry of Culture, Rubalcaba made his early local reputation jamming at the nightclub Johnny Drink with founders of Irakere, Cuban jazz's *last* big thing. He's toured the world since 1980, recorded 10 albums, and been "discovered" over and over again—by Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Haden, Jack DeJohnette, Blue Note's Bruce Lundvall, and Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rob Gibson,

Manhattan

among significant others.

But a Cuban is a Cuban, unless he has defected. Until last May, the U.S. State Department considered the artist Gonzalo *persona non grata*, because his performance here might challenge our economic blockade of that tiny island 90 miles from Miami, not to mention political policy left from the late, lamented Cold War.

What happened to freedom of expression? Is Cuban music so dangerous? Why shouldn't Lincoln Center highlight what Jelly Roll Morton called jazz's Latin tinge?

"It's a little silly," sighed Michael Krinsky, the New York attorney representing Gonzalo in his efforts to be heard in concert and on record in the U.S. "I've been almost shamefaced saying to people, 'You need a little courage and vision to help a jazz artist come to play at Lincoln Center.' They say, 'What are you talking about? We have a right as U.S. citizens to hear who we want.' Of course, it's absurd to protest against Cuba, Castro, or the Cuban government by focusing on a jazz concert at Lincoln Center."

Congress passed an amendment in the late '80s excepting educational and cultural matter from the importation embargo. Krinsky said the State Department's intent in denying visas to performers was to limit the impact of imported goods.

"State Department policy has been that it didn't matter if the performer would perform for free. They'd say the promotion, the publicity, the attention would have the effect of people buying the Cuban performers' records. We say, 'What can be the harm? There might even be some good.' That Gonzalo got a visa is a step forward. Maybe with a couple more steps forward we can forget the absurdity, listen to the music, and move on to other things."

The Jazz at Lincoln Center program suffered no noticeable protest and little adverse publicity in the flurry of press coverage when it sponsored the stateside debut of Rubalcaba and his Havana-based quartet. For 10 days, Gonzalo holed up in a midtown Manhattan hotel with manager Jose Fortesa, doing endless interviews when he wasn't otherwise occupied. His visit was hectic but not coldly received.

What does a Cuban pianist do in New York? Rehearse in Juilliard School practice rooms. Tour the Big Apple in a record-company limousine. Play solo at Steinway Hall (for National Public Radio broadcast with Branford Marsalis as host). Act as deejay on Columbia University's WKCR-FM. Offer a lecture-demonstration to the Juilliard extension class taught by Rob Gibson, and end it improvising on the beloved Cuban anthem, "Guantanamera."

Saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera, a Cuban émigré who sometimes speaks for the concerns of anti-Castro U.S. residents, argued in New York tabloids that Gonzalo ought to be talking about the bad conditions at home. But hey, most everyone knows the economic blockade (which is *not* supported by Canada, Mexico, Japan, or most European countries) has resulted in a dearth of food, fuel, and

medicine, while Fidel has stubbornly held his line.

What neither the blockade nor Castro's dictatorship has been able to stifle is the imaginative and musical spirit of Cuban people—a spirit linked by preference, proximity, and history to the overwhelmingly popular culture invented, established, and spread by Americans for almost a century, a culture exemplified by jazz. Cuba, like Canada and Mexico, is in a large sense American. And without a doubt, Gonzalo Rubalcaba is Cuba's latest jazz musician extraordinaire.

"In the first two years of Jazz at Lincoln Center we had programs dealing with Cuban music," Rob Gibson explained from his office overlooking Lincoln Center and the Hudson River. "First we had Israel 'Cachao' Lopez, the great bass player who left Cuba in the early '60s, as did Celia Cruz, who we had last year. On her program we had Orlando Puntillo Rios, who defected during the Mariel boat-lift in 1980. It seemed like a natural progression to include a Cuban artist who is actually a Cuban national.

"Gonzalo comes out of the Cuban tradition, and he's lived all his life under Castro's regime. I don't hear anything political in Gonzalo's music. He just sounds like a real creative artist who happened to evolve in Cuba hearing American and Cuban music. I hear a lot more Latin in his music than what I'd call the American swing tradition, even though he's listened to Erroll Garner and Art Tatum and Thelonious Monk, people like that. To me, that's good; I think Gonzalo would do best to focus less on the American tradition and more on the Latin and specifically the Cuban tradition. I think if he continues to explore, extend, elaborate, and refine that heritage, he'll come up with something very unique. I think he already has, to a great extent."

Bassist Charlie Haden, whose Liberation Music Orchestra performed at a Cuban jazz festival in the mid-'80s, has long been a vocal U.S. promoter of Rubalcaba's pianissimo; how Haden's efforts resulted in a trio performance with drummer Paul Motian at the 1990 Montreux fest (documented on Rubalcaba's *Discovery*) is well known. The next year, in the midst of their 1991 Toronto engagement and studio sessions for Gonzalo's second trio album, *The Blessing*, DeJohnette weighed in with his approbation.

"I'm especially impressed with Gonzalo's ability to play a ballad," the drummer commented. "You can't say that about too many young players. He has technique and Latin passion and energy; but it's risky to start a club set with slow songs, and I enjoyed doing that more than some of the uptempo stuff."

"Gonzalo has *heart*, a joy in making music, as it's easy to see by the effect he has on his listeners. As he develops, gets more relaxed, more seasoned, and utilizes more space in what he does, he'll be even better. But he's definitely in the spirit of people I've worked with, like Keith [Jarrett] in terms of spontaneous improvisation,

people who come up with something new all the time rather than being repetitive. If sometimes his technique runs away with him, he makes up for it when he plays a ballad and gets so *quiet*.

"As I understand him, he wants to utilize the Latin thing in a different way, fuse it with improvisation, and be accepted as a jazz player—or just as an *improviser*. He's also a hell of a composer, from what I've heard of what he writes for his Cuban bands."

Blue Note Records president Lundvall, who mounted the U.S. tour and Grammy-winning recording of Irakere while he was at Columbia Records in the late '70s, as well as a musical incursion by U.S. jazz and pop stars of Cuba during Democrat Jimmy Carter's administration, is obviously a Rubalcaba fan. Not only did Lundvall sign Rubalcaba to a long-term contract (in accordance with the U.S. Treasury department's strictures, the contract is with Blue Note's sister label Somethin' Else, an arm of Japanese Toshiba EMI, from whom Blue Note officially licenses the pianist's masters), he helped underwrite the Lincoln Center appearance by having his company buy 300 tickets to the concert, squire the pianist around town, pay for costly advertisements in newspapers and magazines, hire an independent publicist, host a grand reception, and record the concert for sooner-rather-than-later release.

"This was delightful and expensive," Lundvall conceded after the fact. "Unfortunately, it's not something we can do often for jazz musicians. But I think in this case it was very worthwhile. Gonzalo is one of those brilliant, two-handed orchestral pianists in the tradition that goes back to Tatum, akin to Jarrett, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea—with whom he played some duets at a Mount Fuji fest. Both Herbie and Chick speak very highly of him. When Charlie Haden first played his tapes for me, I was floored.

"He's got that bravura technique, that Cuban virtuoso thing—think of Arturo Sandoval's high notes, or how Paquito plays faster than anyone else on earth. But as Charlie said, 'Yeah, he's got technique, but his *ideas* don't stop.' Gonzalo's got so much *depth*. He's endlessly inventive and a fine writer; he's very smart and very serious about his music. Not to sign him would have been insanity. I think he's got a bright future, and we're hearing the start of an important career."

These Americanos aren't the first aficionados to be exposed to the talents of Gonzalo Julio Gonzales Fonseca Rubalcaba, who, despite his Cuban passport, resides in the nearby Dominican Republic. Gonzalo wowed the 1987 Berlin Jazz Festival as a multi-keyboardist leading a larger Grupo Proyecto. He's frequented Japan for years, and is treated like a star there. His records and performances have enjoyed generally good reviews. So the U.S. was primed: the groundswell of interest rose fast and thick as Lundvall, Gibson, Lincoln Center president Nathan Leventhal, attorney Krinsky and their associates campaigned to persuade President Clinton's State Department to let Rubalcaba come to play.

"Our programs at Jazz at Lincoln Center not only seek to celebrate the jazz tradition, but we also strive to educate and create

a broader understanding of the worldwide cultural contributions to jazz," Wynton Marsalis, as artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, wrote to Secretary of State Warren Christopher. "Mr. Rubalcaba is a luminary in the field of Afro-Cuban music and would serve as an outstanding performer and historian of this tradition."

Could the pivotal missive have arrived on a sheet with an embossed silhouette of a trumpeter holding an uptilted horn? "For nearly 50 years of his life, Dizzy trotted the globe as an honorary ambassador for jazz. . . . He identified himself with Afro-Cuban jazz throughout his career," Mrs. Lorraine Gillespie wrote. "I urge you

to make a positive decision so that [Mr. Rubalcaba] can reenter the United States and let his presence suggest the possibility of improved cultural ties with his country. . . . Had Dizzy lived, he would have written this letter to you himself."

Christopher or Clinton or someone powerful was swayed. Rubalcaba was *in*, to make music and perhaps take some bows (he accepted no fee from any of his appearances). He also met the press—less a reward, perhaps, than a responsibility he accepted as inescapable and frustrating.

Rubalcaba speaks very little English, so he was interpreted by Fortesa, who is an able translator. Even so, journalists with no command of Spanish could tell Gonzalo expresses himself with subtleties of meaning of which they'd remain ignorant. Not that he's vague; in fact, he's rather grounded. About five-foot-seven, trim, with a handshake that be-

speaks his control of the ivories, Gonzalo peers out of a freckled face with deep, dark, personable eyes.

Days prior to his Lincoln Center concert he reflected on his career. "I have been completing a cycle of trio recordings," he said softly, "getting deeper into American standards, and standards of South American music in general, not just Cuban music. Cuban music I've been thinking of in the context of my Cuban quartet, trying to find its influence upon other styles of music in the world, and also bringing back into it elements of universal music.

"Salsa is not the main goal of my quartet," he insisted. "I'm trying to research other elements of Cuban music than the dance elements. Yes, I'm romantic—I was married to my piano when I was very young. But the romantic aspect you may hear in my music is framed in the lyricism of the music of America in general, the whole America. It is in the bolero, the *batacoda*, the bossa nova. This lyricism is in Cuban music, too; unfortunately, it hasn't been brought out very often. Everybody goes to the rhythmic element of Cuban music. I think the melodic and lyrical aspects that I'm working on are equally important components of the Latin personality, and ought to be known."

Do you make music for music's sake, or with reference to the larger world in order to connect with the audience?

"It's all one. Music represents your world and the world accepts the music you make, if this world gave birth to the original feelings that you recreate and return to your audience. I take values for the sake of music, but at the same time I remake them. I give them back to the audience, with the object of communication.



Gonzalo with Charlie Haden (l) and Jack DeJohnette

CYNTHIA CARRIS

"I make music of every culture in the world, of international elements that are really close; I'm trying to make people understand that everybody is very close, close enough to understand each other. So I'm making music for music's sake, but I'm trying to make people think about what they're listening to, at the same time.

"This New York appearance is obviously a special occasion, because people are looking at it like the sign of a more open relationship between our two cultures. It's a re-articulation of history, in the sense that the relationships between the people of Cuba and the people of the U.S. have nothing to do with politics. Of course it's a big responsibility for me, making me work harder to get the best results in this concert, which is like the first dialogue in many years between two sides."

Not everyone attending the sold-out Lincoln Center "dialogue" had good things to say. Some critics felt he flashed too much technique, didn't have enough "pure jazz" background, and/or didn't play enough traditional Cuban rhythms. Peter Watrous opined in a *New York Times* review: "The general intellectual mediocrity Mr. Rubalcaba shows on records made itself known during the concert as well . . . [he's] a sentimentalist who rarely swings and never uses blues tonalities. . . . At his best Mr. Rubalcaba sounded like a particularly gifted music-school student." Regarding the Cuban quartet's original repertoire, he was equivocal.

As Watrous suggests, listeners can sample Gonzalo's intellectual quality, tonality, and swing—which, yes, resemble the late Bill Evans' or Herbie Hancock's more than Erroll Garner's or Earl Hines'—on his records. The Messidor albums *Giraldilla* and *Mi Gran Pasion* with his Cuban confreres, *The Blessing* and his latest

Blue Note release, *Suite 4 y 20*, are considerably more ambitious and polished works than his hasty live dates.

I thought Rubalcaba acquitted himself honorably opening his concert solo with John Lennon's "Imagine," certainly one of the best-known and most anthemic ballads composed in the past 20 years. His accompaniment was too rich for the puerile lyrics of vocalist Dianne Reeves on "You Taught My Heart To Sing," and the trio segment with Haden and DeJohnette was problematic, but produced some bright moments. Returning to the stage after an intermission, the pianist with his regular group—bassist Felipe Cabrera, trumpeter Reynaldo Melian, and drummer Julio Barreto—played tight ensembles and spirited improvisations. Most of the audience stood roaring its approval and satisfaction. The next day the pianist hesitated to comment.

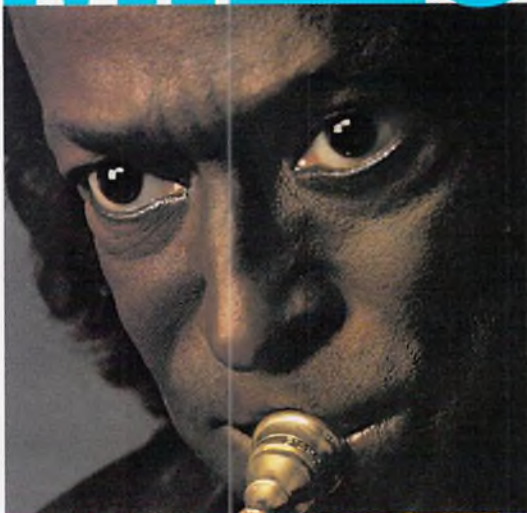
"It's still too close to the whole experience to have an idea of what it was," he said, suffering one last interview. "Impressive is the only word that comes to mind. I'm impressed.

"Immediately after a performance, my first thought is always of my beloved people, my family. I want to be with them then, though I know they cannot be with me. It's a very strange feeling, like being in shock but also being very happy. I realize how much strength and anxiety, memory and tension I've brought out in the previous minutes. Then I feel very tired.

"The next day I wake up and feel as I feel now: alright, last night was a great night, now it's my great responsibility to keep it alive. This thought is a little frightening.

"Then the experience works itself into my music not in the next weeks or months, but in the next days. Even at the end of the first set I always think about what I did, what I should do to correct the


MILES & QUINCY



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LIVE AT MONTREUX

second set if I want to fix the whole thing. Was I creative enough? How should I go on?

"At the end of the concert I thought about it all. I'm thinking over and over what happened last night. This was a very big concert for me, so I'm sure it's going to have a big impact on me as time goes on.

"I was surprised by the ovation of the audience at the beginning, before I'd played a note. But for me, the most important point is the confirmation of this very first reaction by the audience at the end. That's when I found out that we were communicating. This audience came not to judge, to be for or against or to hold the music out at a distance from themselves. They were there to make music with us. They were there to communicate and support. What was beautiful was that everybody was making music. It was the biggest band I will ever have.

"The critics, those who ask why don't I play 'Ruby, My Dear' all the way through, or why don't I play more clave, I answer with a question: Why is it so necessary for critics or anyone else to have the key to understand art? It's funny to me, because we are talking about jazz, a very free way of making music. Yet there are always critics who want to tie me up. Now they want to tie me to the keys. So I say to them, let me be as I am. Enjoy if you can. If not, thank you for coming, anyway."

Why do we critics seek the keys to art? To better grapple with the complex issues a Gonzalo Rubalcaba raises, and more completely comprehend the notions that pass through musicians' minds, fingers, lungs, and hearts, through the air to our ears.

How do politics enter in? Regarding esthetics, not at all; concerning the dissemination of sound, only so far as they impose themselves with reference to extra-musical considerations. Will

Rubalcaba return? In recordings, certainly, and probably in person, too. Were the efforts to bring him here worth it? Yes, of that we are sure. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Like most pianists who tour the world, Gonzalo Rubalcaba is at the mercy of concert producers and club owners when it comes to his main instrument, the grand piano. During his recent New York sojourn he performed solo at Steinway Hall, the showroom of the best-known American piano manufacturer, and also used a Steinway in solo, duet, trio, and quartet settings onstage at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall.

Rubalcaba's studio albums, however, have featured his more expansive electronic pallet. On *Giraldilla*, for example, he played a Korg SG-1D digital grand piano, Roland D-110 sound module, Yamaha DX-7 IIFD synthesizer, Yamaha RX-5 digital rhythm composer, and Yamaha TX-81Z tone generator.

Marcio Garcia (who programmed tracks on *Giraldilla* and *Rapsodia*) used a programmed Apple Macintosh computer sequencer, Performer software by Mark of the Unicorn, Yamaha RX-5 digital rhythm composer, Roland D-110 sound module, Yamaha TX-81Z tone generator, Yamaha DX-7 synthesizer, and Yamaha guitars. Felipe Cabrera played a Yamaha BB-2000 fretless bass, and Reynaldo Melian played a Selmer B-700 trumpet.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

<i>RAPSODIA</i> —Toshiba/EMI TOCJ 5552 (Japan only)	<i>FINEST CONTEMPORARY LATIN MUSIC</i> (1 track)—Messidor 15806-2
<i>SUITE 4 Y 20</i> —Blue Note CDP 0777 780054	<i>GIRALDILLA</i> —Messidor 15801-2
<i>IMAGES</i> —Blue Note CDP 7 99492 (w/John Palitucci, Jack DeJohnette)	<i>LIVE IN HAVANA</i> —Messidor 15960-2
<i>THE BLESSING</i> —Blue Note CDP 7 97197 (Charlie Haden, DeJohnette)	<i>GILLESPIE/GONZALO RUBALCABA EN VIVO</i> —Engrem 4272
<i>DISCOVERY</i> —Blue Note CDP 7 95478 (Haden, Paul Motian)	<i>GRUPO PROYECTO DE GONZALO RUBALCABA</i> (aka <i>Nueva Cubana</i>)—Engrem 4235
<i>MI GRAN PASION</i> —Messidor 15999-2	<i>BUILDING BRIDGES</i> —Jazz Alliance 10022 (Memo Acevedo)

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—Jon Hendricks,
April 1993

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Jazz

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from Everywhere

DOWN BEAT HALL OF FAME

Readers Poll

- 1952 Louis Armstrong
- 1953 Glenn Miller
- 1954 Stan Kenton
- 1955 Charlie Parker
- 1956 Duke Ellington
- 1957 Benny Goodman
- 1958 Count Basie
- 1959 Lester Young
- 1960 Dizzy Gillespie
- 1961 Billie Holiday
- 1962 Miles Davis
- 1963 Thelonious Monk
- 1964 Eric Dolphy
- 1965 John Coltrane
- 1966 Bud Powell
- 1967 Billy Strayhorn
- 1968 Wes Montgomery
- 1969 Ornette Coleman
- 1970 Jimi Hendrix
- 1971 Charles Mingus
- 1972 Gene Krupa
- 1973 Sonny Rollins
- 1974 Buddy Rich
- 1975 Cannonball Adderley
- 1976 Woody Herman
- 1977 Paul Desmond
- 1978 Joe Venuti
- 1979 Ella Fitzgerald
- 1980 Dexter Gordon
- 1981 Art Blakey
- 1982 Art Pepper
- 1983 Stephane Grappelli
- 1984 Oscar Peterson
- 1985 Sarah Vaughan
- 1986 Stan Getz
- 1987 Lionel Hampton

- 1988 Jaco Pastorius
- 1989 Woody Shaw
- 1990 Red Rodney
- 1991 Lee Morgan
- 1992 Maynard Ferguson
- 1993 see ballot on page 50

Critics Poll

- Coleman Hawkins
- Bix Beiderbecke
- Jelly Roll Morton
- Art Tatum
- Earl Hines
- Charlie Christian
- Bessie Smith
- Sidney Bechet/Fats Waller
- Pee Wee Russell/Jack Teagarden
- Johnny Hodges
- Roy Eldridge/Django Reinhardt
- Clifford Brown
- Fletcher Henderson
- Ben Webster
- Cecil Taylor
- King Oliver
- Benny Carter
- Rahsaan Roland Kirk
- Lennie Tristano
- Max Roach
- Bill Evans
- Fats Navarro
- Albert Ayler
- Sun Ra
- Zoot Sims
- Gil Evans
- Johnny Dodds/Thad Jones/
- Teddy Wilson
- Kenny Clarke
- Chet Baker
- Mary Lou Williams
- John Carter
- James P. Johnson
- Edward Blackwell

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1981 John Hammond | 1988 John Conyers, Jr.* |
| 1982 George Wein | 1989 Norman Granz |
| 1983 Leonard Feather | 1990 Rudy Van Gelder |
| 1984 Dr. Billy Taylor | 1991 Bill Cosby |
| 1985 Dr. Lawrence Berk | 1992 Rich Matteson |
| 1986 Orrin Keepnews | 1993 Gunther Schuller |
| 1987 David Baker | *Special Achievement Award |

Jazz, as it is played by small groups, is a music of individuals and the interplay between their voices. There are stars, even legends, who front bands, whose names draw crowds and sell discs, but the music is more about listening and reacting than commanding and obeying. So it is that the critics have elected the late Edward Blackwell to *DB's* Hall of Fame. From Ornette Coleman to Jane Ira Bloom, his fellow musicians have tugged and pulled at the rhythmic base he provided, darting in and out of the spaces he created.

And jazz is not simply a danceable, blues-based music from New Orleans. It has drawn on myriad influences, and few have brought more of them to jazz than Gunther Schuller, recipient of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award. Classically-trained, he played french horn on *The Birth Of The Cool* sessions, has written two volumes of jazz criticism, composed for symphonies and jazz groups, is a producer and publisher. *DB* is honored to honor them both.

—Dave Helland



Edward Blackwell



Gunther Schuller

JACK WARTOOGIAN

BACHBRACH

Dixieland To The Avant Garde

EDWARD BLACKWELL

By Art Lange



CLAYTON CALL

It's fitting that the late Edward Blackwell be elected the 79th member of DB's Hall of Fame, as he was one of a mere handful of practitioners who took the tradition of the earliest great jazz drummers—the legacy of Baby Dodds and Zutty Singleton—and advanced their singular concepts into new, multifaceted directions.

Blackwell was born October 10, 1929, in that hotbed of rhythms, New Orleans, and as a child experienced the variety of musics and sounds that would influence his approach to drumming. As he told New Orleans music critic Kalamu ya Salaam, "Growing up in the culture that New Orleans has was a very big part . . . for one thing, I was around a lot of music everyday, all the time. Music from the parade bands, music from gospel groups on Sunday that would set up on the corner with a tambourine, a guitar, and a set of drums, music from all different aspects, dixieland or whatever, even rhythm & blues. . . . My sister was a dancer in a floor show, and my

brother played piano and danced also. I was quite influenced mostly by my sister's tapping. The staccato of her steps always intrigued me. I would try to imitate it with a pair of sticks or something. That was about the beginning of it."

In addition to the parade bands, church music, r&b, and jazz, New Orleans was the gateway for various types of Caribbean musics in the States, and had a direct link back to African percussion in the unbroken tradition of drumming in Congo Square dating back to the days of slavery. This was to prove a lifelong inspiration for Blackwell, who made three trips to Africa with pianist Randy Weston in the 1960s, and lived there for a year, seeking out G'naoua drummers in Tangier and the indigenous rhythms of the bush tribes in West Africa.

Blackwell began his career drumming in r&b bands around 1949, including one led by the saxophonist Plas Johnson. It was during this time that he met another touring r&b

maverick, Ornette Coleman (it wasn't until 1953 when they hooked up again in Los Angeles). Roommates for two years, they practiced daily while Coleman composed unusual neo-bop tunes, and together they initiated the loosening of formal rhythmic constraints that would soon revolutionize jazz. Before Coleman would record, however, Blackwell returned to New Orleans to tour briefly with Ray Charles and, most notably, co-founded the pathbreaking American Jazz Quintet, which included clarinetist Alvin Batiste and pianist Ellis Marsalis.

By 1960 Blackwell was reunited with Coleman, recording such classics as *This Is Our Music* and *Free Jazz* (both on Atlantic). During this period it became obvious that Blackwell's drumming was distinct from most post-bop styles. From Baby Dodds one could hear the emphatic press rolls, the melodic phrasing, and the concern for colors drawn from the drum set, to which he added a polyrhythmic independence of limbs, heightened pattern playing (from African sources), and an alert interplay with the soloist. In addition to Coleman, he recorded with John Coltrane, and was part of a historic gig, *At The Five Spot* (Fantasy/OJC), with Eric Dolphy, Booker Little, Richard Davis, and Mal Waldron. In situations like these, he provided the horn players with a rhythmic buoyancy and sense of space different from their usual accompanists. He once said, "My approach is about using space very effectively, almost like a horn player taking a breath. The main thing you have to think about is that whatever you play has to make sense. In other words, you want to use quality, not quantity. You can run 16th notes around the drums, but if it doesn't say anything, it's just 16th notes. But when you use space effectively it makes music."

Blackwell's use of space, his patterns and melodicism can be heard most clearly on his duets with trumpeter Don Cherry—the legendary *Mu* (BYG), and 13 years later, *El Corazon* (ECM)—just as his African sources reflect his brilliant work on log drums with Archie Shepp—*On This Night* and *The Magic Of Juju* (both Impulse!). During the '70s and '80s he was at the height of his powers, working with a broad range of musicians, from Thelonious Monk to Anthony Braxton, David Murray to Jane Ira Bloom. He also founded—with Dewey Redman, Cherry, and Charlie Haden—Old and New Dreams, expanding upon their experiences with Coleman. It was also in 1974 that DB first reported his kidney failure. He required frequent, and expensive, dialysis treatments to survive, and it's a measure of his strength and courage that he continued to play with such imagination and fervor. His death in October 1992 deprived us of one of the jazz world's most recognizable and respected rhythmmakers. **DB**

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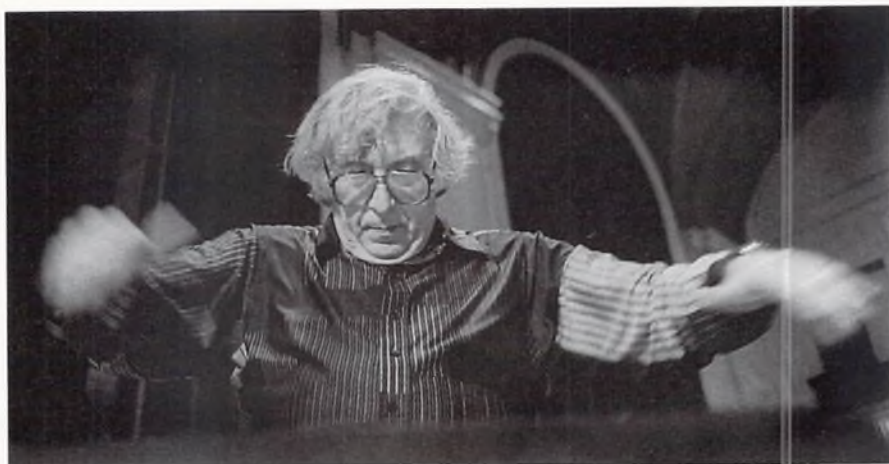
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Classical To Cool To Third Stream

GUNTHER SCHULLER

By William Russo



MITCHELL SEIDEL

If any man ever merited recognition for a lifetime of achievement in music, it is Gunther Schuller. He has a penetrating intellect, a matchless musical ear, and an unrelenting determination to complete all the tasks he has assigned himself. And beyond this, his work emerges from his character, a character that has made him a loyal friend and strong ally to the many musical causes and personalities he has championed.

In his teen years, Schuller played french horn in the New York City Ballet orchestra and the Cincinnati Symphony; by his 20th birthday in 1945 he was principal hornist of the Metropolitan Opera orchestra.

Before leaving that post in 1959, Schuller had joined Miles Davis and Gil Evans to play in two of their renowned collaborations: the nine-piece chamber-band project now known as *The Birth Of The Cool*, and their classic, big-band album *Porgy And Bess*.

Among the 150-odd works Schuller has composed are a full-length opera, *The Visitation*; two french horn concertos; two *Fantasia Concertante* chamber quartets; two orchestral works titled *Triplum* for their structural analogies with medieval motets; two violin concertos; his best-known work (and my favorite), *Seven Studies On Themes Of Paul Klee*, one of several pieces Schuller based on 20th-century paintings and sculptures; and *Music For Brass Quintet*, a work

regarded by many players as the foundation of their repertory.

Schuller's major jazz-oriented works include "Abstractions," "Conversations," and the *Concertino For Jazz Quartet And Orchestra* (all recorded with the Modern Jazz Quartet), as well as *Jazz Abstractions* with guitarist Jim Hall and his collaboration with J.J. Johnson and Dizzy Gillespie on Gillespie's *Perceptions*.

As a widely traveled guest conductor, Schuller has been a tireless advocate of music by composers from across the whole historical spectrum of music, including 19th-century American composers, particularly John Knowles Paine. Also, he has given unsparing effort to the restoration, performance, and recording of music by Charles Ives and Charles Mingus.

His advocacy of music by ragtime genius Scott Joplin had the most spectacular success among Schuller's campaigns for other composers. His Grammy-winning recording of authentic theater-orchestra versions of Joplin's core works from *The Red Back Book* was a landmark in this country's musical self-discovery. And his recorded performance of his own orchestration of Joplin's opera *Treemonisha* was another great contribution to American music.

Schuller was also one of the first, or perhaps the very first, to establish a Duke Ellington revival orchestra, playing Elling-

ton classics transcribed from original recordings, in the 1970s. This eventually led to Schuller's extensive work as co-director with David Baker of the Smithsonian Institution's jazz repertory orchestra.

Schuller also has assumed direction of several musical performance ensembles and series. He has been music director of the Sandpoint Music Festival in Idaho, interim director of the Spokane Symphony in Washington state, as well as co-director with John Harbison of the Collage contemporary ensemble and conductor of the Pro Arte orchestra, both around Boston. In the '60s he initiated the Twentieth Century Innovations concerts at Carnegie Hall and collaborated with John Lewis on the Orchestra U.S.A. new-music project in New York.

Schuller's invention and championship of the "Third Stream" concept of interpenetration between differing genres of music—originally avant-garde jazz and avant-garde classical—generated a wave of fascinating discussion and daring, trans-stylistic composition in the late '50s and early '60s.

In the late '60s, and again in the late '80s, Schuller made his mark on American music by writing two volumes of jazz history with

the Oxford University Press: *Early Jazz* and *The Swing Era*—these were the first such books to achieve standards of scholarship comparable to those of other areas of historical study.

In recent years, Schuller has stirred up controversy on two fronts. He has said that the evolution of 20th-century music into monolithic avant-garde complexity was a vast, historic mistake that has isolated both jazz and classical creators from their audiences. And he has launched severe and sustained criticism of the classical-music business for letting purely financial considerations overwhelm artistic policies.

In the past two decades, Schuller founded two music-publishing companies and a record company, GM Recordings. These have become valuable agencies for preserving and promulgating music that otherwise might never have seen the light of day. And he is the greatest editor one could ask for. He is publishing one of my pieces at this moment, and I can testify to his expertise in editing the music he publishes.

Schuller also has been one of our leading figures in musical education. When he was president of the New England Conservatory

from 1967 to 1977, his passion for all kinds of music gave the institution an excitement that no other conservatory has ever had. And he also enlivened the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood during his 22 seasons there as teacher and director.

Schuller's web of connections with performing and teaching establishments gradually made him a major influence at important arts foundations and institutes. Despite his connections to such power, however, he was always his own man—he stated his own viewpoint on central issues of art and conscience whenever he had to.

He has always been an advocate of black music/musicians, but he recognizes the valuable role white musicians have played in jazz history, especially in his advocacy of white jazzmen such as Paul Whiteman, Lee Konitz, and Richard Peaslee.

As a horn player, Schuller achieved a vibrancy and beauty of tone and expression that many lesser musicians would be well satisfied with as their lifetime achievement. Fortunately, Schuller did not stop there, but went on to greater achievements. Without them, our musical life, and the next century's, would be much the poorer. DB

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MITCHELL SEIDEL

Inherit The Sun

SUN RA

By John Corbett

The funeral program reads: "Graveside Obsequies Celebration of the Homegoing of Sun Ra, Elmwood Cemetery, Birmingham, Alabama, Saturday, June 5, 1993, 12:00 Noon." Le Son'y Ra died May 30, 1993, after suffering a series of strokes that started in 1991. Ra came to this earth via Birmingham, the city of his sad and lonely childhood and a humanoid family he vigorously disavowed, and it was from Birmingham that he returned to outer space, to travel the spaceways from planet to planet, to sprinkle the milky way with his own mad, musical pixie dust. Not a homecoming, but a homegoing—Birmingham was both Ra's

landing spot and his launching pad. Buried in full-space regalia, with appropriate music chosen by Arkestra bassist Jothan Callins, the headstone proudly decrees his rightful name: "Sun Ra."

In a just world, the musical significance of Sun Ra and his Arkestra would be beyond refute. Synthesizer pioneer, piano avatar, brilliant orchestrator and arranger, master craftsman of the large-scale open-jam, and the single most important big-band composer and bandleader since the swing era, Ra was elected to the *Down Beat* Hall of Fame in the 1984 Critics Poll. A question as insulting and ignorant as "Sun Ra: Visionary Or Con Artist?"—the very headline that ran on the cover of *Jazziz* just a month before Ra died—would be embarrassing if it wasn't so hurtful. Indeed, Ra was deeply affected last year by a contemptuous and dismissive article that ran in an Atlanta newspaper. Of course, anyone claiming to be from the planet Saturn will be the subject of continuing ridicule, no matter how irrefutably out of this world and truly prophetic their music is. In that respect, Ra's outlandish image and philosophy of the impossible may threaten to overshadow his musical achievements as he goes down in the annals of jazz history.

But more imminent and pressing threats

now face Ra's widowed band: staying together and procuring work. The first question is whether people will book the Arkestra without Sun Ra, and furthermore, whether the band will be able to continue to work at as high a level as they did when Ra was alive. After refusing the job for some time, tenor saxophonist John Gilmore has finally accepted the daunting task of leading the Arkestra, which will be known as "Sun Ra's Arkestra directed by John Gilmore, featuring Michael Ray." Trumpeter Ray will assume some of the administrative responsibilities, along with Gilmore. Ray also has his own band, Cosmic Krewe, which features half-Ra/half-Ray material and attempts to "keep the cosmic pageantry alive, with a costumier, banners, and the like." As for the Arkestra, they have only just started thinking about a new keyboardist; Dave Burrell has contacted them, Gilmore is considering Jackie Byard and Muhal Richard Abrams as well, and rumors are circulating that Cecil Taylor wants to take over the band.

"I'm gonna knock them into shape," says Gilmore from the Ra house, a Morton Street abode in Philadelphia where many Arkestra members have hung their hats over the last two decades. "Ra would try something once, maybe twice, and if everybody wasn't with it

he'd just move on. Me, I'm gonna straighten them out! The funny thing is that we have so much music that we never even played, beautiful music, that we don't even need anyone writing for us. We're a repertory band, but we've got a lot of new music. No problem there!"

After the first series of strokes debilitated Ra, clubs started to cancel dates. Gilmore hopes that this will change now that there's no chance of waiting for Ra to recover; though with his severe emphysema there are legitimate questions about Gilmore's own capacity to lead the band. Indeed, Gilmore now doubles Kenny Williams on tenor for nights when he finds it particularly hard to breathe. Taking the frontline in booking the Ra-less Arkestra. New York's Bottom Line was the site of a post-funeral extravaganza. Many of the band members flew to Birmingham and then returned that night for the gig, which featured guest appearances by poet Amiri Baraka, violinist Billy Bang, Arkestra-alum (and ex-Monk) bassist John Ore, and—weirdly enough—guitarist Stanley Jordan, who played with the Arkestra once at Sweet Basil, years ago. "Jordan was *cookin'*, jack!" exclaims Gilmore, sensing my skepticism. "He was playing space guitar, unbelievable!" Is it a turning point in Jordan's career, or a symbolic death knell for the Arkestra? I can't help wondering.

Lurking beneath these immediate worries are a host of deeper concerns about the state of Ra's estate. As you might expect, Ra had no last will and testament. This means that all his belongings—including the house, which saxophonist Marshall Allen's father signed over to Ra years ago—are now liable to be claimed by the next of kin, that is, by Ra's sister Mary Jenkins. "Sparks are definitely gonna start flying," says Gilmore. "But the band doesn't have anything. We were broke when he was here, and we're broke now that he's gone." What hangs in the balance, among other things, is any income for the band from future royalties on past recordings. The family, which had virtually no connection with Ra or his career, has already laid claim to Ra's entire wardrobe and personal effects, and lawyers are working on the rest. But when it comes to the sheet music, which is in various states of condition, some extensively copied and existing in multiple editions, some limited to one crumbling page, Gilmore grows animated: "Man, they can't touch that! There's so many arrangers other than Sun Ra, like Hobart Dotson, Pat Patrick, Julian Priest. They can't know *whose* it is."

"I'm not gonna mess with his things till everything gets straightened out," says Jenkins; though, in truth, she has turned all

legal duties over to her niece, Marie Holsten. Asked about her relationship with her brother, Jenkins recalls a trip to visit in-laws in Chicago three years after Sonny had vanished from Birmingham without a trace. "Someone said, 'Hey, Mary, you got some

should stay with his sister. Jothan Callins, who is also from Birmingham, accompanied Ra on the long train ride south. So began the grim last days of Sun Ra, who promptly caught pneumonia on the train. He stayed only briefly at Jenkins' house before medical



Sun Ra and the Arkestra blast off from *Saturday Night Live* in 1978.

...*They are the chosen ones*
 ...*The begotten begardened*
Restin' in their place of berth.....
*they were borne*
To their place of rest.
It is a backward version of birth
Which is better stated as a re-birth.
A rebirth is being born again.....
*A cryptic word of crypt-intent.....*
 —Sun Ra, "*The Garden Of Eden,*"
 from *The Immeasurable Equation*



kin here. He's the one makin' all that music!" she recalls. The siblings then lost touch for some 35 years before Ra phoned to say he was being inducted (with Jo Jones) into the Birmingham Jazz Hall of Fame. "He told me to get all the kinfolk together," says Jenkins, with a sprig of pride. "We got our pictures taken with him." After this, the two maintained limited contact, Jenkins calling the house from time to time until Ra's first strokes, at which time she traveled to his Philadelphia hospital. "Everything was fine," she says. "Then they sent him down here, and it just about ruined my life."

"They"—the Arkestra—sent Ra to Birmingham for good reason. "We had no central heat," explains Gilmore. "And his room was right next to the front door." After suffering a third stroke, Ra recovered in a Germantown rehabilitation center, but when he was discharged, in the middle of a cold Philadelphia winter, it was decided that he

care was needed, at which time it was discovered that Ra had a long-untreated hernia. Five days after treatment for pneumonia, reputedly without consent or consultation with his Philadelphia physicians, Ra was operated on, and he never recovered. Gilmore says that a major malpractice suit is now being looked into.

The "sparks" that Gilmore mentions are thus not the Arkestra's. Though a certain portion of the group is attempting to set up an "Arkestra Foundation," in fact, the Arkestra is currently at the mercy of other powers in the fallout controversy now developing in the wake of Ra's death. Those powers are (besides Ra's relatives) various potentially malevolent forces within the band itself (items have been disappearing from the house, including tapes), various academic institutions (Yale and the University of Chicago have both expressed interest in housing the Sun Ra archives), and Sun Ra's longtime patron, friend, business partner, and co-mystic, Alton Abraham.

"The story can now be told," says Abraham across a café table at the beginning of a rare interview. He reaches into a large briefcase and extracts a bundle of documents. Sifting through them, he selects one and instructs me to read it. It is the original legal paperwork from October 20, 1952, that changed Herman Poole Blount into Le Son'y Ra. It is a magic document, we both know, and he spreads a broad smile and hands me another piece. This time it's a booklet from the American Federation of Musicians, the original registration papers for Saturn Records, from 1956, with Alton Abraham signing in as president. "I wanted to establish

who I am, my credentials," he says. "You see, I own the name Sun Ra. We always shared everything; he always said *we* were his family. And you don't need any Arkestra Foundation—our company, Infinity Inc., that's the foundation." Among other papers that he produces upon request are the original contracts that he negotiated with ABC for the Impulse! series (two sets of releases in the mid-'70s, extremely important in Ra's career) and a rough draft of the paperwork for Blue Thumb's *Space Is The Place* (out of print). Scanning this contract, I pick out a clause with an "x" through it that reads, "Concerning copyright on planets other than earth. . . ." Abraham nods: "Yeah, I guess we decided to take that out."

Herman "Sonny" Blount (pronounced "blunt"), who was almost certainly born on May 22, 1917, first played in Chicago in 1934, just out of high school, but returned for college at Alabama A & M, known at the time as the State Agricultural and Mechanical Institute for Negroes. Blount and Alton Abraham met around 1951, well after Blount had settled in Chicago. On the South Side, Abraham was

" . . . we have so much music that we never even played, beautiful music, that we don't even need anyone writing for us. We're a repertory band, but we've got a lot of new music."—John Gilmore



part of a group of people—a sort of open secret society—researching ancient civilizations, astrology, German philosophy, and outer space, spreading their findings through soap box lectures in Washington Park; this group eventually included James Bryant, another early Ra supporter who joined Abraham and me at the café. Abraham and Blount (who was working behind a curtain at whites-only strip joints in Calumet

City at the time) struck up a friendship, and over the next few years Abraham forcibly convinced Ra to change his name, paid his rent, bought him food and instruments, booked him in clubs, helped build the Arkestra to a seven- and finally 11-piece band, and took Ra from being a reclusive misanthrope ("I hate black people," said Sun Ra," recounts Abraham. "I don't know about white people, I don't know any. But I know I hate black people.") to the spotlight kid he became.

When Ra left Chicago and moved to New York in 1961, the Arkestra worked only sporadically, and some members did very unusual studio jobs; Pat Patrick played sax and Ra played organ on a very popular version of "The Batman Theme," for instance. Throughout this time, Abraham supported them, sending money constantly, and when the group settled in Philly, Abraham gave them vans, station wagons, recording gear, and more money. "I gotta deal with Abraham," says Gilmore. "I don't have any clout, no lawyers. He's been here for 40 years, a friend, gave plenty of money, plenty! He and Sun Ra may not have seen eye to eye all the time, particularly towards

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Everette Harp
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La Voz alto medium hard
La Voz tenor medium hard

Jeff Kashiwa
La Voz soprano medium
La Voz alto medium
La Voz tenor medium hard

Ronnie Laws
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La Voz tenor hard

Sonny Rollins
La Voz tenor medium soft

David Sanborn
La Voz alto medium

Stanley Turrentine
La Voz tenor medium hard

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Kenny G
Hemke soprano #2 1/2
Hemke tenor #3
Hemke alto #3

Kenny Garrett
Hemke alto #3, #3 1/2

Jeff Kashiwa
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the end, but Alton's been there for us the whole time." In fact, Saturn Research has maintained the same post office box since the early '50s, and Abraham owns a huge archive of historical materials, numerous tapes (which he claims ownership of as continuing president of Saturn), several vintage Ra pianos, early synthesizers, and other odds and ends that could probably fill a warehouse. Since Ra's first stroke, Saturn has experienced a series of thefts—probably by musicians or musician's friends. Abraham leaves the door open for anyone wanting to return stolen items, report bootlegs, or fink on the thieves (Saturn Research, P.O. Box 7124, Chicago, IL 60680).

For the record-buying public, there is a seemingly bottomless Ra archive already available, with more on the way. In the fall,

Evidence will put out its third batch of Ra discs, reissuing several of the Impulse! records (*Atlantis*, *Magic City*, *Angels And Demons At Play With Nubians Of Plutonia*, *Fate In A Pleasant Mood*) as well as an important collection of long-obscure Saturn singles. Beyond fall, there are plans for more Evidence Ra reissues as well. Leo Records has just put out a 1990 collaboration between the Arkestra and a Parisian symphony orchestra titled *Pleiades* (LR 210/211); there are Black Saints, A&Ms, Leos, Delmarks, DIWs, hat ARTs, and much more. And for those who never saw Ra live, the public estate contains at least three full-length films—the mediocre French *Mystery*, *Mr. Ra*, Robert Muge's fantastic *A Joyful Noise* (both of these are available from Rhapsody), and Edward O. Bland's fascinat-

ing *The Cry Of Jazz*, which features the Chicago Arkestra, circa 1959, with plenty of hot blowing by an uncredited John Gilmore, a demonstration of jazz rhythm by Ra on piano, and a bizarre trek through jazz history with the Arkestra.

For the rabid enthusiast there is even an E-mail computer mailing list through which information on Ra is being exchanged daily. (To join, send a message to: _Saturn-request@Hearn.Bitnet_.)

Of course, whatever the outcome of the custody battle over Ra's estate, the real inheritors of Sun Ra's wealth of wisdom and knowledge will be future generations of jazz listeners. **DB**

(Thanks to Allan Chase for research assistance.)

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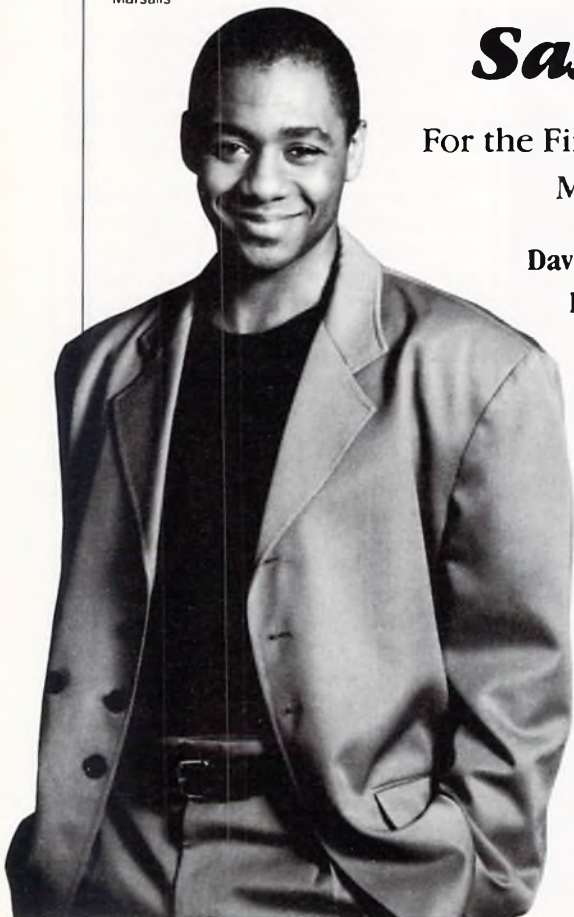
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Parallel Strings

KENNY BURRELL & JIM HALL

By Mitchell Seidel



Kenny Burrell and Jim Hall

Ask any group of modern guitarists to name their key influences, and invariably the names of Kenny Burrell and Jim Hall come up. Both being guitar players, they aren't called upon to perform together often. It can easier be said that they have led parallel careers, each maintaining a standard of excellence while taking a slightly different route. Born just months apart—Hall in Buffalo in 1930, Burrell in Detroit in 1931—these two have fashioned careers that would make anybody envious.

Burrell played with Dizzy Gillespie and John Coltrane while still in his teens, recorded the landmark album *Guitar Forms* with Gil Evans in the 1960s, released a masterful homage with *Ellington Is Forever* in the '70s. Burrell continues to mine the mother lode that is Duke Ellington, adding his own identity to that of the master. His latest is a duo recording with bassist Rufus Reid, *Ellington A La Carte*.

Hall's recording career goes back nearly 40 years, and includes works by Ben Webster, Bill Evans, Lee Konitz, and, most notably, Sonny Rollins.

Hall revels in challenging himself against the chops of younger players—witness his work with firebrand Bill Frisell and his series of albums for MusicMasters featuring John Scofield, John Abercrombie, Ron Carter, and Gary Burton. His latest release is *Something Special*, which features a witty cover cartoon by former Hall student and *Far Side* creator Gary Larson.

Both are perfect examples of how jazz musicians stay forever young. You won't catch these two resting on their laurels, or anything else. They met for a chat about their lives and music in the practice room of Hall's Village apartment, across the street from where he teaches at the New School.

MITCHELL SEIDEL: *Kenny, the first time you heard Jim, was there an immediate impression, or did you make a mental note and file it away in your mind?*

KENNY BURRELL: I think I heard his musical voice, and I took note that here was a young guitarist who was experimenting and trying some new things, and that was interesting to me. Of course, I knew the guys [he was playing with].

JIM HALL: Yeah, that's the thing. It really is like a family, or was in those days, anyway.

The first time I heard Kenny was on records with Dizzy, I believe, and Milt Jackson—is that right? That did make an impression. It was good. And then I have a memory of hearing you with Oscar Peterson. You played in Philadelphia with Oscar, I believe.

KB: The record you were talking about with Dizzy, I made that when I was still in college.

JH: You must have been about 23.

KB: I was 19. Dizzy came through Detroit in '51. He had a small group, and they were going to work a club for a month. I think it was John Brown, the alto player, who took ill. And for some reason he called me. . . . I worked with them at this club . . . for a month. It was Milt Jackson and John Coltrane and Percy Heath.

MS: That's quite a jump-start for a 19-year-old.

KB: [laughing] It sure was.

JH: Sometimes I think about playing with Sonny Rollins. I wouldn't have the nerve to do that now. I didn't know any better.

KB: I was scared, I'll tell you that. Dizzy, as we know, was so funny, so humorous all the time, he kept you relaxed. And he was very encouraging. I didn't realize the extra responsibility I had with no piano.

MS: In trying to find some common ground for the two of you besides the guitar, I've come across Duke Ellington. Jim was at his 70th birthday party at the White House in 1969. Kenny is one of Duke's most avid students. What is his importance to both of you?

KB: I don't think today we realize how important he is to 20th-century music. Period. Several things I got from him were the way to get the creative flow happening and keep it going. And one of the ways is through finding your own music, finding your own voice. He's the perfect example of how you can do that and keep making it stronger. And it works, both artistically and commercially. In that sense, he's a role model for a lot of people, not just Jim and me.

That's another thing people are not really aware of, how complicated, how sophisticated this music is as an art form. When you think of it in those terms, he is the epitome. Not just as Duke Ellington the composer/piano player, but look at all the people he immediately influenced.

JH: I want a copy of what you said.

MS: Before you copy it, Jim, how about you?

JH: I couldn't say it any better. In a personal sense, his picture's on the wall. I was at his birthday party at the White House. And I worked with Ben Webster a lot. Ben had three heroes. One was Duke, one was Art Tatum, and the other was Joe Louis. All I have to do is hear one chord from Duke Ellington's band—not even his piano—and I'm gone. He also had a genius for picking guys to work with him, to express that voice that he had. Miles [Davis] had that voice, too.



“ . . . unfortunately, [jazz] really hasn't been treated like an art form. It's been treated like all other pop music in the way in which it is marketed. The CD has helped put life back into this continuum, this heritage.”

—Kenny Burrell

MS: Talking about another major figure, it's been 25 years since Wes Montgomery died. Does he still exert an influence today?

JH: I do a bit of teaching around the corner here, and the young guys have rediscovered him. If anything, more guys are listening to him now. He epitomizes everything I was interested in at the time. He was already doing it, and perfectly. For me, what he played is still impossible, those octaves and such. The kids, they don't know it's impossible. It's like the four-minute mile: they just do it. To be personal about it, he and a couple of other people—Tal Farlow and Jimmy Raney—hearing them really helped me realize that I'd better find something of my own to do, because I'll never be able to do that.

KB: I think the music . . . is going to last as long as we have recordings. One of the

things I think is overlooked when you look at Wes Montgomery is his chord voicings. I really think that he had a mastery of chords. Particularly moving chords . . . they're called block chords. I really appreciated that a lot.

MS: Do you find, as Jim found, that students are rediscovering Wes?

KB: The guitarists, certainly. If you're serious about the instrument, you're going to know about Wes Montgomery. With students of this art form . . . each year you get a new group. They react to the music business. Right now, because of the advent of CDs, a lot of things are being rediscovered. They're not being rediscovered, there's just more interest in them. CDs come out, there's promotion involved, and they're being played on the air.

JH: I think it's helped Kenny and I, too. The first record I made was reissued two or three years ago on CD. The things I did with Bill Evans, that's all out on CD now, with extra tracks. Sometimes you wish they wouldn't put them on.

KB: I think it's good.

JH: So do I.

KB: . . . because this is an art form.

JH: And it's a young art form.

KB: . . . unfortunately, it really hasn't been treated like an art form. It's been treated like all other pop music in the way it is marketed. The CD has helped put life back into this continuum, this heritage. By accident, in a sense, but it's there. That, to me, is important, because these things are not lost.

JH: I've got a lot of Art Tatum on CD now, stuff that I never even had before. He was one of my first heroes. And Ellington, too. I'm almost afraid to go into the store now, there's so much Ellington.

KB: I'm continuing to collect Ellington. Tatum as well.

MS: Speaking of favorites, are there a handful of people who stand out in your minds?

JH: I can't go too far without saying Charlie Christian. The first time I heard him I was 13 years old, and it changed my life. I didn't know for sure what he was doing. I had been playing guitar for about three years, and said, “This is great.” And now, when I hear it, I say, “Damn, it is great.” There's a Brazilian guy, Egberto Gismonti, that I respect a lot. Sonny Rollins is still a hero of mine.

MS: How about you, Kenny?

KB: All of the above. My list would be too long. I really have so many musical heroes, people I enjoy. And not just in jazz. I don't think it would be fair of me to list just a few. As far as influences . . . Jim mentioned Charlie Christian. I have to mention Oscar Moore, who played with the great Nat King Cole. I guess because I love harmony and chords. Oscar played some of the most beautiful chords behind Nat Cole. For me, he

was really a pioneer in that sense, of putting these modern chords out front. He was overshadowed by this great, popular singer. Johnny Moore, who was Oscar's brother, was another one. Another one is T-Bone Walker, who is probably the most influential blues guitarist on me and many others. Eddie Durham, who we talk about as being the first electric-guitar player . . . says that the first one he heard play electric guitar was T-Bone Walker. Django Reinhardt was influential to me. Not so much in the musical sense, but in terms of the stylistic sense. I just admired the way he could get such an individual sound out of an acoustic guitar. Charlie Parker. And I'd have to say John Coltrane.

MS: *As far as playing goes, do you have any favorite pianists as accompanists?*

JH: Believe it or not, I believe piano and tenor saxophone are my favorite instruments. Even more than guitar. I have a pianist now, Larry Goldings, who's already developing into a voice. Ellis Larkins—I loved Ellis' playing. Jimmy Jones, I loved Jimmy Jones.

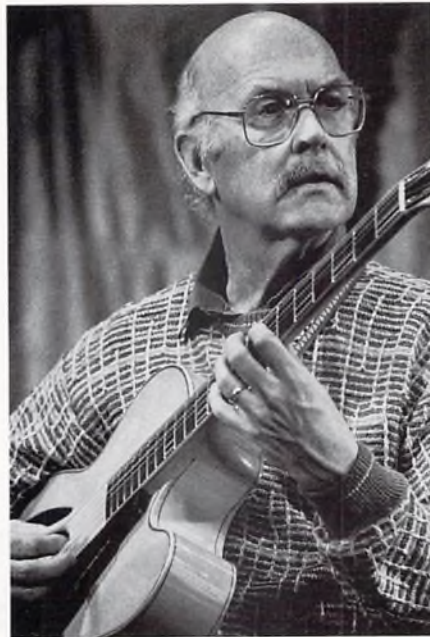
KB: He was so beautiful.

JH: I played with Hank Jones one time at a house party in Connecticut. The piano was terrible, going out of tune as the gig went on. It didn't matter. It sounded beautiful all the way out. Tatum could do that. Tommy Flanagan, of course. Bill Evans was such a huge influence on me. And guys I've worked with recently—Gil Goldstein is a marvelous musician, and Larry Goldings.

KB: I got spoiled many years ago. The first group I was ever in was me and Tommy Flanagan, and bassist Alvin Jackson, who's Milt Jackson's brother. Tommy is a great pianist, a great accompanist. He has to be one of my favorite people to work with and to listen to. I'm kind of spoiled being from Detroit. I had the chance to work with Barry Harris, Roland Hanna, and Hank Jones. I worked with Oscar Peterson for a while. He's another favorite. Both Jim and I worked with Bill Evans . . . another wonderful, sensitive pianist and person. Richard Wyands is a fine pianist, a fine accompanist. He doesn't get much recognition.

MS: *Even among the critics questioned in Down Beat's annual Poll, there seems to be some confusion about what constitutes electric versus acoustic guitar these days. What are the differences?*

KB: Traditionally, what I do and what guitarists like Jim do is try to amplify the sound of the instrument. It changes somewhat. It can't help but change. But not really changing it electronically . . . where some people use certain equipment, and it gets further and further away from the natural sound of the guitar. Electric has traditionally meant that we put a pickup on an acoustic guitar and made it louder. In recent



"I practiced today already, and if I don't, it's like somebody stepped on my hand. That's another one of the beauties of [being a musician]—that it goes on forever."—Jim Hall

years there has been the development of attachments that not only change the sound of the guitar, but do it deliberately. I play both what I call the electric guitar and the acoustic guitar. I think they may have to come up with some kind of word or definition for the guitar that's more electronic.

JH: I fooled around with classical guitar for a while. I keep my strings lighter than most. Part of that was trying to get a classical-guitar sound out of this instrument. I found that with an amp, I could actually play softer, because I didn't have to bang the strings as hard. My sound is a combination of Charlie Christian and a classical guitar. That is an interesting point about electronics. I'm using more of them now. I'll use any kind of tool that will help.

MS: *Earlier, you both mentioned the importance of developing your own voice. As teachers, what do you tell students who say they want to play jazz guitar for a living?*

KB: I try to deal with each student in terms of what his long-range goals are. Some people just want to go into the studios, and others say, "I want to be a real jazz musician." Others want to use the instrument for composing, or something like that. I've done both. I was real successful in the studios for a number of years here in New York. Then I eased out of that and started playing jazz for a living.

JH: My feeling about being a musician, and especially a jazz musician, is that the payoff is being able to do that. Making a living at it is something different. Being able to play music is the reward right there. Another thing that I'm sure of is that it's never over, at least it certainly isn't for me. I practiced today already, and if I don't, it's like somebody stepped on my hand. That's another one of the beauties of it—that it goes on forever. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Like great chefs, there are no absolutes for what Kenny Burrell and Jim Hall play. Burrell points out that the following equipment is what he uses "mostly." Similarly, Hall favors a variety of gear. Burrell's main guitars are a Gibson Super 800 electric, a Stevens steel-string acoustic, and a Gibson classical. He uses a Fender Twin Reverb amp.

Hall has two D'Aquisto guitars—one electric and one acoustic—plus an old Gibson electric that "sounds better every year." He uses D'Aquisto strings. Although he favors his old Gibson tube amp, Hall travels with a Walter Woods solid-state amp, using it with a Harry Kolbe speaker cabinet. At his feet are a Boss chorus pedal and a Digitech harmonizer.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Kenny Burrell
as a leader

SUNUP TO SUNDOWN—Contemporary 14065
GUIDING SPIRIT—Contemporary 14058
AT THE FIVE SPOT CAFE—Blue Note 46538
ELLINGTON IS FOREVER, VOL. 1—Fantasy 79005
ELLINGTON A LA CARTE—Muse 5435
FOR DUKE—Fantasy 4506
A NIGHT AT THE VANGUARD—Chess 9316

with others

ALL DAY LONG—Fantasy/OJC 456 (Donald Byrd)
TOGETHERING—Blue Note 46093 (Grover Washington Jr.)
KENNY BURRELL & JOHN COLTRANE—Fantasy/OJC 300
THE CATS—Fantasy/OJC 079 (Coltrane & Tommy Flanagan)

GUITAR FORMS—Verve 825 576 (Gil Evans)

Jim Hall

as a leader

SOMETHING SPECIAL—MusicMasters 65105
SUBSEQUENTLY—MusicMasters 65078
LIVE AT TOWN HALL, VOL. 1—MusicMasters 5050
LIVE AT TOWN HALL, VOL. 2—MusicMasters 65066
ALL ACROSS THE CITY—Concord Jazz 38-4
IT'S NICE TO BE WITH YOU—Verve 843 035

with others

THE QUARTETS—RCA 5643 (Sonny Rollins)
ALONE TOGETHER—Fantasy/OJC 476 (Ron Carter)
UNDERCURRENT—Blue Note 90583 (Bill Evans)
INTERMODULATION—Verve 833 771 (Bill Evans)

Key

- Excellent ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
- Very Good ★ ★ ★ ★
- Good ★ ★ ★
- Fair ★ ★
- Poor ★



Woody Herman

THE CONCORD YEARS—Concord Jazz CCD-4557: *Thing's Ain't What They Used To Be; Four Brothers; Round Midnight; It Don't Mean A Thing; The Dolphin; Woody 'N You; Blues For Red; Peroido; Central Park West; Lemon Drop; What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life; Battle Royal.* (70:45)

Collective personnel: George Baker, Tim Burke, Bill Byrne, Mark Lewis, Les Lovitt, Brian O'Flaherty, Jim Powell, George Rabbal, Kitt Reid, Joe Rodriguez, Bill Stapleton, Ron Stout, Scott Wagstaff, Dizzy Gillespie, Woody Shaw, trumpet; Jim Barati, John Fedchock, Randy Hawes, Nelson Hinds, Birch Johnson, Mark Lust, Paul McKee, Larry Shunk, Gene Smith, Slide Hampton, trombone; Woody Herman, Bob Belden, Mike Brignola, Jim Carroll, Paul McGinley, Dick Mitchell, Jerry Pinter, Dave Riekenberg, Bill Ross, Randy Russell, Gary Smulyan, Frank Tiberi, Stan Getz, Al Cohn, Flip Phillips, reeds; Dave Lalama, John Oddo, Joel Weiskopf, Brad Williams, piano; Dave Carpenter, Mike Hall, Dave Larocca, Lynn Seaton, Dave Shapiro, bass; Dave Miller, Dave Ratajczak, Jim Rupp, Ed Soph, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Here are the final editions of the Woody Herman band as recorded by Concord beginning in 1979 and ending in March 1987, virtually days before illness finally took him off the road for good. (He died in October 1987.) All are previously issued concert performances, with some plagued by Herman's maddening habit of announcing soloists *during* their solos.

These selections thankfully avoid the Herman band's various accommodations with pop trends and instead concentrate on its core jazz values ("Battle Royal," "Lemon Drop"). It makes for above-average music, though why Lynn Seaton's novelty vocalizing on "Blues For Red" was included is anybody's guess. Especially when superb all-star performances of "The Goo And I," "Not Really The Blues," and other cuts from Herman's *Four Others* album might have been recruited for this compilation.

But there are some lively guest appearances, including Woody Shaw and a very strong Dizzy Gillespie on "Woody 'n You," good Flip Phillips on "Perdido," and an appropriately lyrical Stan Getz on "What Are You Doing." Even the old "Four Brothers," performed by the band's resident soloists, sounds marvelous. John Fedchock's charts, for five of the 12 cuts here, are well-schooled pieces with a preference for brass colorations over reeds, and his immaculate trombone on "Round Midnight" has a classical stoicism about it. It was the young blood of musicians like Fedchock that helped keep Woody Herman's last years musically healthy and growing, as this CD demonstrates.

—John McDonough



Various Artists

COME TOGETHER: GUITAR TRIBUTE TO THE BEATLES—NYC 6004 2: *COME TOGETHER; SHE'S LEAVING HOME; HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE; WITHIN YOU, WITHOUT YOU/BLUE JAY WAY; ELEANOR RIGBY; BLACKBIRD; AND I LOVE HER; MICHELLE; NORWEGIAN WOOD; SOMETHING; YESTERDAY.* (58:43)

Personnel: cut 1: Mark Whitfield, guitar; Thomas Dawson, organ; Roland Guerin, bass; Dowell Davis, drums; 2: Toninho Horta, guitar, vocals; Mike Mainieri, vibes; Rudy Berger, violin; James Genus, bass; Nana Vasconcelos, percussion; 3: Ralph Towner, acoustic guitar; 4: Steve Khan, guitar; Marc Johnson, bass; Peter Erskine, drums; Nana Vasconcelos, percussion, voice; 5: Zachary Breaux, guitars, bass, drums; Rex Rideout, keyboards; 6: Adrian Belew, guitars, synths, drums; 7: John Abercrombie, electric, acoustic guitars; Marc Johnson, bass; Peter Erskine, drums; 8: Allan Holdsworth, guitar; Gordon Beck, keyboards; Gary Willis, bass; Kirk Covington, drums; 9: Leni Stern, guitar; Mike Mainieri, vibes; Nana Vasconcelos, percussion; 10: Larry Coryell, guitar; 11: Toots Thielemans, guitar, harmonica, whistling; Kenny Werner, piano, synths; Jay Anderson, bass; Adam Nussbaum, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

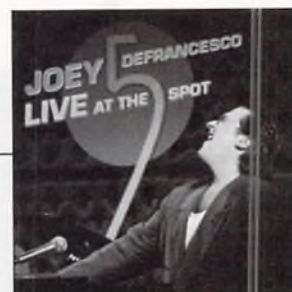
Producer Mainieri came up with the concept and did the casting for this all-star guitar tribute to the Beatles. Diversity is the strength of this sampler, which ranges from Mark Whitfield's urban contempo take on "Come Together" (one of the few truly funky tunes the Beatles ever came up with) to Toninho Horta's slighty saccharine "She's Leaving Home"; from Steve Khan's haunting, modal medley of George Harrison's "Within You, Without You/Blue Jay Way" to Larry Coryell's luscious, harmonically rich solo-acoustic rendering of "Something."

Ralph Towner's solo acoustic version of "Here, There and Everywhere" is typically ECM-ish (sparse and a tad precious), while

Zachary Breaux throws down in trendy fashion on his Wes-meets-hip-hop rendition of "Eleanor Rigby."

Other highlights include Adrian Belew's faithful rendition of "Blackbird." John Abercrombie's moody minor-key reading of "And I Love Her," Leni Stern's mysterious, seductive take on "Norwegian Wood," and Toots' very soulful interpretation of "Yesterday." But the biggest surprise of all is hearing Allan Holdsworth blow with abandon on a swinging, reharmonized rendition of "Michelle." His connection to Coltrane has never been so apparent. If this marks a new direction for the guitar god, I say go ahead, Allan.

—Bill Milkowski



Joey DeFrancesco

LIVE AT THE FIVE SPOT—Columbia CK 53805: *THE ETERNAL ONE; EMBRACEABLE YOU; I'LL REMEMBER APRIL; WORK SONG; MOONLIGHT IN VERMONT; IMPRESSIONS; ALL OF ME; SPECTATOR.* (74:54)

Personnel: DeFrancesco, Hammond XB-3 organ; Byron "Wookie" Landham, drums; Paul Boll-enback, guitar; Robert Landham, alto saxophone (1); Jim Henry, trumpet, flugelhorn (1,4); Illinois Jacquet (2,7), Grover Washington Jr. (4), Kirk Whalum (6), Houston Person (5), tenor saxophone; Captain Jack McDuff, Hammond B-3 Goff Professional Organ.

★ ★ ★ ★

This live performance at New York's Five Spot has the feeling of a dance where all the potential partners are lined up, ready to go. You don't get the continuity of a single band, but boy, do you get great solos as each guy shows his stuff.

The tenor talent assembled here makes an impressive parade on its own. Illinois Jacquet's sweet sound brings Ben Webster to mind on a luscious "Embraceable You" that has the unhurried pace of a bygone era. Grover Washington delivers a soulful "Work Song" that leaves his "lite jazz" image behind, and Kirk Whalum's "Impressions" is full of bite.

DeFrancesco's rambunctious organ playing ties the whole gig together. The other players benefit from his swinging time and his instinct for when to charge ahead with that youthful exuberance and when to back off. It's a revelation to hear Joey next to veteran Captain Jack McDuff, who has organ playing down to a more understated science. From the way DeFrancesco gently backs Houston Person on "Moonlight In Vermont," though, it's obvious that he values subtlety as well as excitement. The torch of jazz organ playing is safe in Joey's hands.

—Elaine Guregian



Stephane Furic

THE TWITTER-MACHINE—Soul Note 121225-2: *COULD YOU BE THERE?; THE MOON BREATHED TWICE; DIAMONDS AND PEARLS; LORD JIM; NO TANGO; GORAG' RAG; HARVEST SONG; GONE NOW.* (55:56).

Personnel: Furic, bass; Chris Cheek, tenor, soprano saxophones; Patrick Goraguer, piano; Jim Black, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Saheb Sarbib

SEASONS—Soul Note 121048-2: *ONE FOR MO; PARTNERS IN WONDER; NYMPH OF DARKNESS; ARIES' DANCE; ROUND TRIP; SEASONS; LIVING RIGHT ON CENTRAL PARK; JUMPIN' JACK.* (40:16)

Personnel: Sarbib, bass, piano; Mel Ellison, alto, soprano, tenor saxophones; Mark Whitecage, alto saxophone; Paul Motian, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Two successful bassist-led foursomes here, both fronted by ensemble-minded fellas. On *The Twitter-Machine*, their second Soul Note release, the Furic quartet approaches the music organically, weaving together with remarkable interactive skills, deploying a gentle-but-purposeful group feel. Berklee-ites all, they play without a hint of conservatory conservatism (check the engine on "Gorag' Rag" or the tense, long tones on "Harvest Song"), but there's little that's abrasive about them, either. Chris Cheek's tenor tone is lush, and Jim Black deftly incorporates silence into his lean drum work. Furic, who has a knack for writing flexible charts, contributes all but three of the compositions: Cheek's gorgeous "Could You Be There?" (the opening chords of which show Patrick Goraguer to be a pianist of real depth and potential), Black's "The Moon Breathed Twice," and "Diamonds And Pearls," the group's surprising arrangement of a Prince tune.

Haven't heard too much from Sarbib, Ellison, or Whitecage over the last decade, but this reissue is definitely worth a listen. *Seasons* is a live recording from 1981, when the Furic band was still in junior high. With a duelling sax front line—often tangling in tandem—and Motian in the driver's seat, Sarbib's quartet is more sharp-edged, energy-oriented, and openly bluesy than Furic's, though it too has a well-formed sense of syncretism and temporal flexibility that binds the group. As with Furic, Sarbib is no showboater, but lays down solidly underneath, grooving hard on "Nymph Of Darkness" and matching Motian's sure swing on Ornette Coleman's "Round Trip." I could do without Sarbib's piano swells on the title cut and "Living Right On Central Park," but otherwise it's a hearty disc.

—John Corbett

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CD REVIEWS

Back From The Byways

by Josef Woodard

Not so long ago, the fine art of female vocalists "treating" great American standards was relegated to the byways of musical culture, eclipsed by the brasher din of pop-music hype. In recent years, though, the American song—from between the epochs of Tin Pan Alley and rock & roll—has made a dramatic return. Thank Natalie Cole's *Unforgettable* phenom and/or the general retro trend in jazz. And yet they come at the timeless material from different angles and in different production wardrobes, as evidenced by this survey of recent releases.

Whatever you think of Cole's dubious post-humous "duet" with her late father, the Grammy-winning album served to focus attention on a classic body of songs more or less retired to the lounges of the world. Without Cole's success, for instance, it's doubtful that **Diane Schuur** could have mustered the interest or lucre to record her lavishly produced new one, *Love Songs* (GRP GRD-9713; 44:43; ★★★). This album basks, unabashedly, in the tradition of lushly arranged vocal projects for your dining and dancing pleasure. All the trimmings that GRP's money can buy are here: the strings, the horns, soloists like underrated tenor titan Pete Christlieb, Tom Scott, Roger Kellaway, and Jack Sheldon, not to mention Schuur's robust vocal heft and thickly basted vibrato. The operative word is rich, but not filling. Highlights include "Prelude To A Kiss" and the gently quirky arrangement of "Our Love Is Here to Stay."

In the current standards-friendly atmosphere, perhaps it was inevitable that **Diana Ross**—that would-be Billie Holiday of the big screen—would toss her hat into the ring. *Live—Stolen Moments* (Motown 374636340; 73:13; ★★½) features Ross' perfunctory readings of 19 of her favorite classic tunes, dating mostly from the '20s to the '40s. Possessed of a serviceable voice, by jazz standards, Ross has the clout and good sense to hire the best. But she packs so many tunes into the package there isn't much time left to give proper stretching room to her sterling backup band, which includes Jon Faddis, Slide Hampton, Roy Hargrove, and Barry Harris. The album is more valuable as a primer for the repertoire than as an example of what makes for good jazz singing.

Eden Atwood, at the ripe age of 22, is a gifted and lovely singer with an abiding affection for her repertoire of standards and show tunes. Her new *No One Ever Tells You* (Concord Jazz 4560; 52:43; ★★★), originally released as *Today* on the Southport label, takes its title from a tune written by her late songwriter father, Hubbard Atwood. She tackles material both familiar—cheeky versions of "Old Devil Moon" and "Them There Eyes," here, a scating vehicle—and such lesser-circulated gems as "Ballad Of The Sad Young Men," recently revived on Rickie Lee Jones' unique standards package, *Pop Pop*. Atwood has some sterling Chicago-based talent on board, including the venerable Von Freeman providing saxophonic poetry on



Sheila Jordan: a heartfelt valentine

Hubbard Atwood's "I Was The Last One To Know," and Eden's own "Nothing's Changed." If still in search of a personal style, Atwood is someone to watch out for.

And then there is the Kansas City singer **Karrin Allyson**, whose *I Didn't Know About You* (Concord Jazz 4543; 61:20; ★★★★★) is a portrait of an artist as a young woman with subtlety running hot in her veins. Displaying a cool sense of swing and an overall restraint that accents the nuances of tone and phrasing, Allyson resists the temptation to go in for the overkill. Instead, she finds such fruitful avenues to expression as her darkly lustrous merging of "Chopin Prelude Op. 28 No. 4/Irisensatez," with the singer on piano and singing in Portuguese. Her collaborators include such impressive regional talents as flugelhornist Mike Metheny and the twin-guitar lineup of Interstring. On the vocal-drum duet (with drummer Todd Strait) of "What A Little Moonlight Can Do," Allyson breaks out with some dazzling spontaneous vocal choreography, and then veers back in for the sly saloon lament of Randy Newman's "Guilty." Throughout the album, Allyson serves up variety, invention, and an appealing discreet use of an instrument worth checking out.

In the veteran's corner, there is **Sheila Jordan**, an eminent stylist who's too smart to get trapped in whirlpools of mere stylization. Her spartan but brilliant new *Songs From Within* (MA 14A:65:51; ★★★★★½) makes an indelible impression, despite—and partly because of—its stripped-down format of voice and bass, that of Harvey Swartz. Recorded in 1989, before the fine recording projects of Nancy King and Glen Moore popularized the voice-bass approach, the album is a heartfelt valentine to jazz, relying on the beauty of economy to tell its story. Jordan sings songs that bow to the legacy of jazz, starting with "Dedication" and continuing with her own lyrical ode to Sonny Rollins via his "St. Thomas." Jordan also digs deep into familiar terrain like "If You Could See Me Now" and "We'll Be Together Again," showing a completely renewed passion born of coolness and naked wonder, with Swartz filling in any perceived lack of a harmonic instrument. It's a precious thing in a lean package. **DB**



John Patitucci

ANOTHER WORLD—GRP GRD-9725: *IVORY COAST, PART 1; IVORY COAST, PART 2; ANOTHER WORLD; MY SUMMER VACATION; SOHO STEEL; I SAW YOU; HOLD THAT THOUGHT; NORWEGIAN SUN; THE GRIOT; SHOWTIME; PEACE PRAYER; SHANACHIE; UNTIL THEN.* (52:05)

Personnel: Patitucci, basses, keyboards (13); John Beasley, keyboards; Armand Sabal-Lecco, basses (3,9,10); Alex Acuna, Luis Conte, percussion; Steve Tavaglione, Michael Brecker (9), saxophones; Jeff Beal, trumpet (6,7,12); Will Kennedy, Dave Weckl (7,12), drums; Andy Narell, steel drums (5).

★ ★ ★ ★

Jimmy Haslip

ARC—GRP GRD-9726: *OUTLAND; OLD TOWN; NINOS; LEAP; ORANGE GUITARS; I DREAMT OF YOU; MATHA; RED CLOUD; MARKET STREET; HANNAH'S HOUSE.* (57:00)

Personnel: Haslip, basses, keyboards, percussion; Vince Mendoza, keyboards, guitar; Judd Miller, EVI trumpet, keyboards; Peter Erskine, drums; Luis Conte, percussion; Randy Brecker (1,7,8), Chuck Findley (9), trumpet; Lenny Pickett, alto sax (2); Bob Mintzer, woodwinds (3,8,9); Joshua Redman, tenor sax (5); Dave Samuels, vibes (3); Andy Narell, steel drums (4); John Scofield, guitar (5,6); John Beasley, piano (6,10); Steve Croes, keyboards (2,7).

★ ★ ★ ★

An anchor of the Elektric and Akoustic groups over the last decade, Patitucci makes some real classy moves on *Another World*. The disc starts on a wide-open Acuna/Conte percussion jam that foreshadows the great grooves to come. He brings in another bassist to jam—the superb piccolo and tenor bassist Armand Sabal-Lecco. Patitucci gives him all kinds of space, supporting him lushly on six-string on the mysterious “Another World,” and staying out of the way as Sabal-Lecco duels with M. Brecker on “The Griot,” supported by the formidable rhythm section of Acuna, Conte, and Kennedy. Equally spellbinding is the darting funk of “Hold That Thought,” which features former bandmate Weckl, expressive and quite firmly laid in the groove. Trumpeter/orchestrator Jeff Beal helps create a techno-village space on “Shanachie.” Looking for a bass statement? Well, there’s the glitz of “Showtime”; but for a truer picture try the understated, gorgeous “Peace Prayer.”

Jimmy Haslip comes out ready to rumble on “Outland,” which is “in” but has a sincere, deadly, funky bite. With the Yellowjackets, Haslip has always been the solid foundation, an extremely colorful player whose steady improvement on fretless electric has meant another fine solo voice for the band. Co-

producing his first solo album with the hot orchestrator Vince Mendoza, the bassist makes good personnel moves (Pickett, Scofield, J. Redman, Erskine), keeps arranging overkill to a tolerable level, and puts out a release that is different from but easily as satisfying as recent Jacket spins. Lenny Pickett walls buckets on the slightly swinging funk of “Old Town,” co-written by Haslip and Jacket drummer Will Kennedy. Haslip doubles and harmonizes the melody with precision and

heart. Mendoza does some great writing for Joshua Redman and John Scofield on “Orange Guitars” as an offbeat edge is maintained throughout. On “I Dreamt Of You” the guitarist lurks, dives in, and splashes all over the pool—but when the layers of strings start piling up, some of the momentum is lost. For the most part, the playing by Haslip and guests, even on a lengthy, slow-starting ballad vehicle like “Matha,” comes off sounding inspired rather than indulgent.

—Robin Talleson

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Mingus uh huh!

by Bill Shoemaker

The release of *Mingus Ah Um* in 1959 is often cited as **Charles Mingus'** entry into the elite ranks of jazz composers. This is partly due to RCA having sat on 57's *Tijuana Moods*, and Atlantic for *Blues And Roots*, which was recorded three months prior to this first album for Columbia. Otherwise, Mingus' ascent may have occurred sooner, or seemed less dramatic, as Mingus had spent the '50s reining in his powerful vision of jazz composition. Collectively, Mingus' four sessions for Columbia that year coalesced aspects of earlier work into a unified whole. Brought together on *The Complete 1959 CBS Charles Mingus Sessions* (Mosaic MQ4-143; total time: 2:36:17: ★★★★★), it's a body of work that truly belongs in the pantheon of jazz recordings.

The sessions, which also produced the equally sterling *Mingus Dynasty*, yielded such well-known classics as "Better Git It In Your Soul," "Fables Of Faubus," and "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," which appears here for the first time in unedited form. But, that's just for starters. "Open Letter To Duke" is a fluidly executed triptych of simmering changes showcasing Booker Ervin's bluesy, brawny tenor saxophone, smoldering balladry featuring John Handy's glowing-ember alto, and a Spanish-tinged vamp that could easily be slipped onto a Henry Threadgill disc. "Portrait In Three Colors" is a thoroughly notated piece that places three contrasting melodies in a round. Along with pieces like "Far Wells, Mill Valley"—which Mingus thought enough of to devote a large chunk of his notes for *Mingus Dynasty* to, detailing its intricate structure and the specific demands on the soloists (the notes are included in the accompanying 16-page, info-rich booklet)—these works constituted what was then Mingus' most persuasive portfolio as a jazz composer.

The ensembles Mingus assembled for these dates were among his very best. The *Ah Um* sessions featured the flexible front line of Ervin, Handy, Shafi Hadji, who played alto and tenor, and, splitting the 'bone duties, Jimmy Knepper and Willie Dennis. Ervin, Handy, and Knepper also performed on *Dynasty*, which features nonets and tentets that included, among others, trumpeters Don Ellis and Richard Williams, flutist Jerome Richardson, vibist Teddy Charles, and cellists Maurice Brown and Seymour Barab. Assisting Mingus to provide the rousing rhythmic urgency of the dates were pianists Horace Parlan (*Ah Um*) and Roland Hanna (*Dynasty*), and the patented pulse of drummer Dannie Richmond.

Because of a limited licensing agreement, *The Complete 1959 CBS Charles Mingus Sessions* has been issued in a vinyl-only edition of 2,500 copies. The four "Q" discs are hefty and expertly pressed; their crisp, enveloping sound is a reminder why many audiophiles remain LP purists. (Mosaic Records: 35 Melrose Place, Stamford, CT 06902)

The Mingus Octet cuts from '53 that make up the first half of *Debut Rarities, Volume 1* (Debut OJCCD-1807-2; 54:08: ★★★★★) are ambi-



Charlie Mingus: rousing, rhythmic, roucou

tious, but are polite by Mingus' later standards, particularly the impressionistic balladry of "Blue Tide," and the cool-hued bop of "Pink Topsy" and "Miss Bliss." Only "Eclipse," which features singer Janet Thurlow, has the provocative edge of Mingus' mature work, as the svelte lyricism of the song collides with the bold orchestral interludes scored by the date's arranger, pianist Spaulding Givens (aka Nadi Qamar). "Eclipse" fully utilizes the tandem work of Mingus and cellist Jackson Wiley, the fluid front line of Dennis, trumpeter Ernie Royal, and wind players Eddie Caine and Teo Macero, as well as the sensitivity of John Lewis and Kenny Clarke. The remainder of the disc features a robust Knepper-led quintet, with Mingus, Richmond, altoist Joe Maini, and pianist Bill Triglia.

The four Mingus compositions included on the co-op *Jazz Composers Workshop* (Savoy SV-9171; 42:01: ★★★★★) are both more adventurous and well-honed. Waxec in '54 with a sextet including reedists John La Porta, Teo Macero, and George Barrow, pianist Mal Waldron, and drummer Rudy Nichols, they have a more elastic relationship between scored and improvised materials. "Purple Heart" is a polished nugget of sophisticated swing, where the horns provide a lead line behind another's solo. "Gregorian Chant," "Getting Together," and "Eulogy For Rudy Williams" are challenging works even by today's standards, full of intricate voicings and textures catalysed by an exacting use of improvisation: the former two support the view that Mingus was a progenitor of free jazz. In addition to Mingus' intriguing arrangement of "Tea For Two," the album is rounded out by four tunes of passing interest by pianist Wally Cirillo, aided by Mingus, Macero, and Kenny Clarke.

Debut Rarities, Volume 2 (Debut OJCCD 1808-2; 49:04: ★★★★★) features Mingus in '51 duets with Givens, a florid, facile pianist, and in '53 trios rounded out by Max Roach. This is a comparatively soporific collection, though Mingus' numerous solos make it suggested listening for students of Mingus the virtuoso. **DB**

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Tom Varner

THE MYSTERY OF COMPASSION—Soul Note 121217-2: *How Does Power Work?*; *Water And Wood*; *Fool's Oasis*; *A Severed Arm*; *The Well*; *Death At The Right Time*; *Control Passion*; *Plunge*; *\$1000 Hat*; *Prayer*. (74:35)

Personnel: Varner, french horn; Ed Jackson, Matt Darriau (6), alto saxophone; Rich Rothenberg, Ellery Eskelin (6), tenor saxophone; Mike Richmond, bass; Tom Rainey, drums; Jim Hartog, baritone saxophone (6); Steve Swell, trombone (6,10); Dave Taylor, bass trombone (6,10); Mark Feldman, violin (5).

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

What a thoroughly enjoyable listening experience! French horn player Tom Varner demonstrates his prowess as a studied composer, thoughtful arranger, and ardent bandleader here with 10 very different pieces. They range in length from "Plunge," the under-a-minute quickie of overdubbed french horn howls, to the

14-minute "\$1000 Hat," which entrancingly swings. The stylistic span is most evident in the shift from "A Severed Arm" to the next track, "The Well." The former is a brief but exhilarating run through what could pass for the soundtrack to a demented grade-C comic-horror flick (stalking beat and slashing lines) while the latter is a concerto informed by classical music about an interchange between a black congregation in New York and a church in South Africa.

Varner even effortlessly negotiates his band through changing forms within a composition, such as when the upbeat "How Does Power Work?" already full flight into an upbeat groove, suddenly blooms into an ecstatic New Orleans romp. He generously trains the spotlight on several ensemble members. Mike Richmond gets lots of room to explore the many voices of his bass on "Water And Wood," the rest of the band pretty much gets out of the way for guest violinist Mark Feldman's evocative soloing on "The Well," and Rich Rothenberg shines on tenor sax on the swinging, tempo-shifting "Fool's Oasis."

Varner also effectually modifies ensemble size when he doubles his quintet for "Death At The Right Time," opting for lots of bass-end support from Jim Hartog's baritone sax, Steve Swell's trombone, and Dave Taylor's bass trombone. Swell and Taylor stick around to join Varner for a convergence of low tones on the meditative and sublimely beautiful "Prayer," the perfect end piece to a superb outing.

—Dan Ouellette

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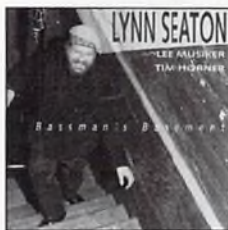
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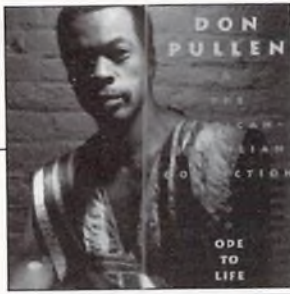


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Don Pullen & the African-Brazilian Connection

ODE TO LIFE—Blue Note B4-89233: *THE THIRD HOUSE ON THE RIGHT; PARATY; EL MATADOR; AH GEORGE, WE HARDLY KNEW YA; ASEKOL (GET UP AND DANCE); ANASTASIA/PYRAMID; VARIATION ON ODE TO LIFE.* (58:39)
Personnel: Pullen, piano; Carlos Ward, alto sax, flute; Nilson Matta, bass; Guilherme Franco,

drums, percussion; Mor Thiam, percussion.

★★★

Don Pullen

MILANO STRUT—Black Saint 120028-2: *CONVERSATION; COMMUNICATION; MILANO STRUT; CURVE ELEVEN (FOR GIUSEPPI).* (40:55)
Personnel: Pullen, piano, organ; Famoudou Don Moye, drums, percussion.

★★★ 1/2

Sometimes I wonder about Don Pullen. The pianist's unmistakable command of his instrument has resulted in a 29-year body of work that, while indeed vast, has been somewhat hard to pin down. It's what I've begun to call the "Pullen Enigma": One minute he's "inside," the next he's "out." Interestingly, however, looking over the fruitful alliances he's cultivated in the past (with the departed George Adams, and more recently David Murray), he seems infinitely more comfortable and compelling when playing devil's advocate to the adventurous—from the inside corner.

The markedly differing musics on these releases, recorded some 14 years apart, attest to Pullen's will to perplex. *Ode To Life* is the second showcase for his new African-Brazilian Connection, a quintet that places Pullen in the company of musicians (read: rhythms) from the cultures in the group's title. But while the program adheres to the band's previous formula (each of the participants brought in a tune), the proceedings are a bit more tame. Those ringing upper-end runs and clusters we normally associate with Pullen are scarce; what replaces them is generally rhapsodic and reflective—most assuredly in remembrance of Adams. Consequently, the ensuing silkiness is by turns harmonically accessible (Pullen's own "Ah George, We Hardly Knew Ya"), danceably placid (Carlos Ward's "Anastasia/Pyramid"), and pleasantly exotic (Mor Thiam's "Aseekol!").

On the other hand, two strikingly disparate faces of serenity are present on *Milano Strut*, a 1978 duet session with Art Ensemble of Chicago percussionist Famoudou Don Moye. The title track's soulful organ textures provide a startling counterpoint to the majestic hand drumming and elegiac pianistics that precede it on the aptly titled "Communication." Both pieces, however, are a welcome relief from the opening "Conversation," which sounds more like an argument. But closing out on "Curve Eleven (For Giuseppe)," a crashing piano/drum introduction leads Moye into deft brushstrokes, matching taut sputters with Pullen's dreamy organ fills. Then, utilizing an arsenal of little instruments, the percussionist moves from solicitous jingle to sunny clatter to keep pace with the pianist's shifts from organ to piano and back again. It's a 13-minute lesson in how to listen to a musician who always keeps us guessing.

—K. Leander Williams



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DOWN BEAT'S 58th ANNUAL READERS POLL on page 50

Trio Triage

by Jon Andrews

A piano trio is like a Rorschach test—a prime opportunity for personal expression. Wearing his heart on his sleeve, **Michel Camilo** plays with unrestrained emotion and exuberance. *Rendezvous* (Columbia 53754; 49:47: ★★★★★) reunites the Dominican pianist with the rhythm section of drummer Dave Weckl and, on contrabass guitar, Anthony Jackson, for a heated, all-out exploration of Caribbean rhythms. Camilo's love of bold gestures and bravado, manifest in tunes like "Caravan," "Tropical Jam," and "As One," shouldn't obscure the range and complexity of his playing. Weckl's presence only encourages reference to Chick Corea's buoyant Latin themes. The drummer's hyperactive style matches Camilo's enthusiasm perfectly, and is prominently featured in the mix. If a little short on subtlety, *Rendezvous* is effective, crowd-pleasing fun.

Fred Hersch is as much an unabashed romantic as Camilo, but *Dancing In The Dark* (Chesky 90; 68:27: ★★★★★) is as subtle and introspective as *Rendezvous* is boisterous. Hersch loves standards and embroiders tunes like "My Funny Valentine" and the title track with a sensitivity and attention to detail that recall Bill Evans' trio work. The pianist takes pride in using lyrics to develop his approach to a song. Hersch dominates this trio, with the rhythm section of bassist Drew Gress and drummer Tom Rainey often sounding distant, relegated to timekeeping with few solos. "Out Of Nowhere," however, takes the trio about as far outside as Hersch will go, and allows for an open interaction and an eerie texture.

For adventurous spirit and balance, it's hard to top **Michele Rosewoman's** trio, which includes expressive playing by bassist Rufus Reid and explosive drumming from Ralph Peterson. *Occasion To Rise* (Evidence 22042-2; 57:20: ★★★★★½) removes Rosewoman from her Quintessence group and its M-BASE saxophonists, but doesn't sacrifice energy in the process. Rosewoman's playing has an aggressive edge throughout, as well as a flair for melodrama and swing. The rapport in the trio, particularly between Rosewoman and Peterson, is exceptional given the "pickup" nature of this 1990 session. Starting with Coltrane's "Lazy Bird," the pace and charge in the performances don't let up. Rosewoman's take on "Prelude To A Kiss" suggests Ellington as heard through Cecil Taylor, and her originals reference interests in r&b and African music.

Karl Berger's easy transitions between piano and vibraphone create an intriguing duality on *Crystal Fire* (enja 7029-2; 60:39: ★★★★★). Berger's long associations with Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, and free music are most evident when Berger plays vibes. Berger's "Crystal Fire Suite" improvises from simple folk melodies, reminiscent of Ornette, supported by liberating, urgent accompaniment from Dave Holland and the late Ed Blackwell. Like crystal, Berger's tone is hard, shimmering, and a bit icy. The piano tracks bring out a warmer, more conventional facet of Berger's music, including a waltz ("Primordial Inno-



Michele Rosewoman: adventurous spirit

cense") and a gentle ballad ("I Don't Want To Be Alone"). It's interesting to compare Berger's phrasing and attack as he alternates between vibes and piano. Each way, there's flow and logic, but Berger brings pianistic qualities to the vibraphone.

Call **Todd Coolman's** group a bass trio. For

his first date as a leader, after several years with James Moody, Coolman wanted a bass-oriented session, and *Tomorrows* (BRC International 9105; 45:48: ★★★★★½) centers on Coolman's elastic bass sound. He claims Oscar Pettiford as a primary influence, and places a strong focus on melody in his playing. Consequently, Coolman introduces themes, and solos extensively and persuasively. Pianist Renee Rosnes and drummer Lewis Nash adjust to emphasize time and rhythm. Rosnes comes effectively and adds flourishes in a somewhat limited role. Pettiford figures in Coolman's choice of tunes and use of cello, including Pettiford's "Now See How You Are," arranged as a double-tracked bass/cello duet.

Frank Carlberg's trio offers a spare, ruminate sound, with the Finnish pianist's formality and precision suggesting Keith Jarrett in a dark mood (with humming and grunting included). *Blind Drive* (Accurate 4400; 59:18: ★★★★★) is pervaded by a certain tension in Carlberg's attack. Original compositions are terse, using silences and clipped phrasing to create an edgy, tentative mood. Carlberg transforms two Monk tunes into ominous visions, but omits Monk's sense of rhythm. Only with his fluid, wonderful treatment of Herbie Nichols' "2300 Skiddoo" does Carlberg seem to relax and establish a flow. **DB**

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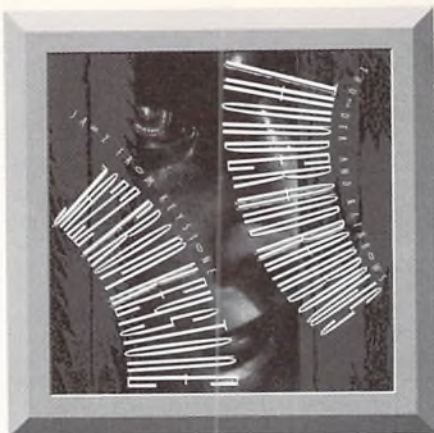


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Clark Terry

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Personnel: Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn; Al Grey, trombone; Lesa Terry, violin; Da Do Mononi, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

JIVE AT FIVE—enja 6042-2: *JIVE AT FIVE; LATE DATE; SOPHISTICATED LADY; LOVE YOU MADLY; COTTONTAIL; COTTONTAIL 2; CUTE; CUTE 2; BIG 'N THE BEAR; PRELUDE TO A KISS; LESTER LEAPS IN.* (56:00)

Personnel: Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn; Red Mitchell, bass, piano, vocals.

★ ★ 1/2

Clark Terry revisits some of the less-visited specialty pieces Ellington concocted for him and others in the '40s and '50s on the 1993 session with Al Grey, *What A Wonderful World*. "Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool," originally a coy pairing of Terry with violinist Ray Nance at Newport in 1958, gets a welcome lift of tempo from the original. His cousin Lesa Terry plays very nicely, taking the violin part of either Mr. Gentle or Mr. Cool. "Baby Clementine" is actually the Billy Strayhorn "Clementine" recorded in 1941, with lyrics added and the title adjusted. "Star Crossed Lovers" dates from 1957 and was Johnny Hodges' part in Duke's *Such Sweet Thunder* suite. A couple of minor Armstrong pieces fill out the program.

The album starts out with swinging promise and mostly delivers. Terry's low-key precision remains flawless, and Al Grey is a fine foil. The leader's singing is another matter, though. In person, I love watching Terry sing, because he's a great natural entertainer. But entertainers must be taken whole to be appreciated, which is why even the greatest of them have rarely thrived in the captivity of a record. Recording is a musician's medium, not an entertainer's. And this album is not well-served by mixing the two.

Terry also co-stars with Red Mitchell on *Jive At Five* in 11 duos. An interlude or even a track of bass and horn can be intriguing enough. But this is simply too slender a thread on which to hang nearly an hour of playing time, even in the hands of two such masters as these. The title track and "Lester Leaps In" (one of only two open-horn pieces) are the best of this 1990 session. In between Terry plays almost entirely muted trumpet when some acoustic variety is sorely needed. Mitchell's work is clever and clean. If you relish long stretches of bass, add

another couple of stars to the above rating. But, and despite, flashes of simpatico, this duo fails to sustain either tension or interest over what seems like a long haul. —John McDonough



George Benson

LOVE REMEMBERS—Warner Bros. 26685: *I'LL BE GOOD TO YOU; GOT TO BE THERE; MY HEART IS DANCING; LOVE OF MY LIFE; KISS AND MAKE UP; COME INTO MY WORLD; LOVE REMEMBERS; WILLING TO FIGHT; SOMEWHERE ISLAND; LOVIN' ON BORROWED TIME; LOST IN LOVE; CALLING YOU.*

Personnel: Benson, guitar, vocals; Nathan East, Will Lee, Abe Laboriel, bass; Bob James, Richard Tee, Steven Benson Hue, keyboards; Wah Wah Watson, guitar; Harvey Mason, John Robinson, drums; Randy Brecker, flugelhorn; Chuck Findley, trumpet; Kirk Whalum, saxophone; Hubert Laws, flute; Paulinho da Costa, percussion; Daryl Tookes, vocals.

★ ★ 1/2

Benson must long for that fan who can appreciate the swift-fingered George of "Affirmation" as well as the sweat-dripping crooner of "Turn Your Love Around," the Benson Burner and the Broadway Benson.

The only sad thing about *Love Remembers* for the fans of Benson's guitar work is that there isn't more of it. He's certainly in good chops, as shown on the modern fusion of "My Heart Is Dancing," the gospel funk of "Willing To Fight," and spunky Latin feel of "Somewhere Island," which he Wesmerizes. He puts a strong melodic push and flourishes on the instrumental ballad "Love Of My Life," which winds up more than a bit over-arranged. In the hard-to-take category, "Got To Be There" suffers from a generally bad arrangement. "Lovin' On Borrowed Time" was doomed from the start, and "Love Of My Life" is kind of like watching that kids' show with the big purple dinosaur—it's too damned sweet.

But the opener, "I'll Be Good To You" (not the Brothers Johnson tune), is a biting piece of contemporary pop-funk, and the album-closing "Calling You" has a different, sort of chilling side that I hope Benson will explore further.

—Robin Tolleson

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Moist Music

by John Corbett

Why is the word "dry" permanently affixed to the front of the word "academic"? For the listener with an inquisitive mind and a willingness to part with standard categories, slight probing reveals a less-dehydrated area in between those musics commonly known as classical and jazz. Certainly, anyone with an interest in Cecil Taylor, Anthony Braxton, or John Zorn has sufficient cause and motive to dip into the moist music of academic composers such as Iannis Xenakis, Elliott Carter, and Helmut Lachenmann



PHOTO BY WELZ

Karlheinz Stockhausen: cinematic

For instance, take a sip of composer **Charles Wuorinen**, someone whose reputation is mightily arid, parched even, but whose music proves otherwise. On *Five/Archangel/Archaeopteryx/Hyperion* (Koch International Classics 3-7110-2H1; 68:38: ★★★★★^{1/2}) we discover a supple sensualist and beautiful orchestrator, not at all caught in the snares of arcane acrobatic mathematics. "Five" plays Fred Sherry's delicate, lightly amped cello against a buoyant orchestral score; David Taylor blows his scrumptious bass-bone with string quartet on "Archangel" and with a 10-piece chamber group on the exquisite "Archaeopteryx." Coupled with Jonathan Harvey's distinctly non-Scelsi-ish, (mostly) one-note First String Quartet and ex-jazz pianist Wayne Peterson's playful First String Quartet on *The Group For Contemporary Music* (Koch 3-7121-2H1; 59:01: ★★★★★), Wuorinen's Second String Quartet uses a panoply of expressive materials, readily blending standard harmony and hobby rhythms with craggy dissonances and splendid sheets of sound.

Known as one of the world's finest instrumentalists, German oboist **Heinz Holliger** is also an accomplished composer. His two-disc *Scardanelli-Zyklus* (ECM 437 441; 68:59/70:33: ★★★★★) revolves around texts by Friedrich Hölderlin. Like Wuorinen, Holliger draws from the complete compositional tool kit, utilizing new and old techniques wherever musically appropriate but never turning such combinations into a gimmick. A slowly unfolding patchwork of moods, the piece interdigitates five different compositions written between 1975 and 1991, including music for solo

flute, small orchestra, and tape, and a stunning seasons-cycle for a-capella choir

Two "post-Soviet" composers, Georgian **Giya Kancheli** and Russian **Alfred Schnittke**, share viola soloist Kim Kashkashian on *Vom Winde Beweint/Konzert Für Viola und Orchester* (ECM 437 199; 67:30: ★★★★★^{1/2}). They, too, use a mishmash of methods; big, bold romanticisms jump out of Kancheli's "Vom Winde Beweint," sometimes with a bit too much bombast, while Schnittke (currently the most fashionable of the newer Eastern European com-

posers, and justifiably so) is more subtle, his postmodern pastiche of styles bearing better fruit and evoking a tremendous performance from Kashkashian.

Karlheinz Stockhausen's *MICHAELS REISE* (ECM 437 188; 49:04: ★★★★★) is scored for solo trumpet—specifically Markus Stockhausen, K'heinz's son, a virtuoso player and improviser who has also worked with Evan Parker—10 accompanists (including two synthesizers) and "sound-projection" by Stockhausen-the-elder. It sports unusually lush,

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sometimes cinematic passages, an unwavering sense of narrative, and just a taste of the obstinate, immobile quality that made Stockhausen's name a couple of decades ago.

More simple and austere is **Maria De Alvear's** solo-piano work *En Amor Duro* (hat ART CD 6112; 50:00: ★★½). Full of dark introspection and mellow drama, the five-part piece drifts nebulously between temperaments until the final section, which consists of two minutes of complete silence. Hildegard KleeB yanks a passionate performance out of the Spanish composer's dreamy, repetitive score. **Morton Feldman's** brilliant, three-and-a-half hour *For Christian Wolff* (hat ART CD 3-61201/61202/61203; 68:16/69:07/65:17: ★★★★★) takes repetition and minimal material to another level altogether. Following the path of much of his late work, this quiet piece—written in 1986 for flute, piano, and celesta and rendered marvelously by Eberhard Blum and Nils Vigeland—toys with the edges of memory, coaxing the listener into a false sense of tonal security, a feeling that periodically vanishes as the harmonic material undergoes slight shifts in emphasis.

Finally, for evidence of the spectrum covered by contemporary composition, check out **Anne LeBaron's** *Rana, Ritual And Revelations* (mode 30; 73:25: ★★★★★). Some of harpist LeBaron's compositions incorporate elements of Asian string and wind music ("Lamentation/Invocation," "Noh Reflections"), though the disc's standout is "Concerto For Active Frogs," a rumination on rumbler, squeakers, and peepers with Curlew's George Cartwright on saxes and animal calls, Jim Staley on trombone, William Trigg on percussion, David Shea on baritone voice, and a full pond of chorus members, both human and amphibian. So much for the dryness of academic music. **DB**

Roll 'Em Bags
by Howard Mandel

Vibist **Milt Jackson** is inarguably a jazz great: an unmistakable stylist, an innovator on his instrument, and a force since the dawn of bebop in bringing modernism into the cultural mainstream. It's a pleasure to listen again to this classic reissued material in light of his new release, *Reverence And Compassion* (Qwest/Reprise 45204; 69:42: ★★½).

A program of originals, blues, and middlebrow standards ("Young & Foolish," "Here's That Rainy Day," etc.) tipped towards A.C. and lite-FM formats, *Reverence And Compassion* sets the Master amid sympathetic accompaniment from pianist Cedar Walton, bassist John Clayton, and drummer Billy Hart, with spare horn charts by Clayton and utterly unnecessary strings penned by Jeremy Lubbock (and Clayton on "This Masquerade"). "Reverence" is brisk, showing off Walton on "Y&F." Bags' breaks flow out of unobtrusive horns. Then "Little Girl Blue" brings on an orchestra from a Hollywood soundstage. On the George Benson hit, flutes add nothing of substance.

"J.C." is Bags' major-scale theme, and the bassist/dedicatée bows in an arco out-chorus. "Cedar Lane" and "How Do You Keep The Music Playing" are notable for Bags' conversational phrasing, Clayton's deep sound, and Higgins' brushes, which the strings occasionally obscure. Walton's "Newest Blues" frisks at an uptempo, and "Bullet Bag" is Bags' swinging chromatic blues. Jackson's ballad "Compassion" and "Rainy Day" end the CD in a makeout mood.

Milt Jackson + Count Basie + The Big Band, Vol. 1 (Pablo OJCCD-740-2; 42:00: ★★★★★½) and *Vol. 2* (Pablo OJCCD-741-2; 43:00: ★★★★★½), both recorded January 18, 1978, share the bluesy, laid-back, seemingly spontaneous consistency that is Basie's legacy. With the Freddie Green/John Clayton/Butch Miles rhythm section, soloists including Waymon Reed, Dennis Wilson, and Kenny Hing, and with such repertoire as "Corner Pocket," "Lil Darlin'," "Easy Does It," and "Shiny Stockings," there's nothing to recommend one CD over the other. Bags floats over and through well-turned ensembles, Basie flicks at the keys, the heat increases from a simmer to a boil. Each disc alone is so satisfying one longs for more.

Statements (Impulse! GRD 130; 54:29: ★★★★★) finds Bags in focused combos from '61 and '64: MJQ drummer Connie Kay with Hank Jones and Paul Chambers (from '61), or Tommy Flanagan and Richard Davis (from '64), Jimmy Heath's on four of the latter's tracks; there's a rare Flanagan trio track with neither of them. Telepathically hard-pressing, bluesy, lean, and emphatic, no one wastes a note or misses the groove in a handpicked selection of great songs. Van Gelder's perfect sound remains intact.

The Savoy's, whose remastered sound is exceptionally clean but whose liner info remains uncorrected, feature coherent programs as well as several house combos whose work over six years was split across many albums. Bags solos, blends, and acts as catalyst on them all.

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FRY/GLASER

Bags with Dizzy Gillespie at the Spotlight, 1946

hep, Jackson with drummer Kenny Clarke, fleet-yet-husky tenorist Lucky Thompson, pianist Hank Jones, and bassist Wendell Marshall open *The Jazz Skyline* (Savoy Jazz 0173; 37:45 ★★★★★), recorded in January '56, by waltzing "Lover" into a fast four. The whole program has a deftness that proves this band was on Bags' counterlines introducing "The Lady Is A Tramp," and offsetting "Sometimes I'm Happy," are especially choice.

Meet Milt Jackson (0172; 37:26: ★★★) unites cuts from '56 (Wade Legge replacing Hank Jones; best is the lengthy "Soulful"); "Telefunken Blues" from '55 arranged by Ernie Wilkins (Bags is credited for piano and vibes); Bags crooning "I've Lost Your Love" from a '54 session (without the listed horns), and three septet cuts stirred by drummer Roy Haynes from '49. These collected odds and ends cruise mostly at mid-tempo.

Opus De Jazz (0109; 33:43: ★★★★★), a quintet date from '55 with Frank Wess securing his flute reputation, Hank Jones, Kenny Clarke, and bassist Eddie Jones, is an extremely tasty chamber work. Don't be put off by the short playing time—every note is just right. Horace Silver's "Opus De Funk" has a memorable line and brilliant extensions for 13:22; "You Leave Me Breathless" is pearly, warm, and slow; "Opus And Interlude" is ultimate '50s.

Telefunken Blues (0106; 37:47: ★★★), nominally drummer Clarke's disc, is titled for the same Ernie Wilkins-charted cut that appears on *Meet MJ*, with a bluesy sextet featuring Wess on tenor and flute, bari saxman Charlie Fowlkes, trombonist Henry Coker, and bassist Eddie Jones. A '54 sextet with Klook, Bags, altoist Frank Morgan, tenorist Walter Benton, pianist Gerald Wiggins, and bassist Percy Heath blows four hard-bop numbers, too. The arrangements' touches maintain interest, but the highlights reach only modest peaks.

First recordings by *The Modern Jazz Quartet* (0111; 36:12: ★★★★★) from August and September '51 include Ray Brown on bass (with drummer Clarke) and Al Johns on drums (with bassist Percy Heath), respectively. By April '52 Bags, pianist John Lewis, Heath, and Clarke were a solid team. All three units got four tunes on the MJQ's first release, which features standards ("Softly, As In A Morning Sunrise," "Heart And Soul," "Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea") and an early, out-of-tune "Round Midnight." The MJQ concept is already fixed: Lewis sets the tone and pace, Bags lends them his edge.

Roll 'Em Bags (0110; 34:10: ★★★½)—six cuts by Jackson's '49 sextet fronted by trum-

peter Kenny Dorham, french horn player Julius Watkins, and tenor saxist Billy Mitchell, with three from the later Jackson/Lucky Thompson/Wade Legge quintet—doesn't give the big group more than three minutes at a stretch, while the small one gets five-to-six-minutes-plus. Bags takes credit for almost every song, yet the sextet is more an ensemble than a star's turn. Meanwhile, his vibe style is full-blown. With age Bags' phrases have gotten longer and more detailed, but their shape's the same.

Howard McGhee & Milt Jackson (0167;

31:29: ★★★) offers eight tracks by a sextet of Bags with Maggie's wide-open trumpet and Jimmy Heath playing alto and baritone saxes, plus four tracks by McGhee with Billy Eckstine, tenorist Kenny Mann, Hank Jones, Ray Brown, and JC Heard (no Milt Jackson in sight). Both sessions date from February '48. The young vibist's sound is lighter than we've come to expect, but he's plenty fluid. To new listeners, this document may seem dredged from the dark ages; actually, it sings clearly across time.

DB

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Kamikaze Ground Crew

MADAM MARIE'S TEMPLE OF KNOWLEDGE—New World 80438-2: *Cowboys; Some Wild Water; Tears And Tango; A Man A Plan; Poppa Dance; Blue Lake Dances; Cloud; Baby Doll Lounge; Too Much Time In Brooklyn; Homage Au Soleil; Chorale; You Are My Sunshine.* (62:13)

Personnel: Steven Bernstein, trumpet, slide trumpet, cornet, flugelhorn; Ralph Carney, alto and tenor saxes, clarinet, harmonica, toy piano; Jeff Cressman, trombone; Danney Frankel, drums, percussion, whistle; Bob Lipton, tuba; Gina Leishman, alto sax, bass clarinet, piccolo, accordion, piano, toy piano, vocals; Doug Wiesel-

man, soprano, tenor, and baritone saxes, clarinet, E-flat clarinet, castanets.

★ ★ ★ ★

It's nothing to say a band is eclectic nowadays—so many of them are—but with six horn players and a percussionist, Kamikaze Ground Crew spoons their naturalistic American music right out of the melting pot in which we're all stewing.

Formed 10 years ago as the pit band for the Flying Karamazov Brothers, with whom they still perform, the ensemble (co-founded by Gina Leishman and Doug Wieselman) creates their own musical theater on this album, their fourth, invoking a tango, a carnival calliope, Native American ceremonial music, a brass choir, and, on "Baby Doll Lounge," a Kurt Weill-like cabaret scene, with Leishman as chanteuse.

Be assured, though, that this is selective eclecticism, a well-informed mix that goes beyond appropriation. Kamikaze Ground Crew doesn't stop at recreating familiar sounds but goes on to mush them all together, butting the whine and buzz of klezmer horns with an accordion and a distorted, tuba-driven Bo Diddley beat, or combining a piccolo's Irish jig with a bluesy clarinet and a Sousa-like trombone riff.

To get a handle, give another think to the band's name, then listen to Leishman's arrangement of "You Are My Sunshine." A sultry, loping, funky take on the American classic, it's a perfect remake for the '90s. —*Suzanne McElfresh*



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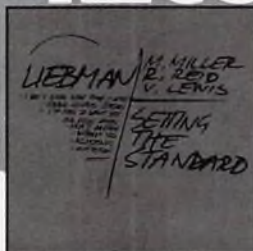


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Joey Calderazzo

THE TRAVELER—Blue Note CD P 7 80902 2 9: *No Adults; Blue In Green; Dolphin Dance; Black Nile; Love; What Is This Thing Called Love; Yesterdays; To Wisdom, The Prize; Lunacy; The Traveler.* (68:29)

Personnel: Calderazzo, piano; John Patitucci (1,2,5,6,8), Jay Anderson (3,4,7,9), bass; Peter Erskine (1,2,5,6,8), Jeff Hirshfield (3,4,7,9), drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

With Calderazzo on piano, you get exhausting speed, precision, and hard-edged technique. *The Traveler* alternates two aggressive rhythm sections for a generous CD of trio music. He makes interesting choices, covering Wayne Shorter (a high-speed blur) and Larry Willis, whose "To Wisdom, The Prize" is a highlight. Taking on "Blue In Green" and "Dolphin Dance," Calderazzo invites comparisons to Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock, but fails to make

the material his own. Striking me as a perfectionist and a technician, *The Traveler* does show a gradually emerging introspective quality. —Jon Andrews



Eddie Gomez

NEXT FUTURE—Stretch STD-1106: *NEXT FUTURE: DREAMING OF YOU; NORTH MOORE ST.; LOST TANGO; TENDERLY; CHEEKS; LOVE LETTER; BASIC TRANE-ING; WALTER (PIGEON)*. (55:13)
Personnel: Gomez, bass; Rick Margitza, tenor, soprano saxophones (1-6,8); Jeremy Steig, flute (7); Chick Corea (1-4,7,9), James Williams (1,2,5-8), keyboardists; Lenny White, drums.

★ ★ ★

If you've heard Gomez with Bill Evans, Jack DeJohnette, or countless others, you expect a warm bass tone and articulate phrasing. *Next Future* offers seductive melodies, gently swaying rhythms, and Rick Margitza's glossy saxophone, but strictly avoids any grit or dissonance. Gomez and co-producer Chick Corea contrive a smooth, bright sound, isolating the bass in the lower end. Gomez sounds most engaged on fast-paced tributes to Coltrane ("Basic Trane-ing") and Gillespie ("Cheeks"). James Williams and Lenny White are underutilized, and Corea's tedious synth washes don't help. —J.A.



Peter O'Mara

STAIRWAY—enja 7077-2: *ABERTURA; STAIRWAY; ROUND & ROUND; CRESCENT; MR. LUCKY; FOR EMILY; WEATHER OR NOT; CHANGE OF WIND; CONTINUITY; IRISH*. (61:37)
Personnel: O'Mara, guitar; Russell Ferrante, piano; Tom Brechtlein, drums; Anthony Jackson, contrabass guitar; Tony Lakatos, tenor sax; Alex Acuna, percussion.

★ ★ ★

Europe's answer to the Stern-Berg Band. Only the Hungarian saxophonist Tony Lakatos is no

Bob Berg. And guitarist Peter O'Mara, an Aussie who migrated to Munich in 1981, makes allusions to both John Scofield and Mike Stern, but is neither.

O'Mara can definitely play, but he has chosen more commercial terrain on *Stairway*. His last enja outing, 1990's *Avenue U*, was a far more adventurous affair featuring Dave Holland, Adam Nussbaum, and Joe Lovano. "Crescent" (definitely *not* the Coltrane tune), the Latin-tinged "Continuity," and the intermina-

bly happy "Round & Round" are strictly lite-jazz radio fodder. Things get a little more interesting on the dark waltz "For Emily," dedicated to the late guitarist Emily Remler, and on the angular shuffle "Weather Or Not," reflecting a decided Weather Report influence. And O'Mara digs for his roots on the lyrical acoustic guitar ballad, "Irish."

O'Mara's a talented guy with the good sense to hire pocket genius Anthony Jackson on bass. But I much preferred the relative open-

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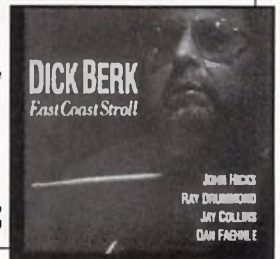
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—Bill Milkowski



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LOOSE CANNON—Soul Note 121261-2: *ALMOST NORMAL; THE 12% SOLUTION; FOOL'S PARADISE; LOWBALL; BROKEN; BEAM ME UP; FIBRIGADE; TILT.* (57:30)
Personnel: Michael Formanek, bass; Tim Berne, baritone, alto saxophones; Jeff Hirshfield, drums.

★★★★

Berne's projects tend to get crowded with soloists. *Loose Cannon* gives him much more room to stretch out, as part of this inventive, balanced trio. The surprise is his extensive use of baritone sax; and if the baritone is less affecting than Berne's agile, plaintive alto, it creates a raucous new persona. Bassist Formanek and drummer Hirshfield use space and silence well in these open, episodic compositions. You'll forgive *Loose Cannon's* occasional shapelessness when you hear Berne's "Fibrigade," which progresses through several sonic environments before resolving in an r&b shout on baritone.
—Jon Andrews



Mike Garson

OXNARD SESSIONS, VOL. 2—Reference 53: *RUMBLE; ALL BLUES; IT'S YOU OR NO ONE; A SONG FOR YOU; WALTZ FOR BILL; REBIRTH; A NIGHT IN TUNISIA; NARDIS; COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS; I GET A KICK OUT OF YOU; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD.* (73:50)
Personnel: Garson, piano; Eric Marienthal, alto, soprano saxes; Brian Bromberg, bass; Ralph Humphry, drums; Billy Mintz, drums (10).

★★★

Free Flight keyboardist Mike Garson, also known for his stint as David Bowie's musical director and his recreation of Liberace's glitzy pianistics for the TV movie *The Liberace Story*, takes a more buttoned-down tack here, reinterpreting pop and jazz standards in a subdued acoustic setting. He embellishes well-worn themes with a classically refined post-fusion technique but displays little passion beyond a muted, slightly aloof sentimentality. Bromberg, scurrying lightly in a Scott La Faro fashion, and Humphry join the leader in chattering colloquy, leaving Marienthal's robust alto to inject ardor into an otherwise bloodless date.
—Larry Birnbaum



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Lost Tribe

LOST TRIBE—Windham Hill Jazz 10143: *MYTHOLOGY; DICK TRACY; PROCESSION; LETTER TO THE EDITOR; EARGASM; RHINOCEROS; MOFUNGO; SPACE; FOUR DIRECTIONS; FOOL FOR THOUGHT; T. A. THE W. (TENDER AS THE WIND); CAUSE AND EFFECT.* (59:40)
Personnel: Dave Binney, alto sax; Adam Rogers, Dave Gilmore, guitar; Fima Ephron, bass; Ben Perowsky, drums.

★★★★

To say that Lost Tribe presents a cauldron of M-BASE-Y ideas—polyrhythmic matrices, quirky funk-rockin' grooves—in a more listener-friendly context might be an accurate musical appraisal, but the spirit of the observation does the band a disservice. Produced by Walter Becker, this is a tough-minded two-guitar assault unit with a sense of humor and big ears. One of the guitarists is Gilmore, one of Steve Coleman's Five Elements. Tribe altoist Binney is an up-and-comer who dishes out lean, mean solos that seem to think on their feet. The same could be said of Rogers and Gilmore's probing improvisations. Perowsky is simply one of the best young drummers on the scene, if pummeling energy and seamless appropriation of jazz, rock, and hip-hop count for anything. The end result is gripping, a real slammin' band sound.

—Josef Woodard

1 Count Basie Orchestra

"Corner Pocket" (from *LIVE AT EL MOROCCO*, Telarc, 1992) Melton Mustafa, trumpet; Charlton Johnson, guitar; Kenny Hing, tenor sax; Frank Foster, director.

PW: That's the most amazing guitar player: you could hear him out in the parking lot. That's fun!

CT: That might have been the recapitulation of Basie under Frank Wess I heard in Japan. Sounded like his arrangement and tenor playing. The trumpet could have been Bobby Bryant or Byron Stripling, no definitive statements to tell me exactly who it was. If I hear grease up on the horn, I know it's Phil! [*laughs*] I like it. 5.

PW: Me, too. I like to hear phrasing, and the band's ambience shows agreement of where they're gonna place those notes. This ensemble—16 musicians playing together—plays with conviction.

2 Steve Turre

"Exploration" (from *SANCTIFIED SHELLS, Antilles, 1993*).

CT: Steve Turre and his conch shells! That's definitely not an instrument you can walk into Manny's and buy! [*laughs*] I'll give them 3½ for effort; if it's Steve, 5.

PW: That groove is beautiful. Can you imagine selling that to a club? "What's your band play?" "Oh, conch shells!" It'd be fun to play with that band; there's a very human quality to it. You know, [his sets feature] conches last because he can't play trombone after it. I'll lay a strong 4 on that one.

3 Vienna Art Orchestra

"Reflections On Meditation" (from *THE MINIMALISM OF ERIK SATIE, hat ART, 1984*) Lauren Newton, voice; Bumli Fian, plungered trumpet; John Sass, tuba.

CT: That kinda leaves you with raised eyebrows. Tuba player did his homework; he was right on the money: tipitipi-ta-bome!

PW: He sure was. I like it. It's a happy feeling. Sounds like "Swedish Mumbles"! Reminded me of Lester Bowie's group.

CT: I can usually tell Lester's round [open] sound; he's my homey, you know, from St. Louis. With the manipulation of the plunger in that fashion, I don't know if Tricky [Sam Nanton] and Rex [Stewart] and Cootie [Williams] and Ray Nance and Bubber [Miley] would recognize the heights the [trumpet] has reached. For the courage, the

CLARK TERRY & PHIL WILSON

by Fred Bouchard

Two beloved globetrotting educators got together to laugh, reminisce, and chinwag over and about a few tunes. Trumpeter Clark Terry, guest of Harvard U.'s Office of the Arts, recently whipped Tom Everett's HUJazz Band into exhilarated concert form with his buttery purls of wit; trombonist/bandleader Phil Wilson had played *Chorus Line* (charts by Billy Byers—shades of Woody Herman days) and mixed his recent *Wizard Of Oz Suite* (Capri). With star ratings (as most things), these giants were generally agreeable.



FRED BOUCHARD

tuba player, the originality, 3½.

PW: I'll raise that to 4 for the happy feel.

4 Dizzy Gillespie Big Band

"Cool Breeze" (from *VERVE COMPACT JAZZ SERIES, 1956*) as guessed, but Billy Mitchell, tenor sax.

CT: That's Gil Fuller [his composition], isn't it? The King's [i.e., Dizzy's] chops sure were poppin' on that one! What a great loss. It made me feel so good, but almost made me feel sad. The saxophonist sounds the way James Moody played. 12 stars.

PW: Agreed. The trombonist almost sounded like Bill Harris, who transcended most trombonists' technical scuffling; it wasn't, but he was great. I think he's Frank Rehak.

5 Gerry Mulligan

"Deception" (from *REBIRTH OF THE COOL, GRP, 1992*) as guessed, except Wallace Roney, trumpet.

PW: There was a time after Miles' "Cool" thing came out where bands like this began to appear. Sounds like *The Wild Ones*.

CT: Miles [Davis] was responsible for some of those charts. Sounds like Jeru [Mulligan]; could be Serge [Chaloff], except for the time period. There's Phil Woods. The trumpet player sounded at first like Shorty [Baker], but he got a little too busy.

PW: Not Shorty, it sounded like someone who'd been listening to yourself, those eighth notes. Then I thought, Art Farmer. It sounds like several decades rolled into one.

CT: 5 stars. The playing was fantastically great and could stand up to anybody on the scene today.

6 Metronome All-Stars

"Overtime" (from *BLUEBIRD, 1949*) as guessed, but Fats Navarro, trumpet; Kai Winding, trombone; Pete Rugolo, composer.

PW/CT: Marvelous! Whew! Damn!

PW: Shall I take a stab at it? Metronome All-Stars, 1946.

CT: Could very well be. Beautifully done, and some of the bosses on there: Buddy De Franco, Yard [Charlie Parker], Diz. . . . Ingredients for 5 stars. That trombonist didn't make any J.J. [Johnson] statements.

PW: Played very lyrically, though; unusual for the period.

7 Fletcher Henderson & His Dixie Stompers

"Static Strut" (from *DRG DISQUES SWING, DRG, 1928*).

CT: I've got a feeling that's a bunch of hip beboppers who have got into the comic scene and play period music and have fun with it. I've seen European bands do that—sit up straight with that precise articulation. That takes forethought.

PW: That's funny! There's a band [Vince Giordano's] at [NYC's] Red Blazer who write out solos but swing like crazy. I go back: I think it's old guys. The trombonist sounded like Bill Rank, with Bix Beiderbecke. A recording studio would find it very difficult to imitate that sound. 3½ stars.

FB: Well, this is Fletcher Henderson with Coleman Hawkins, Rex Stewart, and J. C. Higginbotham.

CT: Well, they were the original beboppers! [*laughs*]

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