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Jazz, Blues & Beyond

The World According To Eddie Daniels


Roy Haynes:
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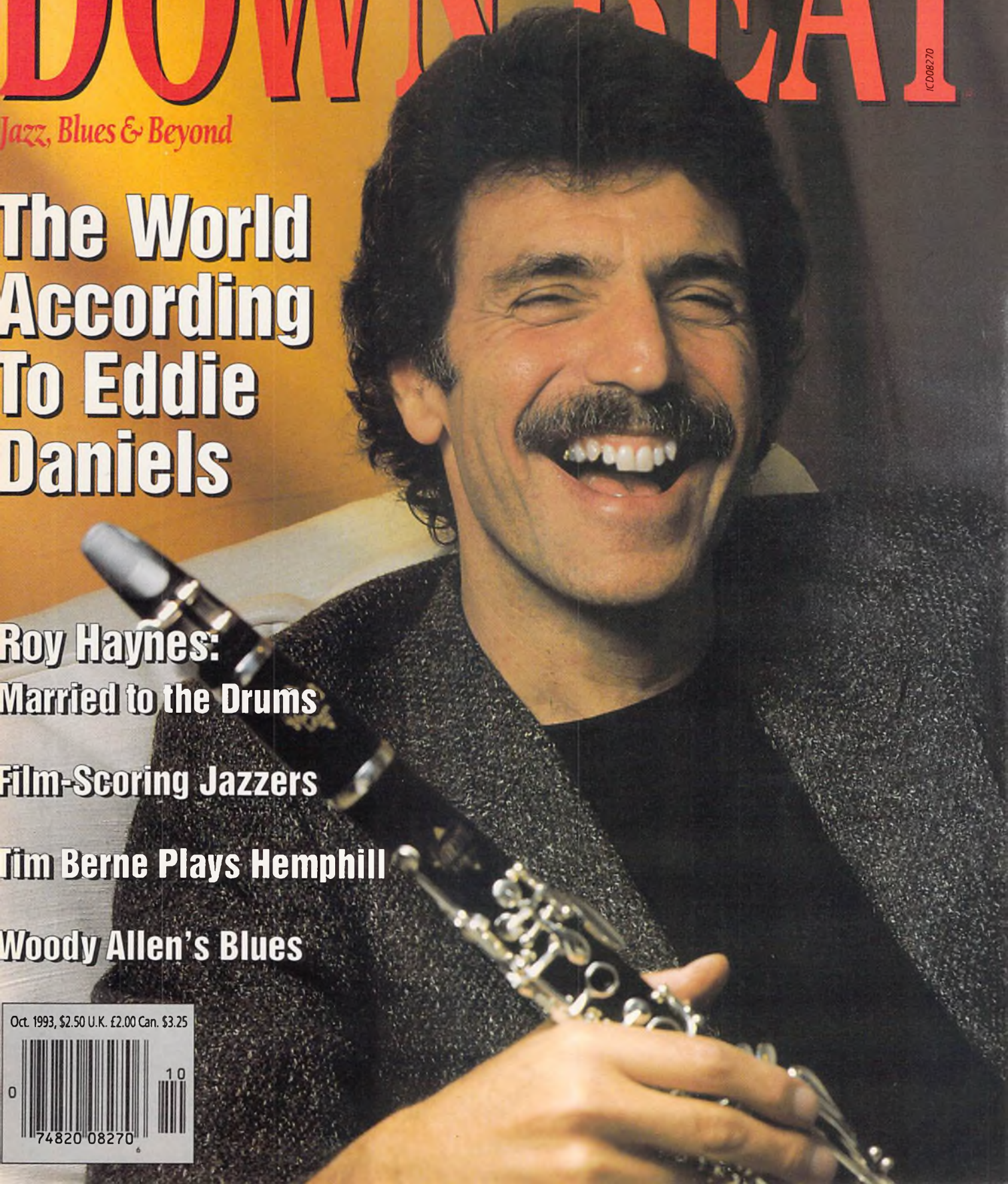
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Roy Haynes

MITCHELL SEIDEL

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by John McDonough

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Lend Me

A TENOR

By John McDonough

If Eddie Daniels' high profile in jazz obscures a highly successful classical music career (and it does), then his virtuosity on clarinet has likewise camouflaged his formidable skills on saxophone, the instrument on which he actually began his reed studies at the age of nine in 1949. (He began on alto, then switched to tenor about the time he took up the clarinet at 13.) It was also as a saxophonist that he recorded *First Prize!*, his first album in 1966 (an album that also has him playing clarinet and is recently reissued on Prestige). And now, 27 years later, he has returned to the instrument for his latest project, *Under The Influence* (see "Reviews" June '93).

"I'm really having a great time playing this instrument again," he says, sounding like a middle-aged man suddenly smitten with an old flame at a high school reunion. "I haven't made a saxophone record in 12 years. But the minute I picked up the instrument it felt like a glove again, although it took me a couple of months before I was completely comfortable."

Daniels was principally a tenor player until the early '80s, when he finally decided that he would be doing more good for the instrument and himself by focusing on clarinet. Since then, he has emerged as perhaps the leading player in the rarified world of jazz clarinet. Daniels talked at length about his odyssey recently. It was the day before he left for Munich, then to Belgium for the International Clarinet Festival. The conversation began with the clinics he would be conducting shortly in Munich:

JOHN McDONOUGH: *If you felt obliged to suggest five or six jazz clarinetists from whom a classically trained musician might learn something, who would they be? And the reverse?*

EDDIE DANIELS: Well, Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw were my idols as a kid. A little more Benny. These guys were already the reigning legends when I was born [1941] and as I grew up. They were always there. In the '50s, the two big clarinetists whom I listened to as contemporary players were Buddy DeFranco and Tony Scott, both of whom emerged out of bop. Buddy particularly excited me a lot. Also Edmond Hall was a very interesting player whom I heard with the Louis Armstrong group. I loved his playing. And I believe there was really something special about Pee Wee Russell. As for classical players: Larry Combs with the Chicago Symphony and Harold Wright with the Boston. Each a superb player.

JM: *Among your jazz clarinetists, you mentioned none before your time.*

ED: That's right. When you come into the clarinet at the level of Goodman or DeFranco, you tend to find the earlier players less compelling as a source of new knowledge on the instrument. This doesn't mean you can't enjoy them as individual voices, and even learn aspects of the instrument's expressive range from them. After all, the universe reveals itself in every single thing. But there's not much mystery in what they did or how they did it from a technical point of view. The process of becoming a musician for me was absorbing the young contemporary players and the guys who came just before them who were still active. I started weaving my own

fabric out of that. I didn't go back a lot before that. I was a music student, not a record collector.

JM: *Were records an influence in your early training?*

ED: I wasn't a person who was obsessed with listening and copying. Today, music education has kids taking all the solos off records. That's a good practice technique. And when something really blew me away, I would do it in order to understand the solo. I took "Giant Steps" off the record. But it can be limiting, too.

JM: *If "Giant Steps" blew you away, were you able to follow John Coltrane through to Ascension and the other late work?*

ED: No. I stopped when he became influenced by the freer players. I loved the Coltrane of the Miles period and of *Blue Trane* when he was really playing the changes and soaring. I felt when he got into *A Love Supreme*, it may have been great playing, but I didn't want to listen to it necessarily. So it turned me away. Roger Kellaway and I play duets sometime, and we often play free. But there's a tension that exists between freedom and form. When it's all freedom, there's no tension.

JM: *Three years ago, you said that one of your goals was "to contemporize the sound of the clarinet in the way David Sanborn had done for the saxophone. What did you mean?"*

ED: Well, there's contemporary commercial playing, and I put David in that category. I was not thinking of him as a jazz player. I'm not sure what name would apply to his work. It's great playing, though, of a certain kind. He defined that sound. It was like he transferred guitar licks to the saxophone. But this is pop-oriented. In a way, of course, it's been limiting because thousands of saxophone players are now copying his sound. I supposed this is a good learning exercise, but it makes everything status quo. Contemporary saxophone playing in the jazz realm is very different.

As for contemporizing the clarinet, radicalism was never my intent. Quite the opposite. The clarinet should simply be at home in the contemporary jazz environment while maintaining its integrity soundwise. But I feel the harmonic vocabulary and phrasing I use now is contemporary. To some extent, it's been a matter of my transferring my tenor approach to the clarinet, just as Sanborn was transferring guitar licks to the saxophone. It's funny, because after *Under The Influence* came out, several people said, "Wow, you've come full circle. Your clarinet has influenced your saxophone playing."

JM: *If classical players, with their attention to training, tend to be leery of jazz, do you also find that jazz players, with their emphasis on spontaneity, are leery of virtuosity?*

ED: Well, some critics and fans, maybe. But not musicians, as a rule. I mean, Charlie Parker changed that. And so did John Coltrane, Stan Getz, Dizzy, Artie [Shaw], Benny [Goodman] . . . all these people were virtuosos on their instruments. There's always that attitude that technique is just some surface gloss designed to dazzle, and if you have too much of it, you're merely slick and nothing more. But I find the consummate jazz players, like the ones I mentioned and current guys like Joe Henderson, they have it all. It's nice when a guy who doesn't have great technique can express a

lot of sweet, lyrical things. But sometimes, such musicians get defensive and say that any virtuoso player is "only technique." I wouldn't dismiss the argument altogether. But you can't let technique become an automatic disqualification of standing in jazz. Otherwise, you might as well invalidate all jazz from Benny Goodman on. That wouldn't leave you with a lot.

JM: *Maybe virtuosos such as yourself make it all look too easy. Part of communicating to an audience, perhaps, is looking like you're pushing yourself to the outer limits of your ability, letting them see you sweat. [Violin virtuoso] Nadia Sonnenberg is a great virtuoso, but she puts on a good show, too.*

ED: What is a show? For me, the best show that I can do is when I make myself happy. And I make myself happy by feeling like I've measured up to what I was going after. That's what art is: being true to yourself. In classical music, you are trained to conform to a standard of technique that enables you to address the basic literature of your instrument. So it's pretty uniform around the world. In jazz, though, your technique rises to the level where it can express your own musical vision. In the end, it's that vision that counts. No one puts down Miles because he didn't meet Dizzy's technical virtuosity. Miles' technique was right for his vision. We each have our own idea of perfection, of where we want to go. And I'm driven by a picture of what I want to create. I want to show my feelings. And yet to do it on the clarinet in this contemporary world, I feel I have to master the technique to have control of what I want to do.

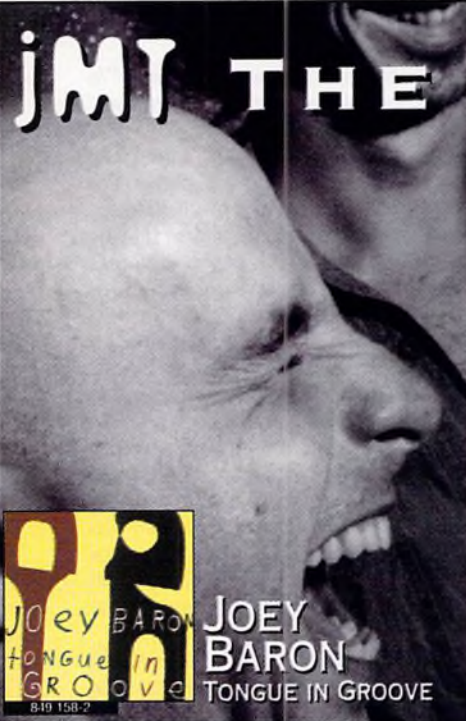
JM: *A dozen years ago, in the 1981 DB Critics Poll, the clarinet*

category read: John Carter, Buddy DeFranco, and Eddie Daniels. This year it read: Don Byron, Eddie Daniels, and Buddy DeFranco. So you and Buddy switched places, John Carter died, and Don Byron took his place at the top. Yet, in the Readers Poll, you have consistently run away with the top position by margins of better than two to one. Why?

ED: If you'll listen to Byron, especially on his *Tuskegee Experiment* album, and me side by side, you may get an idea of why critics chose him. The inside view you'll get from a professional musician is often different from that of many non-playing critics. If I were a critic, I might see my reputation as being dependent upon being out there at the cutting edge of the music, being the first to spot an important trend, and bringing it to general attention. I might want to make myself a kind of advocate for the future of the music. I could imagine that if I were a music journalist, I might take that role very seriously and not want to be caught short.


On the other hand, it is very hard to judge new music and assess its value when its context is not fully formed yet. So sometimes, in the absence of these certainties, new or eccentric music gets the benefit of a certain doubt from writers who would prefer to err on the side of openmindedness. Audiences, on the other hand, are probably less calculating in their responses to music. They either like it or don't like it. But a critic may be more inclined to play the provocateur. I don't want to get into critiquing Don, or Anthony Braxton, or any of the other players who regularly show up in the Polls. They're all fine musicians. Don's got his own approach, it's refreshing and it's him. But we represent different points on the

JMT THE CRITICS' CHOICE.



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"This is a creative, enjoyable album from one of the most innovative players in jazz."
- THE BOSTON GLOBE
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spectrum. I see myself, by virtue of my training and my era, as essentially a centrist, maybe with a tilt toward the left. I like lyricism. In putting together *Under The Influence*, I went back to the repertoire that had an effect on me and that's still holding through.

JM: You call yourself a "centrist." Yet, you are of that generation that came up in the '60s and '70s that seemed to leave the center seriously unattended. Those times seem dominated, in retrospect, by either free jazz, which tended to shrink the jazz audience, or fusion, which essentially bypassed it. Where were the centrists of your generation?

ED: A fascinating question. I can tell you, we were out there, and a lot of us were in Thad [Jones] and Mel's [Lewis] band. Pepper Adams, Roland Hanna. Everybody in that band was an individual. But the media were looking for more iconoclastic things. One of the reasons I stopped being on the jazz scene as a player in New York was because I was not able to make a living playing what I considered jazz. The whole thing went into a slump. The people making good livings were either the guys who had come up before it was too late—[Gerry] Mulligan, [Sonny] Rollins, [Oscar] Peterson, and so on; or Miles and his protégés, who shaped jazz into the *Headhunters* and *Weather Report*. But those of us in the middle were around. Were we a lost generation? I don't think so. The answer to the question is this: If you hang in there long enough and you do music from your heart and you survive, you will prevail. Gary Burton and I have had this discussion many times. What turns a great player into a classic old guy? Two things: You've got to be great and you have to live long enough to be an old guy. That's my goal. I've hung in there. I'm still on the scene. I'm a fighter, and I'm

going to play the music I love; and that's my commitment. Now I find it's starting to pay off.

JM: A final question: How do you feel about having a tenor saxophonist in the White House?

ED: Great. I think it's about time we had a president who can worry about finding a good reed as much as finding an attorney general. Seriously, I do think it's great because it means he's an artist in some way. He has an artistic sensitivity. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Eddie Daniels now plays a Leblanc Concerto, a model designed by Tom Ridenour, whom Daniels has known for many years. "It gives me a warmer, more even sound, and has superior connections between registers so that it doesn't sound discontinuous when you go across the octave break." He attributes these qualities to subtle characteristics of the bore. Daniels also uses Vandoren 3½ standard-cut reeds, as well as a 4 and 4½ V12, which he shaves "a lot."

After auditioning several tenor saxophones, Daniels selected an old balanced-action Selmer, 47000 series with an Otto Link metal mouthpiece. "It's the same model I used on my first album, *First Prize*," he says. "The same kind I had as a kid." He prefers Rico Royal 3½ reeds.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

(For additional listings, see **DB** May '91.)

<i>UNDER THE INFLUENCE</i> —GRP GRD-9716	<i>TO BIRD WITH LOVE</i> —GRP GRD-9544
<i>BENNY RIDES AGAIN</i> —GRP GRD-9665	<i>BREAKTHROUGH</i> —GRP GRD-9533 (Philharmonia Orchestra)
(w/Gary Burton)	
<i>BLACKWOOD</i> —GRP GRD-9584	<i>FIRST PRIZE</i> —Prestige OJCCD-771-2



TIM BERNE

MINUTIVE MYSTERIES (MOSTLY HEMPHILL)

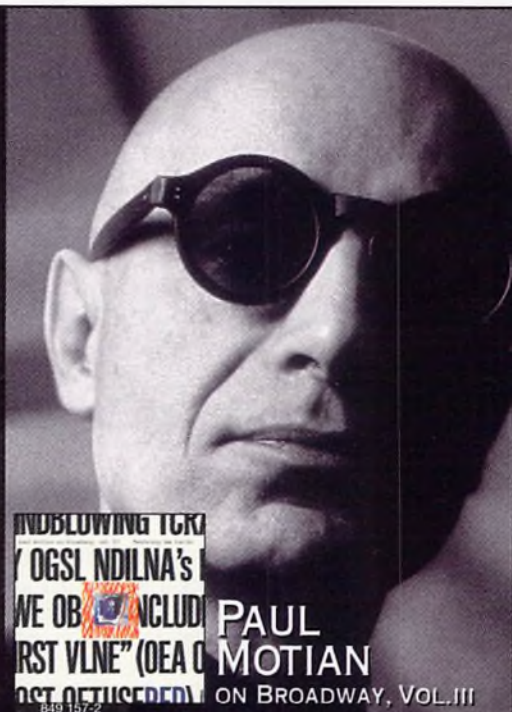


314 514 003-2

Minutive Mysteries is no feel-good stroll down memory lane; it's a leap into the new."

JAZZTIMES

Featuring: David Sanborn; Marc Ducret; Frank Roberts; Joey Baron; Herb Robertson; Mark Dresser



PAUL MOTIAN

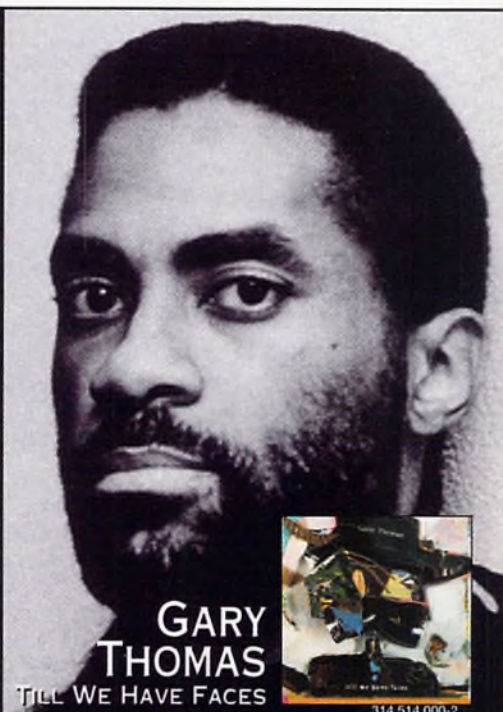
ON BROADWAY, VOL. III



849 157-2

"How is it that certain artists can transform the familiar into something unfamiliar, and with such delightful results?" - DOWNBEAT

Featuring: Lee Konitz; Joe Lovano; Bill Frisell; Charlie Haden



GARY THOMAS

TILL WE HAVE FACES



314 514 000-2

"...this is precisely what the jazz world needs. They just don't make records like this often enough." - JAZZIZ

Featuring: Pat Metheny; Tim Murphy; Anthony Cox; Ed Howard; Steve Moss; Terri Lyne Carrington



'The Father Of Modern Drumming'

ROY HAYNES

By Bill Milkowski



transcendent 17½-minute version of "My Favorite Things." The remaining track on this recent reissue is a swinging "Chasin' Another Trane" from a 1961 session at the Village Vanguard with Haynes fueling the fire beneath Coltrane, bassist Reggie Workman, and alto saxophonist Eric Dolphy.

Haynes' trademark shifts, anticipations, and displacements also provide the momentum on another recent Coltrane quartet reissue, *Dear Old Stockholm*, composed of sessions at Rudy Van Gelder's Englewood Cliffs studio on April 23, 1963, and May 26, 1965. Haynes' slick snare/hi-hat combinations, irregular bass-drum patterns, and crisp accents set the tone on the title track from this '63 session. Two years later he provides a forceful interactive presence behind Coltrane's freer screaming style on intense offerings like "After The Crescent" and "One Down, One Up." In both contexts, Haynes sounds right at home.

As Trane said in a 1966 *DB* interview: "Roy Haynes is one of the best drummers I've ever worked with. I always tried to get him when Elvin Jones wasn't able to make it. There's a difference between them. Elvin's feeling was a driving force. Roy's was more of a spreading, a permeating."

Haynes' spreading pulse is also heard on the recent discovery, *At The Five Spot*, with the Thelonious Monk Quartet featuring John Coltrane and bassist Ahmed Abdul-Malik (see "Reviews" April '93). Recorded by Coltrane's then-wife Naima at the club on the Bowery and Fifth Street in the late summer of 1957, this recent release was made on a portable tape recorder with a single microphone. The sound is not optimum and the club chatter is sometimes obtrusive, but the rareness of this meeting of the minds makes it a historic find.

While studio tracks do exist of Monk with Coltrane—*Thelonious Himself*, *Monk's Music*, and the 1961 compilation, *Thelonious Monk With John Coltrane*—there appears to be no other live document of their gigs since contractual disputes between Monk's record label (Riverside) and Coltrane's (Prestige) prevented official documentation of their performances together.

Questions remain, however, about the true identity of the drummer on this '57 Five Spot gig. Haynes himself doesn't exactly remember this particular evening. Even producer Michael Cuscuna can't be positively sure that it was indeed Roy Haynes at the traps that night. As author/educator Lewis Porter points out in the liner notes, Shadow Wilson opened Monk's five-month engagement at the Five Spot on drums alongside Wilbur Ware on bass. He was replaced for one week in September by Philly Joe Jones. When Wilson left the group in December, he was replaced by Kenny Dennis. Porter goes on to conclude, "Al-

He cuts up the beat like Sugar Ray Robinson cut up opponents in the ring, with slickness and verve. He dances on the snare and hi-hat like Jimmy Slyde or Gregory Hines, with sly, idiosyncratic elan. An elegant, poised presence behind the kit and noted clothes horse, he is a gracious performer from the old school. That is, he brings joy to his art form and passes it on to the audience. And as an accompanist, he is the final word in finesse, always supporting his young sidemen like black velvet against a diamond.

He is Roy Haynes, "the father of modern drumming" (in Pat Metheny's words) and recipient of the prestigious 1994 Jazzpar Prize, the world's only grand international jazz award, coined "The Nobel Prize of Jazz,"

and presented each year by the Danish Jazz Center.

The announcement of Haynes' Jazzpar Prize, with its \$35,000 cash award and a recording deal, comes in the midst of a deluge of Haynes recordings, past and present. Perhaps the most astonishing of these is *Newport '63*, a document of Haynes' performance with the classic John Coltrane quartet (obviously, minus drummer Elvin Jones) at the Newport Jazz Festival. The centerpiece of that set is a scorching 15½-minute rendition of "Impressions," featuring a full 11 minutes of Haynes and Trane going head-to-head in a kinetic dialogue that will cause drummers to drop their jaws. The quartet concludes its Newport set with a soothing "I Want To Talk About You" and a

MICHELL SEIDEL

though there is no documentation of Roy Haynes playing with this particular Monk group—he was still with Sarah Vaughan at the time and joined Monk the next year—the aural evidence suggests that we are hearing Abdul-Malik and Haynes on this release.”

After comparing versions of “In Walked Bud” from the summer ’57 Five Spot gig against the August ’58 Five Spot gig (on Milestone), I too had my doubts. The drummer on the ’57 gig seemed too pedestrian; slicker than Shadow Wilson but lacking the flamboyance and bounce that characterizes Roy’s playing on the ’58 Five Spot gig. There is some similarity in the irregular bass-drum work here (dropping bombs), but the drummer’s solo on the ’57 Monk gig sounds stiff and plodding compared to the quick-wristed, tap-dancer quality and witty style that Haynes exhibits throughout the ’58 session.

The key, to my ears, is the ’57 quintet’s version of “I Mean You.” Listen to the drummer come alive, cutting up the beat with slick abandon, bobbing and weaving behind Coltrane’s solo, slipping punches like Sugar Ray while scoring jabs on the snare. Too slick and jaunty for swing era-oriented Shadow Wilson. It must be Haynes, although we have no absolute documented proof.

“It is me,” Haynes insists emphatically. “Just listen to the crash cymbal. That’s my cymbal. That’s my sound. That’s the same crash cymbal you hear on the ’58 Live Spot recordings. It’s me! I listened to the tape in my living room and got up and started dancing. Like Monk. And it was me, man. I can tell by the touch on the drums and the shit that I was playing.

“Some of the stuff I played, I tried to play like Shadow because I had heard him with that group. On that one song, ‘Epistrophe,’ I got that from Shadow. I heard him play something to that effect. Maybe it was a night I sat in. But it was definitely my drums, so I couldn’t have been just sitting in. I was with Sarah Vaughan in 1957, but Sarah didn’t work during the summer. We always got four weeks off. So I could’ve been off during this period and worked with Monk. But who’s to say?”

The mystery may never be solved. Regardless, there is no denying Haynes’ continued greatness throughout a magnificent career that spans six decades. On his latest release, *When It’s Haynes It Roars*, he displays the same enthusiastic snap-crackle-bounce on the kit that he flashed as a young man in the ’40s with Lester Young, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis.

Haynes’ incredibly crisp, interactive playing on Pat Metheny’s superb *Question And Answer* suggests that he was still at the very top of his game in 1990. And a recent

weeklong engagement at the Village Vanguard with his quartet (pianist Dave Kikoski, tenor saxophonist Craig Handy, bassist Ed Howard) was enough to convince me that the 67-year-old Haynes has been skinny dipping in a fountain of youth somewhere out there in his Long Island backyard.

At a recent *Jazz Drums On Film* presentation at Lincoln Center, host Tony Williams screened historic film footage of some of this century’s most important jazz drummers. The audience of musicians and knowledgeable fans saw rare footage of Art Blakey, Gene Krupa, Sonny Payne, Elvin Jones, Buddy Rich, Jo Jones, Shelly Manne, and Sid Catlett. After offering personal testimony on each drummer, Williams ran down a list of other drummers, not included in the screening, who had inspired him as a player. When

“Roy Haynes is one of the best drummers I’ve ever worked with. I always tried to get him when Elvin Jones wasn’t able to make it.”

—John Coltrane



he got to the name of Roy Haynes, the crowd spontaneously erupted into applause, an indication of just how much the man is appreciated by those in the know.

“I love that,” Haynes said when I told him of the scene at the Lincoln Center screening. “That’s a reward in itself. That’s one of the things that has kept me going over the years, the acknowledgement that I’ve gotten from the musicians. A lot of people don’t understand what Roy Haynes is all about, especially those who are running the business. But to hear that really inspires me.”

He still can’t get a record deal in the States, but Haynes must gain some sense of satisfaction in knowing that he is at least appreciated in Denmark (the Jazzpar Prize) and held in such high regard by jazz drummers everywhere. But the lack of commercial acceptance doesn’t get him down.

“I don’t play that often anymore. I don’t want to. But when I do, I mean it,” he says while sipping champagne in the rustic comfort of his Freeport backyard. “I’m still growing, and I still love to play. I don’t have no beats to waste, man.”

Born on March 13, 1926, in Roxbury, Massachusetts, he put in his apprenticeship with Sabby Lewis, Frankie Newton, and Pete Brown while still a teenager. “I met a lot of the great jazz men when they would come to

Boston from New York,” Haynes recalls. “I was still in school when I met Papa Jo Jones. All the drummers used to talk about Jo. He was our guy. As great as Sonny Greer, Jimmy Crawford, Erskine Hawkins, and those guys were, Jo Jones was our main guy. You should’ve seen this guy in the early ’40s with Basie’s band before he went in the Army. Just to watch him with that band was something to behold. I also met Art Blakey when he was with Fletcher Henderson. I was just a teenager, and Art used to call me his son. We got to be very, very close over the years.”

Another big inspiration during Haynes’ formative years was Max Roach. As he told Ira Gitler in *Jazz Masters Of The Forties* (Collier), “A lot of Max rubbed off on me. When I first heard him, he had one cymbal, bass drum, snare, no tom-tom. He had his right hand on the cymbal, his left on the snare drum. At the time, the drummers weren’t playing on the two and four. The bass drum was like another hand. Maybe guys didn’t have a tom-tom because they couldn’t afford it, but I got rid of mine.”

In September 1945, Roy came to New York to join Luis Russell’s big band at the Savoy Ballroom. Two years later, he joined Lester Young’s band at the same place. His audition, Roy recalls, was on the bandstand.

“I knew Lester was a very sensitive player, and here I am considered by some to be one of the hard-boppers . . . dropping bombs and all of that. But when I got up there with Pres, I just played the beat. The feeling was there. And after two or three numbers, he slipped over to the drums and whispered, ‘You sure are swinging, Pres. [He called everybody Pres.] If you got eyes, the slave is yours.’ Slave meant job. Pres had all the greatest slang, his own language. So from that first night, he was for me. And I stayed with Pres two years.

“The only reasons I left in 1949 was because he went with Norman Granz on the Jazz at the Philharmonic tour, without his band. But by that time, I was down at the Three Deuces playing with Miles and Bird and Bud Powell and everybody and sitting in at Minton’s. When Pres finished the Philharmonic tour, I was already on 52nd Street playing with Bird. So I didn’t go back. I was in another dimension, so to speak. But for two years, man, it was enjoyable. I learned a lot from Pres.”

After Miles Davis quit Charlie Parker’s band around Christmastime of 1948, he put together his first band at the Orchid Room (formerly the Onyx Club) on 52nd Street. That group included Bud Powell, Nelson Boyd, and Roy Haynes. After that gig closed, Haynes joined Parker’s group at the Three Deuces and later became the first drummer to work in

Birdland back in 1949. Around the same period, he also recorded with Wardell Gray and Kai Winding for Prestige and appeared on Bud Powell's first recording for Blue Note.

In 1951, Haynes recorded sides with Lennie Tristano while continuing to appear sporadically with Bird that year and over the next couple of years. (At one point in this interview, Haynes brought out a strikingly

historic photograph of himself playing with Bird, Miles, and Charles Mingus at the Open Door. The picture is dated September 13, 1953.)

In the summer of 1952, Haynes toured with Ella Fitzgerald. Then from 1953 to 1958, he became the tasteful accompanist for Sarah Vaughan, a gig that demanded more restraint and less of his patented creative overplaying. "With certain people,

you just can't play too busy in order to make it work. I didn't play that way with Sarah Vaughan all the time. I was very respectful, but some nights you could do a whole lot of stuff there. You didn't have to play the song the same way. She'd be getting more of a kick out of it if you added or changed up on her. It was mostly brushes, though there were some tunes when I played sticks and I got down.

"But I did stay there a bit long," he says in retrospect. "It got a little too comfortable, but I dug it. The atmosphere was good. A lot of pretty girls. I had a lot of nice ladies in those days. But then I settled down and got married and started making gigs with a lot of other people in the interim that I didn't really want to do because I had young children and a mortgage and car notes and things like that. And I managed through all of it. I played drums and did what I wanted to do and still was a responsible family man."

After the Sarah gig, Haynes joined Monk's quartet in 1958 and played on the famous *Live At The Five Spot* for Milestone. His mercurial style of drumming seemed perfectly suited to Monk's rhythmic eccentricities. That same year, Haynes recorded his Stateside debut as a leader for Fantasy. (He had already recorded a 10-incher in 1954 that was released on the EmArcy label and later included in the Quincy Jones compilation, *Jazz Abroad*.) Entitled *We Three*, this excellent album features the great Phineas Newborn on piano and Paul Chambers on bass. It was reissued in 1985 and is highly recommended as a prime example of Haynes' melodic approach to the kit.

In 1961, Haynes began playing and recording with Stan Getz while also making sessions with Lee Konitz, Lambert, Hendricks & Ross, George Shearing, and Kenny Burrell, among others. Two years later, his sense of sartorial splendor was acknowledged by *Esquire* magazine, which named Haynes one of the "Best Dressed Men in America" alongside the likes of actors Fred Astaire and Walter Pidgeon. The only other musician to be so honored by the magazine that year was Miles Davis.

"Yeah, Miles and I both liked clothes," says Roy. "Clothes and cars. Miles and I both bought a new car the same week. We used to race through Central Park, and neither one of us had a driver's license at the time. We was some wild cats back then."

Around that same period, Haynes brought a stellar group into Slug's for a week. "The band was Wayne Shorter, just before he went with Miles, me, Cecil McBee on bass, and Albert Dailey on piano. We were really kicking ass."

In 1967, Haynes formed his own Hip Ensemble, featuring George Adams on tenor sax, Charles Sullivan on trumpet, Don Pate on bass, and Cedric Lawson on piano.

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"Our first gig was at the Scene, an acid-rock place," Haynes recalls. "We played maybe 10 days at this place. I remember Chick Corea came to the gig on opening night, and he came back after the first set and said, 'Man, you can really put together a band.' It really was a hip little band, hence the name." (For much of the '70s and '80s, Roy continued to lead his own bands.)

Haynes was rediscovered by a whole new generation through his work in the late '60s with Corea and with Gary Burton. Corea continued to work with Haynes in the '80s, and Metheny introduced Haynes to his fans with Metheny's *Question And Answer*, from 1990, arguably one of the best jazz albums of that year.

While it isn't widely known, Haynes has also been responsible for honing the chops of a whole bunch of young lions. Some of the players who have regularly attended the freewheeling jam sessions over the years held at Camp Haynes out in Freeport, Long Island, include saxophonists Sam Newsome, Donald Harrison, and Ralph Moore, guitarists Kevin Eubanks and Mark Whitfield, bassist Ira Coleman as well as his current stable of youngbloods: Craig Handy, Dave Kikoski, and Ed Howard.

"Some critics say, 'Why don't you get guys

to play with on your own level?' But they didn't say that to Bird when I was in my 20s. Or to Pres. Young guys inspire me. That's why I like to play with them."

Now that Haynes is finally getting worldwide recognition via the Jazzpar Prize and

through the recent rash of reissues, it would seem he is poised for yet another comeback.

"But the thing is," he points out, "I never did stop playing. And I never will. I'm married to the drums. I'll always be playing."

DB

EQUIPMENT

Haynes plays Ludwig drums and Zildjian cymbals. He has 16-inch and 14-inch floor toms, 8 x 12 and 9 x 10 rack toms, 22-inch bass drum, and a 5 1/2 x 14 hammered brass snare. He also occasionally uses a hammered brass piccolo snare and sometimes augments his kit with Ludwig tym-

pani. His cymbals include a 20-inch K flat ride, 18-inch crash and 20-inch crash. His hi-hat consists of a K on top and an A on the bottom. He uses Ludwig medium-coated, white-ensemble heads as well as Ludwig's L-7A Roy Haynes model sticks and L-195 white-handle brushes.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

WHEN IT'S HAYNES IT ROARS—Dreyfus 36556
TRUE OR FALSE—Free Lance 007 (w/Ralph Moore, David Kikoski, Ed Howard)
LIVE AT THE RIVERBOP—Blue Marge 1002
OUT OF THE AFTERNOON—MCA 639 (Rahsaan Roland Kirk—out of print)
THANK YOU—Galaxy 5103 (o.p.)
VISTALITE—Galaxy 5116 (o.p.)
WE THREE—Fantasy/OJC-196 (Phineas Newborn, Paul Chambers)

with various others

INNER FIRES—Discovery 71007 (Bud Powell)
BIRD AT ST. NICKS—Fantasy/OJC-041 (Charlie Parker)
AT STORYVILLE—Blue Note 85108 (Charlie Parker)
LIVE AT THE FIVE SPOT (1958)—Milestone 47043 (Thelonious Monk with Johnny Griffin, Ahmed Abdul-Malik—o.p.)

AT THE FIVE SPOT (1957)—Blue Note 99786 (Thelonious Monk with John Coltrane, Ahmed Abdul-Malik)
NOW HE SINGS NOW HE SOBS—Blue Note 90055 (Chick Corea, Miroslav Vitous)
TRIO MUSIC—ECM 827 702 (Chick Corea, Miroslav Vitous)
QUESTION AND ANSWER—Geffen 24293 (Pat Metheny, Dave Holland)
NEWPORT '63—Impulse! GRD-128 (John Coltrane)
DEAR OLD STOCKHOLM—Impulse! GRD-120 (John Coltrane)
BAD NEWS BLUES—Prestige 2504 (Booker Ervin—o.p.)
BLUES & THE ABSTRACT TRUTH—Impulse! 5659 (Oliver Nelson)
OUT THERE—Fantasy/OJC-023 (Eric Dolphy)
BLUES FOR COLTRANE—Impulse! 42122 (David Murray, McCoy Tyner, Pharoah Sanders, Cecil McBee)
DUSTER—RCA 3835 (Gary Burton—o.p.)



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Scoring In Hollywood

By Eliot Tiegel

KAREN MILLER



Tom Scott in his home studio writing music for Chevy Chase's late-night show.

Is that a real trumpet solo or a computer gone wild? Was that a B \flat on the bass or a synthesized note? And whose arpeggio was that anyway? It's hard to tell when listening to the scores of scores jazz musicians are writing for films and television.

And if they don't have computers, synthesizers, sequencers, samplers, compressors, equalizers, and videotape decks at home, jazz writers are missing the advantages of providing a taste for producers and directors of what their musical gumbos will sound like when recorded by an orchestra on a scoring stage. "It's like having an orchestra at home," muses Terence Blanchard, who is working on his third film score.

The growing community of jazz musician/film scorers includes Gerry Mulligan, Tom Scott, Dave Grusin, Stanley Clarke, George Duke, Patrick Williams, Lennie Neihaus, Abdullah Ibrahim, Lalo Schifrin, Michel Legrand, and Benny Golson as well as such newcomers as Bennie Wallace, Grover Washington, Jr., Michel Camilo, Michael Wolff, Bobby Watson, and Jeff Beal. They've joined the ranks of Duke Ellington, Herbie Hancock, Quincy Jones, Benny Carter, Henry Mancini, Gil Evans, Gerald Wilson, Oliver Nelson, and J.J. Johnson, who have all added the spice of jazz to soundtrack music.

What's the bonus a jazz musician brings to film scoring? Clarke, who wrote the music for Janet Jackson's *Poetic Justice*, says "it's an open harmonic sense. You definitely learn from jazz what harmonic freedom is." Blanchard feels he brings "a sensitivity" from interfacing with other musicians. Duke, whose credits include *Flash Dance*, *Leap Of Faith*, and *The 5 Heartbeats*, says playing in groups has opened him "to dealing with other people's feelings about what the music in a film should sound like."

When composers wrote at home, applying pencil to paper, sounding chords on a piano,

the first time they really heard their completed orchestrations was the same time the producer and director heard it—when the musicians gathered on a film-scoring stage played it. If there were glitches, disagreements, arguments, they were hashed out right there in front of everybody. And was that ever embarrassing.

No more. Digital technology has changed all that. Today, rainy or sunny, wherever they

"The best of any improvised composition comes from the same creative place as any good solo I do."

—Tom Scott

live, it's the executives who now come to the composer to hear the work they've paid big bucks for, and to make any suggestions in the privacy of the composer's home studio. Dave Grusin, who wrote the scores for *Havana* and *The Firm* in his Santa Fe home, explains: "Sidney Pollock [the director of both films] has a Learjet and he likes to fly, so he came to Santa Fe when I was scoring *Havana*."

Although they're jazz musicians, when they're hired to write for films and TV, they may not necessarily create a jazz score. The history of producers hiring working jazz musicians is peppered with exemplars of all the moods and rhythms of jazz who brought a sense of their styles, but not necessarily a pure jazz sound, to the screen. Saxophonist Bennie Wallace (see "Riffs" Sept. '93), after

working on *Bull Durham*, *Blaze*, and *White Men Can't Jump*, is now writing a '30s-era jazz score for the animated feature, *Betty Boop*.

George Butler, Columbia Records senior vice-president/executive producer of jazz and progressive music, works on soundtracks and understands the politics of a jazz musician adhering to the producer or director's musical requests. "But what's interesting," Butler stresses, "is the jazz musician's ability to demonstrate versatility by writing in almost any idiom."

One of the major hurdles the jazz musician/composer faces is the potential loss of his or her freedom to improvise. In its place they encounter the rigid, unassailable constraints of writing for each specifically timed scene.

Blanchard, who was originally hired by Spike Lee to play one song in *Mo' Better Blues*, has since written complete scores for Lee's *Jungle Fever* and *Malcolm X*. He has just completed a jazz-heavy score for *Sugar Hill*, starring Wesley Snipes. So he's adept at writing to the stopwatch. "It's a different discipline which allows you to be creative in a different form," he says from his home in Brooklyn. Translation: he's cool with the medium.

Grusin, Stanley Clarke, and George Duke all contend that film writing is another form of improvisation. Says Grusin: "Writing music at the moment is instant composition." Says Clarke: "I do the same thing as soloing artists do when I put hand to paper." Adds Duke: "I'll sit with the directors and spot a scene where we think music should go, and I'll improvise something on the piano or synthesizer, and then the orchestra takes it on." Duke has two special devices that assist him in the actual scoring: a New England Digital Synclavier ("it's an orchestra in a

box") and a Korg Wavestation ("it's an orchestral score in a box").

For Grusin, who splits his time between his Santa Fe digs and his ranch in Montana, writing an acoustic-piano score for *The Firm* meant using "the piano as an orchestra" while supporting director Pollock's original idea of using acoustic piano to portray Memphis' rich blues heritage. MIDI technology made it possible. The veteran of 29 years in film/TV work wrote his "temporary

music" on his Korg M1 synthesizer. The actual recording used a Yamaha grand in an L.A. studio. "The advantage of having a home studio," Grusin says, "is if I'm cutting an orchestral score, I can make myself a little demo and I can patch as many as eight synthesizers into the instrument using a Cambi Mode program."

Composer/arranger/conductor Patrick Williams, who played trumpet in jazz bands at Duke University, goes one step further.



George Duke at work (note the video monitor, required for any film scorer's home studio)

He uses his Macintosh II fx computer "to make a kind of painting off of raw materials." Williams, a prolific composer who has scored more than 65 feature films and dozens of TV movies, uses both note-processing software and paper and pencil in his office complex in the Village Recorder studio in West Los Angeles. "I find it's fun to play and paint with sounds I can only create in the computer. You come up with things you'd never be able to write on paper."

When reedman Tom Scott sits down in front of his Macintosh II fx computer "to write different parts for different instruments" in his Tarzana, Calif. studio, "the best of any improvised composition comes from the same creative place as any good solo I do." He uses a Proteus 1 synthesizer "when I need horn sections. My Akai S-1000 sampler lets me get the sounds of strings, trumpets, and trombones."

Scott's credits over a 24-year period include *Soul Man*, *Stir Crazy*, and the musical direction of Pat Sajak's and Carol Burnett's TV shows. He is composing the music and conducting the quintet on the new Chevy Chase late-night talk/comedy show, which debuts this month on Fox Broadcasting.

Ten years after arriving in the U.S. from the Dominican Republic, pianist Michel Camilo has scored themes and underscores for network news shows and soap operas. He says his Macintosh II si computer "saves my fingers. In the past, when I held a pen to a paper it created a bit of an inflammation in the tendons of my hands." Camilo wrote the score to a recent Spanish production on his computer in his Katonah, N.Y., studio in 15 days. "If I'd done it by hand it would have

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MORE THAN A PIANO

Dave Grusin's all-acoustic piano score for *The Firm*, combined some offbeat "objects" with standard computer technology to create the accompanying percussive effects for his piano during the dramatic "Mud Island Chase" sequence.

If you think you're hearing a metronome click or tom toms, you've been tricked. "There was a lot of experimenting because I wanted to only use sounds from the piano," explains Grusin. "We came up with 30 different sounds, like tapping on dead strings with fingers, hitting the metal cross beam above the sound board with a tympani mallet, rolling a ping-pong ball down the bottom strings lengthwise, hitting wood pieces with a hard mallet, and using guitar picks to get fast glisses on the strings.

"We created all the sounds from a Yamaha piano by sampling them and putting them in an Atari computer. Two engineers at Sunset Sound in Los Angeles, Don Murray and Michael Kloster, helped me come up with the effects."

Murray used Adep software by Hybrid Arts, along with the Atari to sample the various invented sounds.

Notes Grusin: "Once we had them sampled and stored, Don assigned them to various areas of the keyboard so I could play them as if they were coming from my piano. Once we had the basic sound, I had the pattern I wanted to play, a basic bata-drum triplet pattern. It varied quite a bit depending on what was going on on the screen. The drum sound, which imitated a tom tom, was made by hitting the cross beam with the mallet. The rolling ping-pong ball produced a sustained sound. If you didn't hear the ball bounce at the end, you wouldn't know what it was. This all took an awful lot of studio time to do, but I'm glad we did it this way."

—E. T.



taken at least a month and a half." Add speed as another plus for computer-composing at home.

While there are common advantages to building up a home studio, there's got to be a

"You definitely learn from jazz what harmonic freedom is."

—Stanley Clarke



catch, right? "You can buy a house for what a 32-track console costs," exclaims Stanley Clarke, who owns just such an expensive item.

Besides the obvious advantage of working at home, Tom Scott chuckles when he ticks off several other bonuses for owning a home studio: "I use less gasoline, I have the full use of my own swimming pool and basketball court, and I get to watch my kids grow up."

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The Three Outsketeers

TIM BERNE

By Howard Mandel

A top-selling prince of the soul saxophone and a composer/improviser who insists on going his own way honor a too little-known composer/reed player who's been their mentor and inspiration. That's one way to look at Tim Berne's *Diminutive Mysteries (Mostly Hemphill)*, the new JMT production wherein David Sanborn stretches fearlessly on soprano as well as alto, joining Berne (on bari and alto) and his band of accomplished pals-on-the-edge to play five new compositions and two old ones by sage Julius Hemphill, plus one long extravaganza by Berne himself.

Despite its title, there's nothing small about *Diminutive Mysteries* (see p. 47). The project stands at a crux of several large questions pertinent to current jazz. How does a musician celebrate a respected elder who's as busy in the present as he's been in the past, yet retain his own creative, exploratory, interpretive options? Must an artist be shackled by a reputation as an entertainer? What's down that road so seldom taken?

Hemphill, of course, is the Texas-born, St. Louis-steeped, New York-resident composer and saxist who has ranged restlessly through jazz traditions and potentials since emerging from Fort Worth in the late '50s. Touring in Ike Turner's r&b revue, co-founding the musicians' cooperative Black Artists Group (B.A.G.) and the World Saxophone Quartet, writing the saxophone opera *Long Tongues*, advancing hot and bluesy musical imagery that's primordial but not primitive ever since his debut album of 1972, *Dogon A.D.* (first released on his own Mbari Records), Hemphill is one of those rugged individualists who stand outside the American mainstream, presenting it with startling ideas.

Then, too, so is Tim Berne. He credits *Dogon A.D.* with having changed his life, and says he came to New York City from Syracuse (via California) specifically to find Hemphill. He took three lessons with An-



HYOU WIELZ

thony Braxton in '74, then met Hemphill and embarked on a four-year course of study that went considerably beyond fingerings and embouchure. Subsequently, Berne has pursued the muse through thorny thickets of sound in downtown Manhattan, Europe, and sessions for independent labels as well as Columbia Records.

"The central thing in Julius' thinking and his music," says Berne, who began issuing his own albums on his own Empire label with *The Five-Year Plan* in '79, "is that he encourages independent investigation and action. In our lessons he didn't offer me one system, but a lot of possibilities, with the emphasis always on ideas and sound."

That emphasis is central to *Mysteries*, in which electric guitarist Marc Ducret, cellist Hank Roberts, drummer Joey Baron (and, on Berne's lengthy composition "The Maze," trumpeter Herb Robertson and bassist Mark Dresser) create textures of sandpaper and silk; the saxophones surge, soar, cut, and scrape through them. The level of energy and organization only seems freestyle; this is structured group music. Grooves emerge from a tangle of lines, then fall out in a squall, regather, and disappear—all exactly as planned.

"The music on my albums is usually 70 percent written," Berne explains, "but the writing is disguised, sometimes to sound like complete noise. What Julius gave us to work with was not his WSQ sound, or like

something he would have released on Mbari. The ideas he gave us were different even from what he'd done before."

Those ideas—the "mysteries"—are episodes Hemphill wrote in sketch form to allow some creative latitude. They pose questions for the musicians to address.

"What we do with his writing is different than what he does with it," says Berne. "That was partly to make it mine, but also because I didn't want to just take his heads and blow. I was concerned about how much to arrange and how much to let things happen as we went along. I included more stretches of free playing than usual, which was scary. But some choices were easy: a two-alto album wasn't of timbral interest to me, so I planned half of it for bari and soprano. With the cello and guitar, that gave us an orchestral sound and put David and me in less familiar, comfortable positions—which I liked."

So, apparently, did Sanborn, whose performance throughout is entirely credible. Forgoing his hallmark lyricism, with its keening swoops, Sanborn indulges an intense curiosity.

"Well, it's hard to judge someone just from records and know what they do. David has a lot of different sounds," Berne maintains. "I don't think anyone would hear this project and automatically say, 'Oh, that's David Sanborn.'"

"But this project came about from a conversation David and I had sometime after we first played together on his TV show, *Night Music*. He talked about having come out of St. Louis and knowing Julius and Oliver Lake and those guys. I thought, 'Wow. Two alto players existing in two separate worlds intersect at Julius Hemphill,' who has always gone against the grain. I mean, everything he did always made sense to me—but I'd get a puzzled response from people who were into his peers when I told them to check him out. Julius was overlooked even in the WSQ, where he was obviously the source of a lot of their music."

"I happen to be a big fan of Tim Berne," says Sanborn, who has welcomed several opportunities to venture outside his commercially popular format. "Tim believes that in music you look for the magic, which is an idea he got from Julius Hemphill. And that's what I love about Julius, too."

"Philip Wilson [the late drummer, the only musician to record with both the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and the Art Ensemble of Chicago] introduced me to Julius, as well as Lester Bowie, Oliver Lake, Hamiet Bluiett, and a lot of other people when I was younger, living in St. Louis. I played with them once in a little coffee house that was about the size of the entranceway in my apartment—three altos, Julius, Oliver, and me. We played all Hemphill's music, as a matter of fact. I think his music encompasses so much—pop music, r&b music, blues, jazz, free improvisation, all of that. Structure and non-structure. It's *inclusionary*. If that's not a word, it should be."

"To me, the saxophone is as close to the human voice as you're going to get, and what Tim does with vocabulary developed in the '60s by people like Julius expands the pallet of what's available to the saxophone player."

"Like Tim's great slap-tongue stuff: 'Cluck cluck cluck, *wheweeep!*' It's real expressive. And his structures are like contemporary classical music."

Want to hear it? Click to "Rites," track six of *Mysteries*, a theme Hemphill recorded at the start of his career. In three concise minutes Berne overblows, underblows, and slap tongues, while Sanborn skitters above and Roberts plucks along so close the three really blend. Baron lays out until Ducret cues him with a chord—then he launches a humongous four-limbed roll into screaming hardcore, an abrasive, excoriating-but-brief passage that snaps into the thick-voiced, fully controlled out-theme rages to an inevitable final plot-twist/time-complication.

"This is not popular music," Sanborn acknowledges. "To make popular music you've got to make dance music or power ballads or record with Michael Bolton. Hey! Julius Hemphill and Michael Bolton: there's a concept."



TERI BLOOM

Julius Hemphill: "look for the magic"

"[Hemphill's] music encompasses so much—pop music, r&b music, blues, jazz, free improvisation, all of that. Structure and non-structure. It's inclusionary."

—David Sanborn



You never know who will get together. "I didn't ever realize I was influencing these guys," Hemphill claims. "I remember David from St. Louis, when he had a good sound, but not the one he's noted for now. He was always a soulful player, always approached the music from that standpoint, and he's developed into a singular voice in that genre. I don't generally associate him with this kind of improvisation."

"I mean, I *know* the fellow behind what he's doing here; he's one of the few guys who practice what they preach. He says, "'Funky Butt' is not the end of the world.' He doesn't want to jeopardize his commercial career, but he wants to do other things. I appreciate that."

"Tim did most of the organizing and development for *Diminutive Mysteries*—the title was my idea—for which I'm grateful. I didn't work closely with him after I wrote the pieces, which were conceived as a suite. But I was pleasantly surprised that, without our talking about it, he pursued the full implication of the pieces in a very creative way. More than playing the lines, they developed the *notion* of each section, either building it up or leading into it or unwinding it as they got into it. To me, it's a brilliant example of group improvisation with written material. And the improvised aspects are outstanding."

Now everybody's happy.

"I put a lot of pressure on myself to make this a good thing because I wanted Julius to like it, I wanted David to like it, I wanted to like it," says Berne. "And I was terrified that it wouldn't be as good as I wanted. But it felt good in the studio right off the bat. I'm satisfied. The picture of Julius is completely cool."

Berne refers to the CD's cover photo. Better yet, on the disc itself, contained in the music, there's an exemplary group show.

DB

EQUIPMENT

Tim Berne plays a Selmer Mark VI baritone sax with a low A, Vandoren #3 reeds, and a Ria #8 metal mouthpiece ("That means it's pretty open," he says, "like the Holland Tunnel.") He also plays a Selmer Mark VI alto sax with a hard-rubber Berg Larsen 110/3 mouthpiece ("That means it's huge. I get excited, and I like a lot of resistance.") He uses

3½ Vandoren Java alto reeds

David Sanborn has a Selmer Mark VI alto sax, and a Yamaha soprano. For complete equipment information and a selected discography of Sanborn, see **DB's** Feb. '93 cover story where he "answers his critics."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Tim Berne

DIMINUTIVE MYSTERIES (MOSTLY HEMPHILL)—JMT 514 003
CAOS TOTALE PACE YOURSELF—JMT 834 442
FRACTURED FAIRY TALES—JMT 834 431
MUTANT VARIATIONS—Soul Note 1091
THE ANCESTORS—Soul Note 1061
LOOSE CANNON—Soul Note 121261
MINIATURE I CAN'T PUT MY FINGER ON IT—JMT 649 147
SANCTIFIED DREAMS—Columbia 44073 (out of print)
FULTON STREET MAUL—Columbia 40530 (o.p.)
THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN—Empire EPC 24K (o.p.)
7X—Empire EPC 36K (o.p.)

Julius Hemphill

JULIUS HEMPHILL BIG BAND—Elektra/Musician 60831
FAT MAN AND THE HARD BLUES—Black Saint 120115
FLAT OUT JUMP STEET—Black Saint 120040
JAH TO THE JAH BAND—Minor Music 003
DOG ON A D—Arista 1028 (o.p.)
COON BID NESS—Arista 1012 (o.p.)

with the World Saxophone Quartet

(For additional WSQ listings see **DB Aug. '89**)
METAMORPHOSIS—Elektra/Nonesuch 79258
RHYTHM AND BLUES—Elektra/Musician 60864
STEPPI'N'—Black Saint 120027



MITCHELL SEIDEL

All Stick, No Shtick

WOODY ALLEN

By John Ephland

"Bunk!" you might say. And you'd be right. Depending on where you're sitting, comic/moviemaker/clarinetist Woody Allen's recent first-ever jazz album is either "a nice try, Woody, but stick to comedy," or an interesting attempt to dust off some very early jazz.

Aptly titled *The Bunk Project*, the album is actually the work of the New York Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of veteran banjo player Eddy Davis, with Allen on board as a prominent sideman. Deriving its name from New Orleans trumpeter Bunk Johnson, and with all due respect to the top-notch professional musicians on hand, the album just might prompt a few questions from your average skeptical observer: Is it yet another trad-jazz revival album with, once again, white musicians playing black music? Is it a comedy album with jazz filler? Is it a joke brought on by a self-effacing amateur clarinetist in search of respectability? And is that really Woody Allen standing with a bunch of strangers in that black & white album cover photo?

Ensclosed in his screening room at the Manhattan Film Center in downtown Man-

hattan, one wall lined with jazz albums covering everyone from King Oliver to Oscar Peterson, Allen looks a tad weary. And yet, there's that bouncy Woody Allen voice, so often heard in his movies, and the attire he's worn for so long it's become a kind of uniform, simple and unadorned: the starched, white long-sleeved shirt and pressed, khaki pants hanging on his truly small frame.

Sitting on a neighboring couch, Allen cuddles a large pillow like a teddy bear. When asked to comment on *The Bunk Project's* origins, he starts off in a familiar, unassuming manner, not unlike his famous opening monologue to *Annie Hall*: "I don't say this out of any sense of false modesty, but I don't consider myself even a passable musician of any sort. I think I'm a pretty terrible musician, as a matter of fact. I've only been a hobby clarinetist my whole life, playing privately." (This coming from someone who, if he doesn't get his two-hours-a-day of practice time, is "absolutely consumed with guilt.")

Essentially self-taught, Allen took up the clarinet at 15, after having studied the

soprano saxophone and ukulele. A later interest in modern jazz led to his taking up the vibraphone for a time. At 17, he took clarinet lessons from former Fats Waller and Conrad Janis band member Gene Sedric. In 1973, he recorded the soundtrack to his movie *Sleeper* with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. To this day, he does not read music.

Early on, Allen favored traditional (i.e., very early) jazz's more rugged, languorous style over the sophisticated and more soloistic dixieland or Chicago styles. (Subsequent jazz styles were to remain of passing interest.) As author Eric Lax put it in his recent biography of Allen, this earlier New Orleans style of jazz is perfect for Woody because "[i]t hates authority; its quirky, individual style requires great discipline to play right; it is all the things that fit his own and his comic character."

During his stand-up comedy days of the '60s, Allen crossed paths with veteran clarinetist Turk Murphy, who managed to get Woody to play with him. "And after that, I started to play with other people. And I started to play with guys in New York. In their living room, just for fun. I had no ambition in it. I just loved to play. And they said, after about a year playing together, 'Why don't we go play in a club in New York?' I said, 'Fine.' I never took any money for it. I never wanted to get paid. We went into this club [Michael's Pub], and we've been playing there now for, I don't know, 25 years every Monday night [since 1971]." The group, called the New Orleans Funeral and Ragtime Orchestra, is still made up of mostly non-professionals.

"And then, five years ago, Eddy Davis joined our group. I met Eddy many years ago in Chicago, in the '60s. I was playing Mister Kelly's on Rush Street. I used to play jazz for fun at Jan Scoby's, near Mister Kelly's. I went in and played there, and Eddy was the banjo player, and we just sat and talked a little bit, and that was it. And then, cut to five years ago. He just showed up, sat in, and remembered that time. Eddy is great; he's probably the best traditional jazz banjo player in the world."

As for the formation of *The Bunk Project*, Allen states, "Eddy had his own group, and he said, 'You be the clarinet player and let's just make some sessions just for fun.' He brought a tape recorder, and we played a half-dozen sessions, and suggested that he might think of putting it out. I said, 'You can do it if you want to; if I don't hold the band back too much, fine. I don't want to be advertised or featured.' And so he did; he put the whole thing together, every bit of it." Recorded at New York's Harkness House over a two-year period (and released on the MusicMasters label), Allen relates, "it was truly a jam session of a group of musicians,

many of whom didn't even know each other." Indeed, as the liner notes to the album state, "The tunes were unrehearsed and called out at random by anyone present as the spirit moved them." The jam-session flavor extends to the less than state-of-the-art sound quality, with beer-hall acoustics consistent with the music itself.

Getting him to comment on his own playing, Allen confesses, "I've played in bands where the guys were deliberately playing crude. But for me, I'm playing to the top of my limit, the absolute top. So, in that sense, I can sometimes sound authentic." Eric Lax puts a positive spin on it: "[Allen] displays more feeling, more emotion, in his music than he does in any other way, at least in public. There are times in the way he loses himself in a melody when he seems almost to be caressing the notes."

On *The Bunk Project*, this plaintive, emotional playing—reminiscent of idols Sidney Bechet and George Lewis—can be heard clearly on slow, wistful tunes like "What A Friend We Have In Jesus" and "Burgundy Street Blues." But Allen is the first to admit that his playing, and the album in general, is "a stepping stone on to better stuff" (e.g., the music of Lewis and Bechet).

A collector of vintage clarinets, his main ax is a 77-year-old Albert system clarinet, a 12-key Rampone fellow-clarinetist Kenny Davern picked up in a pawn shop for \$12. "A real junky clarinet. But it sounds good when I play it. The guy that repairs it for me all the time says, you know, 'Get rid of it.'" (Benny Goodman put him on to one of his Albert system clarinets: "The most beautiful Selmer you've ever heard.") It's bigger, more difficult to master, and tends to play only approximately in tune, another sign of authenticity and musical goal of Allen's.

The other major part of Allen's musical life can be heard through his movies. From the swing-era laced *Radio Days* to his Gershwin tribute, *Manhattan*, to his paean to America's songbook, *Hannah And Her Sisters*, Allen's movies have, among other things, been catalysts for viewers to seek out the music they hear in them. In fact, more recent films show the hand of Woody Allen, the music compiler, in lieu of a composer who scores for his movies.

"I've used jazz scoring for years," he says with great pride. "And it's great, because you have that whole library at your disposal. I have been going strictly by my record collection for years. Some of the best music you'll ever hear is in *Stardust Memories*; the score to that is just fabulous. [Louis Armstrong and Django Reinhardt are prominently displayed.] It's a chance for people to hear some of these records they've never heard before. You have the whole world at your disposal. I mean, it's such a pleasure to come in here and pick out music—that's the

most pleasurable part, just to walk into this office and run through records and see what would be nice to accompany a scene; it's really, really fun."

At the end of *Stardust Memories*, perhaps his most personal and autobiographical film to date, Allen is seen lying on a couch, talking into a portable tape recorder, reflecting on the age-old question, "Why is life worth living?" His answer includes a variety

of delights, among them, Louis Armstrong's recording of "Potato Head Blues." It appears the music Allen the romantic loves follows him around even better than a good joke worth telling. More than Chaplin, Keaton, or Bergman, Armstrong reminds Woody Allen if he'd "been born with a massive talent," the life of a full-time musician would've been "the best life I can think of."

Bunk, indeed.

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Chick Corea

THE BEST OF—Blue Note 0777 7 89282 2 5: *STRAIGHT UP AND DOWN; TONES FOR JOAN'S BONES; MATRIX; MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE; WINDOWS; SAMBA YANTRA; PANNONICA; NOW HE SINGS, NOW HE SOBS; TOY ROOM; BLUES CONNOTATION; NEFERTITI.* (59:45)

Personnel: Corea, piano; Blue Mitchell, trumpet (1,2); Julian Priester, trombone (1,2); Jerry Dodgion, alto sax (1,2); Junior Cook, tenor sax (1,2); Gene Taylor (1,2), Miroslav Vitous (3-8), Dave Holland (9-11), bass; Mickey Roker (1,2), Roy Haynes (3-8), Barry Altschul (9-11), drums.

★★★★★

Chick Corea's Elektric Band II

PAINT THE WORLD—GRP 9731: *PAINT THE WORLD; BLUE MILES; TONE POEM; CTA; SILHOUETTE; SPACE; THE ANT & THE ELEPHANT; TUMBA ISLAND; RITUAL; ISHED; SPANISH SKETCH; REPRISE.*
Personnel: Corea, piano, keyboards; Eric Marienthal, saxophones; Jimmy Earl, bass; Gary Novak, drums; Mike Miller, guitars.

★★★ 1/2

The Best Of Chick Corea lives up to its title, charting the pianist's artistic heyday from his mid-'60s stint with Blue Mitchell to his 1970 collaboration with Holland and Altschul in the avant trio Circle. In between are six tracks with Vitous and Haynes from the 1968 trio date that yielded Corea's finest album, *Now He Sings, Now He Sobs*. Since the complete *Sobs* session is already available on CD, the present release is valuable mainly as an overview of Corea's evolution from Milesian modalism to Ornette-ish semi-freedom. Beyond that, it's simply brilliant, as Corea, supported by a succession of taut, supple rhythm sections, scampers with delicate intensity, hinting at wistful moods yet to come without a trace of smirking sentimentality.

Paint The World, filled with warmed-over

fusion licks and bluesy clichés, sounds plodding and stale by comparison. Marienthal, the lone holdover from the previous Elektric Band, is the standout soloist, while newcomers Miller, Earl, and Novak fail to measure up to their virtuosic predecessors. Corea sticks mostly to acoustic and electric piano, leaving synthesizers for background texture, but his acoustic work is hampered by the stiff, heavy beat. Occasional bright moments give way to syrupy melodramatics, none sappier than the new-age epiphany of "Silhouette." Corea has shown that he can still rise to the occasion, but here he's just fluttering at half mast. —Larry Birnbaum

Jawaka"). Then there's the fired-up a cappella gospel segment ("The Meek Shall Inherit Nothing"), the virile, jazzy, electric-guitar-and-synth-driven instrumentals "Echidna's Arf" and "Sofa," and the hilarious events of "Jazz Discharge Party Hats."

In keeping with Zappa's artistic intentions, the performances juxtapose the whimsical and the serious—projecting the composer's sense of humor and biting commentary while maintaining the highest level of musicianship. Zappa's absence from these recordings (due to poor health) doesn't diminish the spirit of his music. These performances are proof of the universality of Zappa's music, of his mastery as a composer, and are assurance that his music lives on. —Suzanne McElfresh



Various Artists

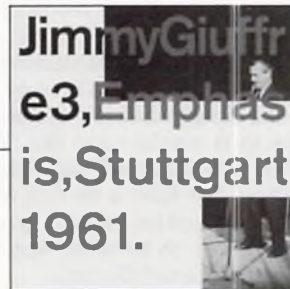
ZAPPA'S UNIVERSE—Verve 314 513 575: *ELVIS HAS JUST LEFT THE BUILDING; BROWN SHOES DON'T MAKE IT; JAZZ DISCHARGE PARTY HATS; INCA ROADS; MOGGIO; NITE SCHOOL; ECHIDNA'S ARF (OF YOU); HUNGRY FREAKS, DADDY; HEAVENLY BANK ACCOUNT; THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT NOTHING; WAKA JAWAKA (EDIT); SOFA; DIRTY LOVE; HOT PLATE HEAVEN AT THE GREEN HOTEL.* (67:43)

Personnel: Rock Group: Mike Keneally, guitar, keyboards, vocals; Scott Thunes, bass, vocals; Morgan Agren, drums; Johnathan Haas, multiple percussion; Marc Ziegenhagen, additional keyboards. The Persuasions (1,10,14); Jimmy Hayes, Jerry Lawson, Joe Russell, Jay Otis Washington, vocals. Rockapella (1,9); Sean Altman, Barry Carl, Elliot Kerman, Scott Leonard, vocals. Special guest artists: Steve Vai (12,13), Dweezil Zappa (13), guitars; Dale Bozzio (14), vocals. Orchestra of Our Time (1,2,6,11,14); Joel Thome, artistic director/music director/conductor/arranger; Sal Scarpa, assistant music director/conductor; with 25-piece orchestra.

★★★★★

For four nights in November 1991, the music of Frank Zappa was performed at the Ritz in New York by band alumni, a cappella groups, opera singers, offspring, and a 25-piece orchestra. The recorded result is a revealing cross-section of more than 25 years of the composer's musical genius in one tidy package (available on CD, video, and laserdisc).

Zappa's range—of compositional styles, of socially relevant topics, of genres—is represented here, and it is an awesome thing to behold, especially in the hands of these well-rehearsed musical aggregations. The recording spans Zappa's wide-ranging musical career, from 1966's *Freak Out!* ("Hungry Freaks, Daddy") to '88's *Broadway The Hard Way* ("Elvis"). In between are lively examples of his rock side ("Dirty Love") and immaculate renditions of his intricate, inimitable orchestral creations ("Brown Shoes," "Nite School," "Waka



Jimmy Giuffre 3

EMPHASIS, STUTTGART 1961—nat ART 6072: *WHIRRRR; EMPHASIS; SONIC; VENTURE; JESUS MARIA; STRETCHING OUT; CARLA; CRY, WANT.* (52:00)

Personnel: Giuffre, clarinet; Paul Bley, piano; Steve Swallow, bass.

★★★★★

Jimmy Giuffre/ André Jaume

EIFFEL—CELPC6: *EIFFEL; MOMENTUM; I'LL BE THERE; STAND POINT; SEQUENCE; OICE; DIALOGUE; DINKY TOYS I; DOTTED LINE; MIRECOURT; DINKY TOYS II.* (39:52)

Personnel: Giuffre, clarinet; Jaume, clarinet, bass clarinet, tenor sax.

★★★ 1/2

While it might seem strange for that ART to release another live concert recorded in Germany (a mere three weeks earlier than last year's *Flight, Bremen, 1961*—see "Reviews" June '93), it is a testament to the extreme flexibility and inventiveness of this, Giuffre's most adventurous trio, that these two CDs make such an ideal set. Though they share four tunes—"Whirrrr," "Sonic," "Cry, Want," and "Stretching Out"—only the final of these seems redundant, and that only because it is four-fifths through-composed. The melodic themes, at once sharp and angular and expressing an overall gentility, are so organically weaved into the trio's improvisations that they take on a new identity each time played, suggesting the mode of musical blending later explored by composer/musicians like Anthony Braxton and Maarten Altena.

Bley's piano playing is aggressive on *Emphasis*: he buzzes strings liberally and dives

inside the piano thunderously over Giuffre's plaintive clarinet on "Cry, Want" and in the midst of "Sonic." And for new material, there is Bley's sprightly "Carla," Carla Bley's coy "Jesus Maria," as well as two more Giuffre beauts.

Recorded live in Paris, 26 years later, Giuffre's 1987 encounter with French reedman Jaume also emphasizes mutability of form. Jaume is an underappreciated player who has been on the scene now for many years; his sound carries the warmth of his home in Marseilles and a clear admiration for Giuffre. *Eiffel* is a calm duet, given over to direct dialogue; there are solos ("Momentum," "Once," "Dotted Line"), and on Jaume's "Stand Point," Giuffre only peers in at the very end. Together, they work lyrically, peaceful cross-talk peppered with plenty of silence. Things occasionally move from quietude to rambling, though it's a genial kind of ramble, like a nice stroll.

—John Corbett



Jazz Mentality

MAXWELL'S TORMENT—VAI Audio VAIA 2002: *MAINSTREAM; BLOOMIDOO; BREATH; IVAN THE TERRIBLE; MY FOOLISH HEART; MOOSEMAN; THE MONK-WALK; ASK ME NOW; MAXWELL'S TORMENT.* (60:41 minutes)

Personnel: Chris Potter, tenor, alto, soprano saxes; Steve Elmer, piano; Ralph Hamperian, bass; Myles Weinstein, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Ryan Kisor

ON THE ONE—Columbia 53563: *ON THE ONE; FAR AWAY; REMEMBERING TOMORROW; THINKING OF YOU; GROOVIN'; VALHALLA; THE DISTANT PRESENT; PUNJAB; DARN THAT DREAM; BEATITUDES.* (66:15)

Personnel: Kisor, trumpet; Chris Potter, alto sax (1-7,10); Mark Turner (1-3,6,8), David Sanchez (3,4,7,10), tenor sax; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Chris McBride, bass (1-8,10); Lewis Nash, drums (1-8,10).

★ ★ ★ ★

Ah, the fearlessness of youth. Ryan Kisor (b. 1973) and Chris Potter (b. 1971) are presently soaring. The tune could be Kisor's "Remembering Tomorrow," Potter's "Valhalla," or several of the others from *On The One*, the trumpeter's second album. Bright, incisive tones cut through the years: bop, hard-bop, and '60s post-bop revisited. These jazzmen run on fearsome chops, and Kisor knows to start cool and build. He won the Monk Institute's trumpet competition in 1990, and Potter was already in Red Rodney's band then. Along with their technique, you get their maturity on *On The One*.

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The band is mostly a sextet, with charts that suggest Blakey's Messengers and occasionally Miles' quintet. The originals (four by Kisor, two each by Potter and producer Bobby Watson) make less of an impact than the playing. The tenor men, who appear together only on "Remembering Tomorrow," are bold, fluid players, with Turner the more angular of the two. (His Joe Henderson-like solo on Henderson's "Punjab" shows both expertise and humor.) Miller (with several darting solos), McBride (another 20-ish prodigy), and Nash (a sure bet for taste and invention) give the horns strong underpinning and interplay.

Potter is Bird to Kisor's Brownie on *On The One*; with the Jazz Mentality, another modern-mainstream group, he plays the field: Bird (obviously) on "Bloorndido," but Frank Morgan on "My Foolish Heart," Trane on Elmer's "Mooseman," Richie Kamuca on Hamperian's "Breath," perhaps Art Pepper or Clifford Jordan here or there. Overall, *Maxwell's Torment* is more laidback than the Kisor album. Elmer is a firm bop pianist with roots in Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner, Bud Powell, and Thelonious Monk. Hamperian brings a Paul Chambers-like warmth to the bass lines, and Weinstein can both play it cool and bear down like Elvin Jones. Potter maintains a boppish conception from horn to horn, although his soprano is very nasal and oboe-ish on Elmer's "Ivan The Terrible."

—Owen Cordle



Glenn Spearman Double Trio

MYSTERY PROJECT—Black Saint 120147-2: *STRAIGHT UP STRAIGHT OUT*; *DOUBLE IMAGE*; *THE SUITE: HORUS*; *S.D. III*; *THINKING OF FRANK*. (68:09)
Personnel: Spearman, tenor saxophone; Larry Ochs, tenor, soprano saxophones; Donald Robinson, William Winant, drums; Chris Brown, piano, Yamaha DX7; Ben Lindgren, double bass.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

The energy is unrelenting, the passion fervent, the musicianship superlative as West Coast tenor saxists Glenn Spearman and Larry Ochs combine trios and launch into a riveting free-form jazz extravaganza. The pieces are developed with stridency and grace. Spearman

zigs, Ochs zags, then both playfully helix their lines skyward. Drummers Donald Robinson and William Winant vigorously spar and thunderously roll. Pianist Chris Brown pounds out turbulent comps and solos with riotous abandon while double-bassist Ben Lindgren bows with a didgeridoo-sounding grittiness and keeps the entire proceedings from jettisoning too far from the compositional moorings.

On the opening piece, Spearman's "Straight Up Straight Out," the conversations rise and fall with rollercoaster intensity as the saxophonists splinter the head, overblow with yelps and wails, and lead the way into improvisational tempests. Likewise, Ochs' "Double Image" evokes images of a storm with torrential downpours of notes, roaring rhythms, and lightning-fast changes. There are even the intermittent lulls, the gentle showers of quiet piano-sax passages before the squalls reappear with a ferocious tenor blowing and swirling piano currents.

The concept for the double trio and this album was conceived at an improvisers festival in Oakland in 1990. It was here that Spearman (a veteran of free-jazz explorations) and Ochs (Rova Saxophone Quartet member and leader of the new-music trio Room) decided to join forces to celebrate the spirit of Ornette Coleman's 1960 double-quartet album, *Free Jazz: Mystery Project* not only successfully and enthusiastically pays homage to Coleman's

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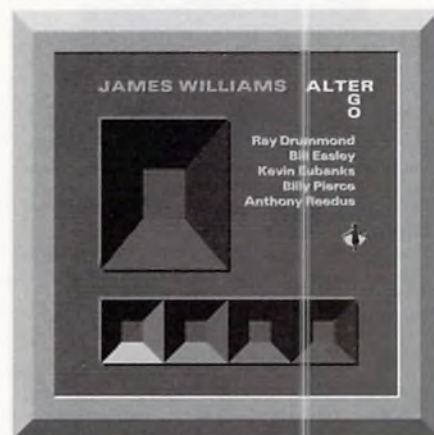
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groundbreaking music, but it also bears testimony to the vitality of the estimable improvisational free-jazz community in the San Francisco Bay Area.

—Dan Ouellette



Vince Jones

ONE DAY SPENT—Intuition 3087 2: *LET'S GET LOST; DETOUR AHEAD; LIKE YOUNG; I WISH YOU LOVE; SINCE I FELL FOR YOU; THE AFTER THOUGHT; TIME AFTER TIME; NEVER LET ME GO; SAVE YOUR LOVE FOR ME; I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN.*

Personnel: Jones, vocals, trumpet (7); Dale Barlow, tenor sax; Benny Green, piano; Charnett Moffett, bass; Carl Allen, drums; big band (10).

★ ★ ★

Vince Jones, twentysomething Glasgow-born naturalized Australian, has tossed his hat in the ring to run for Prince of the New Crooners. Jones' voice is rounded, pleasant, callow, slightly husky/hooty—with a touch of Tony Bennett's youthful blaze, Mose Allison's easy dynamics, and Mel Tormé's downy appeal. He tackles a straightforward set of light standards, all but two with sax and rhythm. He hides behind no clever charts or fancy mic'ing, but neither does he set himself any challenges; that's surprising since he's made 10 gold

albums Down Under.

Jones mostly keeps his pitch, but shows little sustain or vibrato to hold up phrase ends, which drop off. "I Wish You Love" and "Never Let Me Go" are set a tad low for his modest mid-ranged baritone. Jones' tendency to "blue" (flatten) final notes sounds self-conscious, more applied than natural. Despite uncomplicated material—like the pseudo-hip, time-capsule ditty "Like Young"—Jones barely strays from the melody or four-square phrasing.

Jones' bandmate and co-producer Dale Barlow takes sturdy, no-nonsense tenor solos on most tracks. Would that Jones had joined him in a front-line ensemble or two, or that space had been afforded smashing young pianist Benny Green, who shows an appealing facet as accompanist, with firm attack, sensible chordal underpinnings, and just enough pedal. Moffett and Allen mesh with Green fine.

—Fred Bouchard

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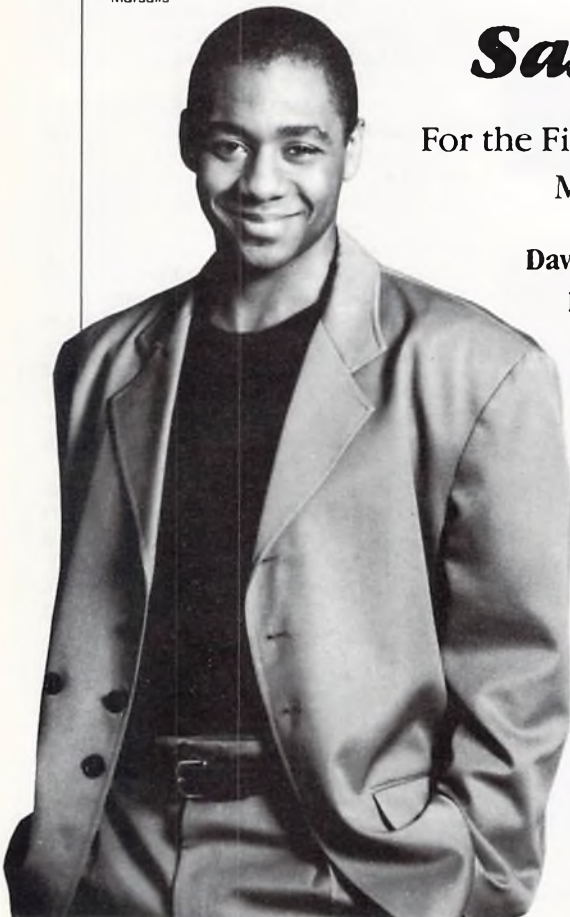
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Latin-Jazz Razzmatazz

by Larry Birnbaum

For most of its 50-year history, Latin jazz, snubbed as a half-breed, has been consigned to the outer fringes of the jazz and Latin scenes. But today, with Latin players fleeing the confines of commercial salsa and some jazz musicians looking outward rather

than backward for inspiration, Latin jazz is finally coming into its own. First-rate albums by established artists and newcomers are appearing at an unprecedented rate, together with reissues that shed a measure of belated glory on the music's founders. Some of the most progressive sounds now come from Cuba.

El Jazz Cubano (World Pacific CDP 0777 7 80599 2 9; 48:33; ★★★★★) is a stunning compilation of the past decade's Cuban jazz. Underexposed pianists Hilario Duran, Frank



Ray Barretto: potent percussion


Emilio, and the late Emiliano Salvador outshine the better-known Gonzalo Rubalcaba and Jesus "Chucho" Valdez here, on the strength of their bands' rhythmic vitality as much as their own post-bop virtuosity. Conga legend Tata Güines, featured with Emilio's group Los Amigos, devastates on "Sandunga Y Mondongo," a white-hot take on Monk's "Evidence."

Valdez' group *Irakere* sounds jazzier than ever on *Live At Ronnie Scott's* (World Pacific CDP 0777 7 80598 2 0; 61:21; ★★★½), recorded two years ago in London. The band is bright and swinging, but the genre-bending experimentalism of its early years is narrowed into a more conventional fusion, and its polished soloists can't match the luster of departed members Paquito D'Rivera and Arturo Sandoval. On *Solo Piano* (Blue Note CDP 0777 7 80597 2 1; 63:16; ★★★½), Valdez plays with little rhythmic or dynamic flexibility, but his richly romantic compositions have a compelling logic of their own.

Back in the States, Jerry Gonzalez and his Fort Apache Band have released *Moliendo Café* (Sunnyside SSC 1061D; 59:16; ★★★★★) arguably their finest album yet. With his twin-depth experience as hard-bop trumpeter and Latin *conguero*, Gonzalez meshes the two idioms into a silky, swinging unity. Drawing personnel (saxophonists Carter Jefferson and Joe Ford, pianist Larry Willis, drummer Steve Berrios, and bassist Andy Gonzalez) as well as material—Latin standards "Obsession" and "Moliendo Café," jazz classics "Stardust," "Summertime," and Wayne Shorter's "El Toro"—from both sides of the cultural divide, the Apaches redefine the state of the art. (Sunnyside: 1-800-654-0279)

Another native New Yorker, Ray Barretto, whose congas supplied the Latin tinge on many vintage hard-bop sessions, takes a funkier, fusion-edged tack on *Ancestral Messages* (Concord Picante CCD-4549; 56:38; ★★★★★). His youthful band lacks seasoning but not spice, as trumpeter Ray Vega, saxophonist Jay Rodriguez, and pianist Hector Martignon solo with poise and promise. The original material is less inspired than tunes by Eddie Harris and Benny Golson, but Barretto's potent percussion keeps the rhythms popping.

Puerto Rico's **Papo Lucca** (see "Riffs" Mar '92) has established an underground reputation as a jazz pianist while leading the durable salsa band Sonora Poncena. On his first-ever solo album, *Latin-Jazz* (Fania JM 669; 46:04; ★★★½), he lives up to his legend, playing mainly electric keyboards in a squarely mainstream yet distinctive and inventive style.



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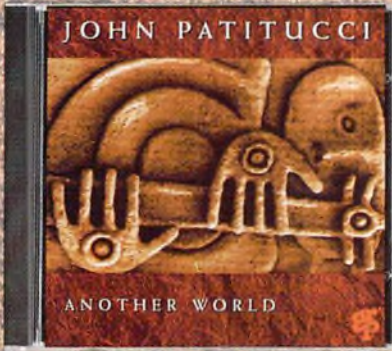

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Switching effortlessly from Latin vamps to Bud Powell-ish improvisations, he locks tightly with a percussion team drawn largely from Sonora Ponceña on a set of mostly original tunes.

Trumpeter **Armando Rodríguez** and drummer **Victor Rendón**, leading their New York-based **Latin Jazz Orchestra**, set galvanically arranged standards to rumba, mambo, cha-cha, songo, and other Cuban beats on *Juarez* (Tortilla Flat TF001CD; 46:05: ★★★★★). Trumpeter Jim Seely, tenorist Peter Brainin, baritonist Pablo Calogero, flutist Mauricio Smith, and pianist Arturo "Chico" O'Farrill solo smartly; but it's the collective impact of horns and percussion that gives this album its solid punch.

Canadian pianist **Kathy Kidd** leads **Kongo Mambo**—drummer Steve Berrios, percussionist Richie Flores, bassist Andy Gonzalez, cuatro player Nelson Jaime, saxophonist David Sanchez, and trumpeter Charlie Sepulveda—on *Do What You Love* (Lowrider LOW-0043; 52:10: ★★★★★). Her keyboard technique is fleet and fluent; her compositions recombine familiar riffs by masters like Tito Puente and Horace Silver with freshness and flair; and her all-star sidemen negotiate the sassy charts with power and pizzazz.

Although he contributed to the recent soundtrack of *The Mambo Kings*, Argentine pianist **Carlos Franzetti**'s style is South American rather than Caribbean. On *Tropic Of Capricorn* (Square Discs SQ-777; 47:00: ★★★★★), he swells and swoons through pensive tangos and breezy sambas, leaning more toward classical music and fusion than bebop. But Franzetti holds his passions in craftsmanly check—even the synthesizer washes sound elegant—while bassist Sergio Brandao and drummer Portinho churn out briskly buoyant beats.

The prolific **Tito Puente** may be suffering from overexposure, but he maintains a regal standard on *Royal T* (Concord Picante CCD-4553; 59:44: ★★★★★). Mario Rivera's tenor sax, Bobby Porcelli's baritone, Piro Rodriguez' trumpet, and Sam Burtis' trombone wail with authority, while Tito's timbales keep the rhythms cooking. Standout tracks include a supersonic version of Charlie Parker's "Donna Lee," a crackling treatment of Mingus' "Moanin'," and a romping rendition of the late Louis Ramirez' "Slam Bam."

The late octogenarian Latin-jazz godfather

Mario Bauza has a new release. *My Time Is Now* (Messidor 15824-2; 46:02: ★★★★★); and if it doesn't quite measure up to his spectacular comeback session, *Tanga*, it's only because nothing here can compete with that album's magnificent Chico O'Farrill-arranged "Tanga" suite. The new disc does offer two dynamic O'Farrill charts, a guest appearance by Paquito D'Rivera, robust vocals by Rudy Calzado and Bauza's sister-in-law Graciela, and the lushest big-band sonorities this side of Jimmie Lunceford.

A 1949 recording of "Tanga" by Machito's Afro-Cuban Orchestra on *The Original Mambo Kings* (Verve 314 513 876-2; 76:12: ★★★★★) is more daringly futuristic than anything in Latin jazz today. Directed by trumpeter Bauza, the orchestra—with guests like Charlie Parker, Flip Phillips, Howard McGhee, and Buddy Rich—is featured on most of the album, and its rhythm section performs with Dizzy Gillespie's Orchestra on "The Manteca Suite." Other material includes Chico O'Farrill's classic "Afro-Cuban Jazz Suite," but it's all great and essential. **DB**

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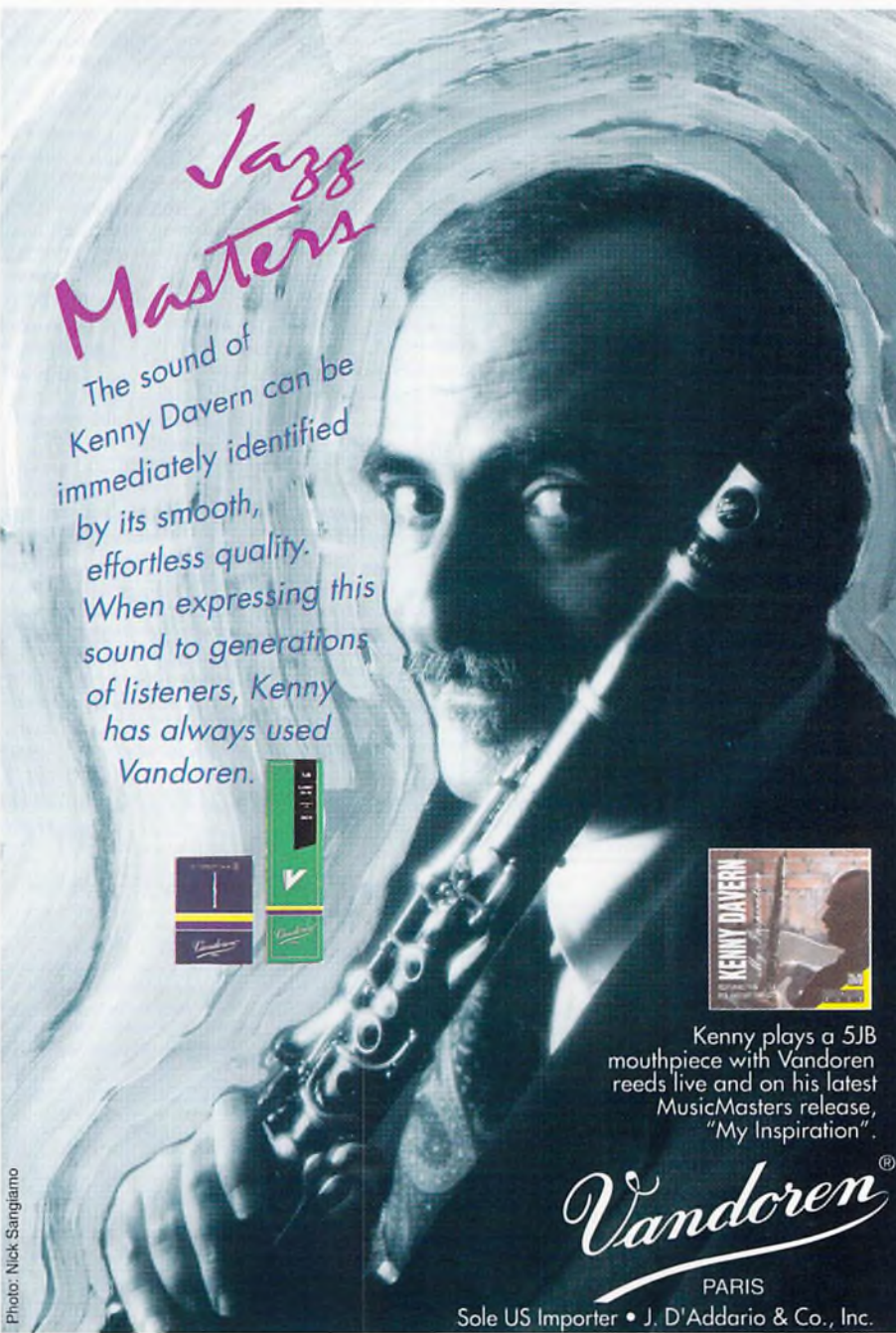
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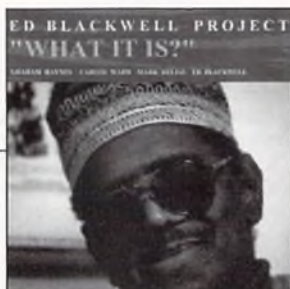
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Ed Blackwell

"WHAT IT IS?"—enja 7089: *NETTE; PETTIFORD BRIDGE; BEAU REGARD; THUMBS UP; MALLET SONG; ROSA TAKES A STAND (FOR ROSA PARKS)*. (62:40 minutes)

Personnel: Blackwell, drums; Graham Haynes, cornet; Carlos Ward, alto sax, flute; Mark Helias, bass.

★ ★ ★

Just two months before DB Hall of Famer Blackwell's death in October 1992, his first "project" as a leader played this 100 percent fat-free date, recorded live at Yoshi's in Oakland during the third annual festival celebrating drummer Eddie Moore (who died of a heart attack onstage at the same club in 1990). Compositions come from Helias ("Beau Regard," "Thumbs Up") and Ward (all others), and are treated to extended readings, often recalling the classic-era Ornette Coleman Quartet, especially on the loose unison heads of "Nette" and "Rosa Takes A Stand."

Ward is characteristically terse and strong, but the standout soloist is Haynes, whose inventive mind is put to good use in the unfettered quartet setting. "Thumbs Up" features a nice coloristic shift to flute and muted cornet, and elsewhere there's no end of hip-socket groove from Helias and Blackwell, who work exceedingly well together. Helias' sound is smooth, deep, and resonant, his raw acoustic funk flawless. Behind, on top, underneath, and in the thick of it all is Blackwell. Whether performing one of his ride-cymbal miracles, stirring up snare trouble behind Haynes' great solo on "Pettiford Bridge," or tapping out a melodic line with his signature tom-tom sound

on "Mallet Song," Blackwell was the master of casual energy—relaxed, responsive, and always swinging.

What it is is that he'll be sorely missed.

—John Corbett



Jeff Beal

THREE GRACES—Triloka 7197-2: *JAZZ HABIT; THREE GRACES; I SAW ISABELLA; WRONG NUMBER; THROUGH A GLASS DIMLY; THE WATCHERS; PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS; DIZZY SPELLS; FOR MILES; WALTZ FOR MARY*. (51:50)

Personnel: Beal, trumpet (1,3,4,6,9), flugelhorn (2,5,7,8), piano (10); Steve Tavaglione, tenor sax (1,8); John Beasley, piano (1-6,8,9); John Patitucci, acoustic bass (1,2,4,5,7-9), electric bass (3,6); Vinnie Colaiuta, drums (1-4,6); Steve Cardenas, electric guitar (3,4,6,9), acoustic guitar (5); Dave Weckl, drums (5,7-9).

★ ★ 1/2

Marvin Stamm

MYSTERY MAN—MusicMasters 01612-65085-2: *MARK TIME; INFLUENCE; MARIONETTE; MAN WITH THE CUCUMBER; RE-RE GIUSEPPE; OLD BALLAD; MYSTERY MAN; A METHOD TO THE MADNESS; MY FUNNY VALENTINE*. (66:03)

Personnel: Stamm, trumpet, flugelhorn; Bob Mintzer, tenor sax (1,2,5,6,8,9); Bob Malach, tenor, soprano saxes (1,6,8); Bill Charlap, piano; Mike Richmond, bass; Terry Clarke, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Most musicians take their inspiration from other musicians, but Jeff Beal could also learn something from the bridge players' adage, "Lead from strength." On *Three Graces* this young musician has spread himself dangerously thin

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by composing and arranging every tune on the album; playing trumpet, flugelhorn, and piano; and producing the recording to boot.

As a trumpet and flugelhorn soloist, Beal shows a penchant for a soft tone and fluid lines. He's a quiet presence rather than a forceful leader. As a composer, Beal's strength is in his harmonies, which, on the boppish "Jazz Habit," for example, can be intriguingly strange. The quirky harmonies on the ballad "Waltz For Mary" also have the potential to grab the listener by the heartstrings, Bill Evans-style. Instead, this performance by Beal, who is a respectable pianist, leaves the listener at a polite distance. Beal comes across as someone who wants permission to break the rules. He has promise, but he needs to focus his energies and let his passion show.

Marvin Stamm has a jump on Beal in terms of musical experience. Still, the title of his new recording, *Mystery Man*, is apt. With this mix of bebop and contemporary styles, he covers a wide range of territory without a strong personal approach to any of it.

Stamm has a gorgeous tone on trumpet and flugelhorn, and he flies through the changes on bop-inspired tunes like "Re-Re." Mintzer sounds great, too, on the swinging "Method To The Madness," and the rhythm section is generally strong.

As a leader, though, Stamm has a chameleon quality rather than a memorable personal style. By offering something for everyone, Stamm ends up frustrating the listener who wishes he would take his best shot at being himself.

—Elaine Guregian



Jay Hoggard

IN THE SPIRIT—Muse 5476: *BYE YA*; *PRAYIN' OUT LOUD*; *STOLEN MOMENTS*; *IN THE SPIRIT OF ERIC DOLPHY*; *PEACEFUL MESSENGER OF GOD'S MUSIC*; *ANDREW*; *GAZZELONI*; *DE POIS DO AMOR O VAZIO (AFTER LOVE)*; *WITHOUT A SONG*. (56:11)

Personnel: Hoggard, vibraphone; James Newton, flute; Dwight Andrews, bass clarinet, soprano sax, alto flute; Mark Helias, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Don't be fooled by the opening track, a fairly straight-ahead rendition of Monk's "Bye Ya": Jay Hoggard, the eclectic vibraphone virtuoso known for his association with the New Haven-based chamber-jazz movement of the '80s and his subsequent dabblings with commercial funk-fusion, has not jumped on the back-to-bop bandwagon. Instead, his latest album is a tribute to Eric Dolphy, an acknowledged master who, despite the relative accessibility of his

music, has so far been excluded from the neo-trad canon.

Hoggard's stellar quintet brings an airy, post-bop sensibility to bear on mainstream material like Oliver Nelson's "Stolen Moments" and the vibist's own bluesy "Prayin' Out Loud," stripping the clichés from even so familiar a standard as Vincent Youmans' "Without A Song." But the musicians seem more at home on abstract tunes like Dolphy's "Gazzeloni." An-

thony Davis' "Andrew," and Hoggard's title track. Newton flutters incisively, while Hoggard shimmers with an edgy angularity that dispels mere prettiness. Andrews acquits himself well on bass clarinet but can't match Dolphy's penetrating tone or leaping energy. Helias is supple and solid, but it's Blackwell, on one of his last studio dates, who really cements the session, walking cool and proud between earth and sky.

—Larry Birnbaum

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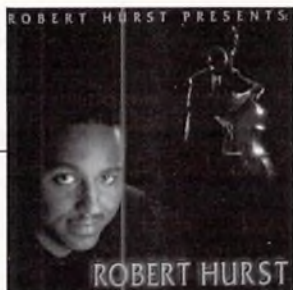
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Personnel: Hurst, bass; Marcus Belgrave, trumpet, flugelhorn; Branford Marsalis, soprano, alto and tenor saxes, clarinet; Kenny Kirkland, piano; Jeff Tain Watts, drums; Ralph Miles Jones, bass clarinet, bassoon (5.6.12).

★★★★

Bassist Robert Hurst has come up with an ambitious debut as a recording leader. He wrote all the compositions and arrangements

except Monk's "Evidence," which serves as a locus to the CD as a whole. Hurst performs the tune as a well-developed solo vehicle for bass, and also utilizes its succinct melodic and rhythmic motifs in his own writing. Typical of much jazz composition today, Hurst's pieces rely on brief motifs, some of which are quite fragmentary and obtuse, leaving much to the improviser. Throughout this disc, the compositional elements—melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic—appear, disappear, reappear, and are tossed adeptly from one band member to another. To Hurst's credit, for the most part, his ideas flow from tune to tune in a suite-like manner.

A bittersweet quality pervades much of the recording; most of the tunes are in a minor key and designed for moderate or slow tempos. The interplay between the horns reinforces this somewhat dark atmosphere; Marsalis and Belgrave glow in this setting, and Ralph Jones' bass-clarinet and bassoon parts add an amber resonance to the songs he plays on. "Blue Freeze," a major blues, is uplifting after all the pensiveness, but is the only tune that doesn't quite fit. The intensity of such uptempo numbers as "Devil's Night In Motown," which rips through the disc's profoundly introspective mood, feels more appropriate.

—Stephanie Stein



Nicky Skopelitis

EKSTATIS—Axiom 314 514 518-2: *Tarab; Meet Your Maker; Ghost Of A Chance; Proud Flesh; Sanctuary; One Eye Open; Heresy; Jubilee; Witness; Telling Time.* (56:53)

Personnel: Skopelitis, electric guitars, Baglama, sitar, dobro; Jah Wobble, bass; Joseph "Zigaboo" Modeliste (1.3.6.10), Jaki Lieberzeit (2.4.5.7-9), drums; Zakir Hussain, tablas (1); Guilherme Franco, Aiyb Dieng, percussion; Foday Musa Suso, doussongoni, kora; Simon Shaheen, violin, oud; Amina Claudine Myers, organ; Bachir Altar, flute, Ghaita.

★★★★

Ekstasis is a somewhat uneven, but at times

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gloriously grooving effort from Skopelitis, the guitarist who has been adding his unique "industrial jazz" licks to producer Bill Laswell's music for the past several years. He brews a strange stew here, grinding out one improbable part after another, building his world beats until they're wasted.

With drummers Jaki Liebeck and Ziggy Modeliste trading tunes, the results include the huge, loose, drum-oriented pocket on "Proud Flesh" and the tight, Meters-like syncopation of "One Eye Open," where Skopelitis sustains his intriguing coral-sitar sounds under Shaheen's violin solo. "Heresy" is a jam tune (and I mean Pearl Jam) that gets kind of Hawaiian with Skopelitis' electric-slide work. On "Witness," he mixes dobro into the fray with Suso's doussongoni, while Shaheen's violin cries over the drone (and isn't that really Ginger Baker on drums?).

Bassist Jah Wobble, never does. The psychedelic funk of "Telling Time" is what Stax Records might have sounded like if it had been located in San Francisco. Skopelitis has a knack for creating fascinating musical spaces and textures, e.g., when he locates the telling, circular melody on "Proud Flesh."

—Robin Tolleson



Joe Sample

INVITATION—Warner Bros. 9 45209-2: *BLACK IS THE COLOR; A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME; COME RAIN OR COME SHINE; INVITATION; SUMMERTIME; NICA'S DREAM; STORMY WEATHER; DJANGO; MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE; MOOD INDIGO.* (49:58)

Personnel: Sample, piano, synthesizers; Cecil McBee, bass; Victor Lewis, drums; Lenny Castro, percussion; New York Philharmonic, Metropolitan Opera orchestra.

★ ★ 1/2

Here's a whole different take on the lush life, where orchestral arrangements create a sheen over 10 standards given a jazz-pop treatment by pianist Joe Sample. If it weren't for his short but elegant solo excursions, Sample would be treading awfully close to making muzak out of some of the tunes (e.g., "Summertime" and "Stormy Weather"). This easy-listening and safe collection stagnates in the slow tempo zone (despite plenty of fine brush work by drummer Victor Lewis), which makes it a shoo-in for the dinner-jazz crowd bent on not being disturbed while conversing and sipping char-donnay. All is not sanitized beauty, though, as Sample pushes out an animated solo on the appealing title number and he and his band offer entrancing renditions of "Nica's Dream" and "Mood Indigo."

—Dan Ouellette

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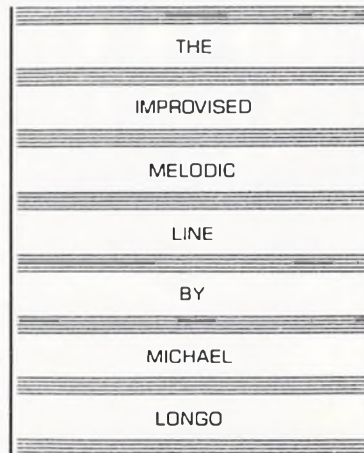
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Paul Smoker
Trio, Genuine
Fables

Paul Smoker

GENUINE FABLES—hat ART 6126: *TOTAL ECLIPSE; St. LOUIS BLUES; TETRA; LAURA; FABLES OF FAUBUS; HELLO, YOUNG LOVERS.* (59:33)
Personnel: Smoker, trumpet; Ron Rohovit, bass; Phil Haynes, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Paul Smoker is the best trumpeter to roll out of Iowa since Bix Beiderbecke. Unleashing his downright scary musicianship on the pan-

stylistic perspective pioneered by Lester Bowie, Smoker has reconciled heretofore unjoinable aspects of jazz trumpet history, represented by such unlikely pairings as Don Cherry and Shorty Rogers, and Leo Smith and Maynard Ferguson. Smoker's conceptual boldness and technical brilliance is well-detailed on *Genuine Fables*, an '88 date that inventively mixes adventurous originals, flexible readings of jazz classics, and off-center recastings of lounge staples.

The occasional over-sweetening of Smoker's already-rich sound with board-fed reverb, particularly on his space-sensitive "Tetra," is the set's only noteworthy drawback. Otherwise, this album is the real deal. The Paul Smoker Trio—Smoker, Ron Rohovit, and Phil Haynes—have an insatiable appetite for collective brinkmanship, whether it's pummeling the starch out of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Hello, Young Lovers," or upending "St. Louis Blues" with a slightly jaundiced take on '80s neo-classicism.

They love the music enough to mess with it, and they love playing with each other enough to take it to the limit each time out. *Genuine Fables* is the genuine article. ---Bill Shoemaker

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Larry Carlton

RENEGADE GENTLEMAN—GRP GRD-9723:
*CRAZY MAMA; R.C.M.; SLEEP MEDICINE; COLD DAY
IN HELL; ANTHEM; AMEN A.C.; NEVER SAY NAW;
FARM JAZZ; NOTHIN' COMES; BOJNER; RED HOT
POKER.* (56:24)

Personnel: Carlton, guitar, vocals (1,7); Terry McMillan, harmonica, percussion, vocals (4); Michael Rhodes, bass; Chuck Leavell (1,4,6,7,9), Matt Rollins (2,3,5,8,10,11), keyboards; Chris Layton (1,4,6,7,9), John Ferraro (2,3,5,8,10,11), drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

The renegade Carlton gets down and gritty in this package of Southern rock and blues tunes recorded in 1991 L.A. and 1993 Nashville sessions. Some instrumentals like "Farm Jazz" stray too long in a smooth and antiseptic zone. Yet, many fire on all cylinders, including "Amen A.C.," the scorching tribute to Albert Collins, and the catchy Memphis-blues flavored melody "R.C.M." Plus, Carlton proves to be a fine singer in his first recorded vocal outing since 1980. He cruises through J.J. Cale's "Crazy Mama" and gives a bluesy reading of the Percy Mayfield song Ray Charles made famous, "Never Say Naw." Big bonus is Nashville harmonica ace Terry McMillan, who injects just the right abrasive riffs into the proceedings.

---Dan Ouellette



Rickey Woodard

THE TOKYO EXPRESS—Candid 79527: *RECORD-A ME; THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU; JUST FRIENDS; SAND DANCE; EASY LIVING; GROOVY SAMBA; POLKA DOTS AND MOONBEAMS; THE TOKYO EXPRESS.* (63:39)

Personnel: Woodard, alto, tenor saxes; James Williams, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Joe Chambers, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Rickey Woodard delivers savory sax lines on his sophomore outing recorded live at Birdland in New York. He cruises straight ahead through Joe Henderson's melodic "Record-a Me," blows soul into "The Very Thought Of You," and rides a gently swinging groove through "Just Friends." Noteworthy moments the rest of the way include Woodard's sumptuous alto sax whines on the ballad "Easy Living" and the engaging solos both pianist James Williams and bassist Christian McBride bestow on the buoyant "Sand Dance," one of two pieces composed by Woodard. Everyone in the quartet really stretches out and blows for the first time on the vigorous set-ending, Woodard-penned title number. More originals and more unrestrained playing could well have made this gig even stronger. —D.O.



Ali Farka Toure

THE SOURCE—Hannibal HNCD 1375: *GOYE KUR; INCHANA MASSINA; ROUCKY; DOFANA; KARAW; HAWA DOLO; CINQUANTE SIX; I GO KA; YENNA; MAHINI ME.* (60:34)

Personnel: Toure, vocals, electric, acoustic guitars, njarka fiddle, percussion; Affel Bocoum, vocals; Hamma Sankare, calabash, background vocals; Oumar Toure, congas, background vocals; Taj Mahal (3,10), Rory McCleod, acoustic guitar (3); Nana Tsiobe, percussion (6); Nitin Sawney, tablas (2).

★ ★ ★ ★

On his third album available in the States, brilliant guitarist Ali Farka Toure once again

serves up a superb set of his folksy Malian blues. It's a stunning meld of American acoustic blues and gentle West African rhythms. Toure's music is calming and mesmerizing, with delicate drone-like riffs, deceptively simple and unpretentious guitar solos, and joyful vocals. His songs are delivered in a laid-back and deeply soulful style. Sung in four different African languages, they are about such atypical topics (at least by Western pop-music standards) as honor and resisting corruption, devotion to good works, and being careful not to have a wagging tongue.

Highlights include the buoyant lead-off num-

ber, "Goye Kur," with its ringing electric-guitar beat, steady percussive clipping and celebratory vocals, and the quiet but bouncy solo acoustic-guitar instrumental, "Cinquante Six." However, the best songs are the two tracks where Taj Mahal guests. "Roucky" is a show-stopping jam (with additional acoustic-guitar support from Rory McCleod) of slow blues lines and spicy slide licks. And when Mahal and Toure play off each other on the jaunty "Mahini Me," there's more going on than guitarists talking to each other through their instruments. It's an intercontinental African-American celebration of the blues. —Dan Ouellette

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Jazz Labyrinths

by Jack Sohmer

If they serve no more elevated purpose than as training camps for tomorrow's studio session players, then at least our college and high school bands are exposing their fellow students to a musical diet far more challenging than much of what passes for popular music these days.

Historically, one of the first and best of these is the **University of North Texas' One O'Clock Lab Band**, whose *Lab 92* (North Texas Jazz 9201; 59:49; ★★★★★), in defiance of conventional practice, both opens and closes with ballads, the first a piece by director Neil Slater, and the second, "Too Young To Go Steady," a rarely heard Jimmy McHugh standard that features trombonist Greg Waits. In between, we hear a variety of tempos and styles, including a stride-piano solo by Tim Harrison on Thad Jories' "Fingers." Other soloists of merit are saxmen Jeff Antoniuk and Chris Karlic. This school has also released an anthology called *The Best Of One O'Clock* (Amazing Records 1027; 64:07; ★★★★★) that includes performances from 1967 to 1990. Especially enjoyable are the brass and saxes on the non-fusion tracks, but unfortunately their names were not singled out for mention.

California Institute Of The Arts has produced the most musically varied program of the lot in *1993 Jazz* (DPRO 79729; 60:37; ★★★★★), an album that ranges from modern combo jazz through authentic hot Latin to an improvisation on a Macedonian folk song. The instrumentation and personnel constantly shift

from title to title, what with a six-man percussion choir playing only hi-hat cymbals on one track, a big band on another, two harmonized flutes with soft rhythm here, and jazz saxes there. What finally emerges is an impression of great diversity of talent and decidedly global view of what constitutes jazz.

While closer in concept to what most people would identify as contemporary big-band jazz, the next several units, as far as these recordings go, largely err in the direction of conformity and predictability. Undeniably, there are subtle differences to be heard among them, but these lie typically in the area of individual levels of technical competence rather than in the broader arena of contrasting styles. Thus, **Youngstown State University's Jazz Ensemble 1's** *Things To Come* (SPI 9101; 69:37; ★★★★★), **De Paul University Jazz Ensemble's** *Have You Heard?* (DPUJE-001; 45:38; ★★★★★), **Western Illinois University Jazz Studio Orchestra's** *Jazz At The Crossroads* (Walrus Records 4505; 68:38; ★★★★★), **University Of Northern Iowa Jazz Band One's** *Northern Exposure* (UNI 82592; 52:59; ★★★★★), and **McGill Jazz Ensemble's** *Cookin' The Blues* (McGill 750044; 62:36; ★★★★★) all sound as if their many young participants had been uniformly robotized by the same handful of musical models, studied the same texts, mastered the same exercises, practiced out of the same folios of solo transcriptions, and, what is even more distressing, never had a chance to jam with jazzmen from musical backgrounds and generations different from their own.

Here, all of these musicians excel at precise, and sometimes even spirited, sectional team-

work. But their main soloists—Youngstown's Mike Kamuf, Ron Fleischman, Bob Matchett, Jack Hasselbring, and Brian Scott; WIU's Peter Hannen and Stephen Kummer; McGill's Kelly Jefferson, Brian O'Kane, Michel Therrien, and Kelsey Grant; UNI's Lenny Roberts, Kevin Hanna, and all six trumpeters—are largely indistinguishable from one another. Again, they differ only in detail. However, DePaul's Scott Hall, Brian Culbertson, Bryan Olson, and Chris Salas do seem to stand out, the reason being that their solo styles are not so obviously formed from the same cookie-cutter molds. Any student of big-band history should know that the most memorable jazz soloists were those who had readily identifiable styles, i.e., distinctive tones, original ideas, and a palpably urgent need for creative self-expression. Intangibles that are nearly impossible to teach.

At opposite ends of the spectrum are the two final submissions. **Houston's High School For Performing and Visual Arts' Inner Glimpse** (Star City 73141; 60:00; ★★) is a poorly recorded cassette that offers four tunes each by its big band and quintet, but the lo-fi sound quality is so below standard that even the most earnest players involved sound bland and uninterested. The best entry, by far, is that of the **Western Jazz Quartet**, whose *Firebird* (SMR 9201; 57:10; ★★★★★) brings together the collective talents of Western Michigan University's resident Music School faculty: saxman Trent Kynaston (a DB contributor), pianist Stephen Zegree, bassist Thomas Knific, and famed drummer Billy Hart, who turns his kit over to alumnus Sam Nead on the last of seven highly professional tracks. **DB**

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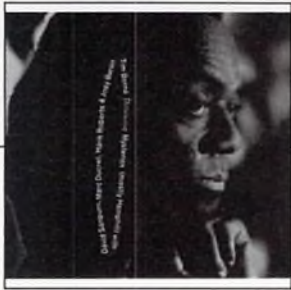
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Tim Berne

DIMINUTIVE MYSTERIES (MOSTLY HEMPHILL)—JMT 514 003-2: *SOUNDS IN THE FOG*; *SERIAL ABSTRACTIONS*; *OUT, THE REGULAR*; *THE UNKNOWN*; *WRITHING LOVE LINES*; *RITES*; *THE MAZE (FOR JULIUS)*; *MYSTERY TO ME*. (66:11)

Personnel: Berne, alto, baritone saxes; David Sanborn, soprano, alto saxes; Marc Ducret, guitar; Hank Roberts, cello; Joey Baron, drums; Herb Robertson, trumpet, cornet, flugelhorn (7); Mark Dresser, bass (7).

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Widen scope, all ye who enter here. Tim Berne moves from strength to strength, and on *Diminutive Mysteries* he has garnered all his creative juices for a dedication to his mentor, Julius Hemphill. It is a clamorous, brash, invigorating affair, bursting with energy, unusual ideas, and

creative combinations of sound. Hemphill contributed the bare bones of five pieces written especially for the project—the first five cuts—and his compositional signature is clearly in the mix. Berne fleshed the charts out, opting for loads of color and encouraging ensemble improvisation rather than standard-issue, rhythm-section/solo form.

The leader concentrates on baritone, adding rubbery textures to "Sounds In The Fog" and bluesy lines to the "The Unknown." Sanborn (here, proving himself more than the out-music dilettante I once thought him to be) also wets the reed of his second horn, sticking mostly to his tart soprano. Ducret is an unabashed Frisellophile, and Berne uses Roberts as Hemphill does Abdul Wadud, sending him back and forth from timbral tincture to funky strut. His usual nuts-genius self, Baron is able to shift gears instantaneously and kick a sodden section into swingin' overdrive, or conversely, to make scrunchy noise over a sweet bit.

Berne's labyrinthine composition "The Maze" clocks in at 21 minutes, with added help from Berne regulars Dresser and Robertson, and the remaining pieces are drawn from Hemphill's back catalog. Things end abruptly, tunes emerge and disappear enigmatically, and there's a perverse, slightly inexplicable joy about this music. It's those little mysteries that count.

—John Corbett



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1 McCoy Tyner Big Band

"Uptown" (from *UPTOWN/DOWNTOWN*, Milestone, 1988).

Four stars. This is McCoy Tyner. I love it, but I wish he had stretched out a little longer with some of his melodic lines. I love those solos he did on [John Coltrane's] *A Love Supreme*. I miss those. There's a lot of great chordal and rhythmic work here; but whenever I think of McCoy, I think of those wonderful, long, extended lines he plays. I suppose some pieces get cut short because the record industry doesn't want them too long. Otherwise, they might not get played on the radio.

2 Geri Allen Trio

"Skin" (from *TWYLIGHT*, Verve, 1989) Allen, piano; Jaribu Shahid, bass; Tani Tabbal, drums.

I'm not sure who this is, but I have the same complaint as with the Bud Powell composition. The piece isn't allowed to develop. Not that there can't be short gems. But this doesn't really work for me. First, you have the theme, then some out playing, then a return to the theme. I don't like the out playing. I'm not sure what it has to do with the beginning or the end. 3 stars.

3 Jane Bunnett & Don Pullen

"Double Arc Jake" (from *NEW YORK DUETS, MUSIC & ARTS*, 1989) Bunnett, soprano sax; Pullen, piano.

Four stars. There was a long section in there that sounded like Don Pullen, especially with the left-hand rhythm work. It's him? I wasn't sure because in the beginning of the piece the playing was done with such a light touch that it didn't sound like Don. I remember performing once at the Knitting Factory and literally having to wipe the blood off the keys after he played. This has great piano work, but I felt the piece could have been condensed. There was a part that sounded like the end, but they kept playing. What happened afterwards was wonderful, but I like strong endings. I don't like endings that go on. It actually happens sometimes with my own group, too, when I find a good place to end, but my band keeps going.

4 Bud Powell

"Bud On Bach" (from *THE BEST OF BUD POWELL*, Blue Note, 1957).

That's by a real old guy. I'm going to give it 2 or 3 stars, and watch, it's going to be Bud Powell. 2½ stars. There was some sloppy playing at the beginning part of the theme. What he ended up doing was fine, but it

MARILYN CRISPELL



BRIAN MCWILLIEN

by Dan Ouellette

Marilyn Crispell approaches her instrument with a whirlwind intensity

and a fierce romanticism that's made her a leader among avant-garde pianists. The classically trained Crispell, whose demanding music melds structured composition with freewheeling improvisation, leads her own trio, quartet, and quintet and frequently performs with Anthony Braxton's quartet. Her superb Music & Arts trio album, *Highlights From The Summer Of 1992 American Tour*, with bassist Reggie Workman and drummer Gerry Hemingway, was released earlier this year (see "Reviews" June '93), and *Live In Berlin*, a quartet outing recorded in 1982, will be reissued this month on the Black Saint label.

This is Crispell's first Blindfold Test. It took place in her hotel suite in Oakland during a six-night stint at Keystone Korner Yoshi's with the Anthony Braxton Quartet.

wasn't developed much. It's not Bud Powell, but someone before him. The melodic lines remind me of him, but it can't be him. It is? I guess I'm better at recognizing people than I thought. I'd like to hear that again.

5 Art Ensemble Of Chicago with Cecil Taylor

"Excerpt From Fifteen Part 3A" (from *THELONIOUS SPHERE MONK: DREAMING OF THE MASTERS VOL. 2*, DIW Columbia, 1991) Taylor, piano; Lester Bowie, trumpet; Joseph Jarman, Roscoe Mitchell, saxophones; Malachi Favors Maghostut, bass; Famoudou Don Moye, drums, percussion.

I loved this from the very first moment. 5 stars. You can hear Cecil's trademarks all the way through the piece. There are certain things that he does that identify him, things like playing with a lot of energy and playing in extended tonality. At the beginning of the piece, I thought that the music had a Chicago sound to it, so I was wondering how it could be Cecil. Then I remembered the album he did with the Art Ensemble. People are going to think that just because it's Cecil I'm giving it 5 stars, but, really, this is the best music you've played so far. I loved it all the way through and thought it hung together really well. It was beautiful and strong. The players moved organically from one feeling to the next in the piece.

6 Billy Taylor

"You're Mine" (from *DR. T, GRP*, 1992) Taylor,

piano; Victor Gaskin, bass; Bobby Thomas, drums.

That's really fine. 4 stars. It almost sounds like McCoy, but the lines played with the right hand are softer and lighter than how McCoy would have played them. It's not particularly adventurous playing, but the rhythm was strong and I've always been impressed by someone playing strong melodic lines. I liked it.

7 David Murray & Friends

"Blues For X" (from *MX, Red Baron*, 1992) Murray, Ravi Coltrane, tenor saxophones; John Hicks, piano; Bobby Bradford, cornet; Fred Hopkins, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.

It's great. Another 5 stars. It's the same thing as with Cecil and the Art Ensemble. The piece is long, but it hung together as it went through different spaces that were connected organically. It really swings. The playing is great, and I like the composition. I'm really curious as to who this is.

DO: *It's David Murray with John Hicks on piano.*

I haven't heard much of David's work, but I'm going to have to get this CD. I love John Hicks' playing. He's one of the few pianists I know who sounds just as good when he plays contemporary pieces as when he's working with more traditional material. It's not like a pianist who works in the mainstream realm, then decides to let loose for five minutes and senselessly bang around. Everything he does in this piece is excellent. DB