

60TH ANNIVERSARY KICKOFF

# DOWN BEAT

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DAVE HENDERSON

## DB KICKS OFF 60th ANNIVERSARY

Cover photos by William Gottlieb (Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday), Ray Flerlage (Muddy Waters), Hyou Vieiz (Ornette Coleman), Ted Williams (Buddy Rich), Charles Stewart (Thelonious Monk), and Columbia Records (Miles Davis)

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Duke Ellington

# Duke Says Swing is Stagnant!

*Duke Ellington was not only a master musician, he could write as well. This February 1939 article found him on the attack as he discussed the current craze of swing music in light of jazz overall. In a related interview, from July 7, 1954, Ellington talked about his then-current big project.*

**By Duke Ellington**

**T**he most significant thing that can be said about swing music today is that it has become stagnant.

Nothing of importance, nothing new, nothing either original or creative has occurred in the swing field during the last two years.

It becomes necessary to adopt a far-seeing and mature point of view when considering the current popularity of swing, revising in the mind's eye its inception, the conditions and circumstances surrounding its birth and growth, and the completion of the cycle as it appears today. Much has been written about swing, it has been defined 1,999 times, and it has been the subject of much controversy.

An ironic twist to the situation has bitten deeply into the minds of many of the actual purveyors of swing music. Those musicians who were "swinging" on their instruments 10 and 15 years ago (before the appellation "swing" had any significance other than that of inferring in what style the music was to be played) today look on, some with amusement, others with intolerance, at the farce which is being played out to the full on that merry-go-round known as the amusement world.

What is important is the fact that Jazz has something to say. It speaks in many manners, taking always original and authentic form. Still in the throes of development and formation, it has fought its way upwards through the effortful struggles of sincere and irate musicians, has fought to escape mal-judgment at the hands of its own "causified critics," those fanatical fans who have woven about it interminable toils. It has striven in a world of other values, to get across its own message, and in so doing, is

striving toward legitimate acceptance, in proportion to its own merits.

Granted then that Child Jazz shows promise, let's swing the spotlight over toward the adolescent youth, Swing. It's not so very difficult to understand the evolution of Jazz into Swing. Ten years ago, when this type of music was flourishing, albeit amidst adverse conditions and surrounded by hearty indifference, there were yet those few enthusiasts in whom the music struck a responsive chord. . . .

Before proceeding to explain why I feel that the music is stagnant at the present time, it is only fair to recognize certain beneficial effects which the swing craze has brought about. Without any question, qualifications for playing swing music demand superior musicianship than that heretofore required. Greater flexibility, superior tone and range, and intelligence in the use of phrasing and dynamics are all qualities that are far more consistently demanded from the swing musician than they were in the past from the average player.

Accordingly, the myriad of bands throughout the country today, who are modeling themselves along the lines of a Benny Goodman or a Red Norvo, rather than along the lines of any out-and-out popular dance band, are cultivating a higher standard of musicianship among the younger professionals who are striving, musically speaking, to get their feet on the ground. Young bands trying to make their way these days are more apt to play cleanly and in tune than has been the habit in the past. . . .

I believe that there has been little or no progress in swing music of late. It is the repetition and monotony of the present-day swing arrangements which bode ill for the future. The mechanics of most of the current "killer-dillers" are similar and of elementary quality.

Once again, it is proven that when the artistic point of view gains commercial standing, artistry itself bows out, leaving inspiration to die a slow death. The present dearth of creative and original music is not, I'm convinced, due to a lack of talent.

## Duke Ellington Writing Musical History of Negro

New York—Duke Ellington is working on plans for a production of his musical narrative history of the Negro.

"The musical foundation," he indicated during his recent stay at Birdland, "will be *Black, Brown And Beige*. I've added, however, a chorus and dancers. The sound part of the work will be done in oratorio fashion with the troupe of dancers pantomiming and dancing the development of the music.

"Several major singers I've talked to are enthusiastic about the project. I can't talk specific dates with them until I know myself when I can do it. But among those singers who are interested are William Warfield, Larry Winters, and Margaret Tynes. Janet Collins, the leading bal-

lerina of the Metropolitan, is also enthusiastic.

"We even have buyers for it—buyers before the production!—who would underwrite it. We can travel with it like with a concert presentation. But if we could set it down on the Main Stem for a while, that wouldn't hurt me or anybody else.

"I originally thought I would do it this fall, but since I'm doing the tour with Dave Brubeck and Gerry Mulligan, it'll have to be after that, and possibly that's when I'll be able to undertake it.

"Actually," concluded Duke, "I am such an optimist, I keep my fingers going in so many things—call me tenacles, for short."

The adage, "necessity is the mother of invention," can very aptly be applied to our situation. The responsibility of improving audience level lies with the critics, who might well give their particular job more serious consideration. When audience level improves, it will likely inspire our artists to a high level. Swing is merely one element in good dance music. Pure swing is monotonous. I feel strongly that the swing "craze" has been harmful since it has done two or three damaging things to popular music.

It has thwarted the improvement of many

good bands, which for commercial reasons remain in the same uninspired groove and refuse to risk rising above the current public taste.

It is, however, encouraging to note that there has been a closer affinity between the exponent of swing music and the exponent of legitimate music. It is pleasant to hope that the series of lectures and concerts promoted by Walter N. Neumberg of the Town Hall music committee, and other prominent musical personalities, now being conducted in New York's Town Hall, devoted to a study of

Jazz as a native American art, will perhaps encourage the general public to give more serious thought to the music of today, and to show further discrimination and to seek high levels in the music which they have made popular.

Benny Goodman's performance with the Budapest string quartet, rendering Mozart's *Quintet For Clarinet And Strings*, was still another step in the right direction, demanding serious approbation for the swing musician. There is being shown at the present time a definite trend in this direction which offers some promise for the future of swing. Without any doubt, progress must await audience development.

We are not concerned personally with these conditions, because our aim has always been the development of an authentic Negro music, of which swing is only one element. We are not interested primarily in the playing of jazz or swing music, but in producing musically a genuine contribution from our race. Our music is always intended to be definitely and purely racial. We try to complete a cycle.

As a group of musicians, we understand each other well. We have identical feelings and beliefs in music. Our inspiration is derived from our lives, and the lives of those about us, and those that went before us. The boys in our band play in a certain style; the music I write is inspired by those things they play. We write the music for the men in our band, it is inspired by those men, and they play it with the realization and understanding that they are playing their own music.

DB

## Louis Armstrong

# 'My Chops Was Beat -- But I'm Dyin' To Swing Again'

DB, in what appears to be our first real interview, from June 1935, caught Louis Armstrong as he began one of many "comebacks," this time after a two-year absence from the States.

Louis Armstrong and his newly formed orchestra begin a tour of one-nighters, opening at Indianapolis the first week in July. Joe Glaser, Louis' newly acquired personal manager, is handling the details of the bookings.

Louis Armstrong, king of the trumpet, whose freak lip and "hot" solos have amazed and delighted musicians for 10 years, will definitely resume his career the first week in July.

"My chops was beat when I got back from Europe," said the leather-lipped and balloon-lunged Louis. "My manager worked me too hard, and I was so tired when I got back that I didn't even want to see the points of my horn. And 'pops,' he wouldn't even let the 'cats' come 'backstage' to visit me, and you know I'm always glad to see everybody."

All musicians are "cats" to Armstrong. He usually addresses his acquaintances as "pops" or "gate."

Armstrong has been resting in the Chicago home of his mother-in-law waiting for his contract with manager Collins to expire.

His inactivity and seclusion has started a





score of rumors that he had "lost his lip," that he had a split lip, that his former wife [Lil Hardin Armstrong], now leading her own band, had tied up his earnings to satisfy the demands of her suit for alimony, and so on. Musicians all over the world wondered what the real truth was in Louis' "solitude."

"My chops is fine, now," Armstrong said, "and I'm dying to swing out again. They gave me a new trumpet over in Europe, and I've

got a smaller mouthpiece than I had on my old horn. And my old first-trumpet man, Randolph, is making some swell arrangements. I'm all rested up and dying to get going again."

Asked what he thought of American dance bands after his two-year absence from the States, Louis said, "I think Benny Goodman and Casa Loma have mighty fine bands." His attention was called to Louis Prima, an

Italian youth from his hometown of New Orleans, who is creating something of a sensation at the Famous Door in New York.

"I don't know Prima," Louis replied, "but his voice on phonograph records tells you that he's a mighty sweet boy. And say," Louis replied with a great deal of enthusiasm, "my old drummer, Zutty Singleton, has a nice little band right here in Chicago." Zutty plays nightly at the famous Three Deuces. **DB**

Billie Holiday

# 'Don't Blame Show Biz!' -- Billie

*Back on June 4, 1947, when this piece ran, times were particularly tough for Billie Holiday. Her career had hit a snag with the law on drug charges. A candid, and touching, look at Lady Day.*

By Michael Levin

**W**hen you're writing, straighten them out about my people. Tell 'em maybe I made my mistake, but that show people aren't all like that. Whatever I did wrong, nobody else but me was to blame—and show people aren't wrong."

That's what Billie Holiday said 10 days ago before arraignment in Philadelphia federal court on charges of possessing heroin in her Attucks hotel room there.

"I'm not offering an alibi, I'm not singing the blues. Things weren't easy. There were a

lot of things I didn't have when I was a kid. My mother died 18 months ago, the only relative I had in the world. I guess I flipped, run through over \$100,000 since then.

"But I was trying to go straight. It just seems as though I have a jinx over me. I was with Count Basie when things were really rough, then I had a fight with John Hammond and got fired. I stuck with Artie Shaw through that southern road tour, we got back to New York, and they had to let me go. It's been one thing after another.

"This year I made a picture, my records were really selling, it was going to be my time.

"Now it looks finished. I'm through—at least for a while. After all this is over, maybe I'll go to Europe, perhaps Paris, and try to start all over. Sure, I know about Gene Krupa—but don't forget he's white and I'm a Negro. I've got two strikes against me and don't you forget it.

"I'm proud of those two strikes. I'm as good as a lot of people of all kinds—I'm proud I'm a Negro. And you know the funniest thing: the people that are going to be hardest on me will be my own race. Look what they did to Billy Eckstine for three weeks in two of the big Negro papers—and you know that was a frame-up.

"You know, I just spent \$3,000 of my own money taking the cure for three weeks. Maybe I was a fool to do it. It put me on record. They may have suspected before, but they were never sure of it. Now the federal people tell me they may send me away for another cure—and they never tell you how long it will be.

"Just when things were going to be so big and I was trying so hard to straighten myself out. Funny, isn't it?

"You know what actually happened? I was coming back to the hotel and we noticed a lot of people around it, and my driver Bill said it looked like it had been raided. I told him he was crazy, but we parked by the side of the hotel, and he went up there to see what was going on. He saw some agents and came





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running back to the car. Evidently he had one offense against him for something and they had told him he would lose his car if he did anything else. Well, he started the car like it was a jackrabbit, and we tore by a couple of policemen on the sidewalk.

"I heard a couple of sounds like shots, and I asked him and he said yes, they were shots but that he was afraid to stop, he didn't know what was going on. So we came back to New York City.

"Don't believe that business about our trying to run down an agent. Were we driving over the sidewalk? You know another funny thing: one of the officers mixed up in the case is Lt. Anderson, [opera singer] Marian Anderson's nephew.

"They're sitting on my [trumpeter] Joe Guy downtown now. They're holding him on \$3,000 bail; they claim he was mixed up with some of the stuff they found there. Joe's been a headstrong boy. When I first knew him, he was just playing horn for Lucky Millinder. I gave him a lot of clothes and a band. Guess it turned his head—he ran through \$35,000 with the band and nothing ever happened.

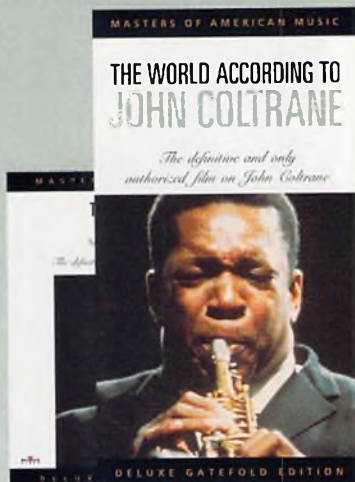
"But don't let anyone tell you it's his fault. My manager Joe Glaser hates him, says he's responsible for everything that has happened to me. Don't you believe it. I'm grown-up. I knew what I was doing. Joe may have done things he shouldn't, but I did them of my own accord, too. And I never tried to influence anybody else or do anything to hurt anyone. Joe didn't make it any easier for me at times—but then I haven't been any easy gal, either.

"I've made lots of enemies, too. Singing that 'Strange Fruit' hasn't helped any, you know. I was doing it at the Earle [in Philadelphia] 'til they made me stop. Tonight, they're already talking about me. When I did 'The Man I Love' [at NYC's Club 18], I heard some woman say, 'Hear he's in the jug downtown.'

"Of course, my singing was never better because of it. I was unhappy and a Negro and a lot of other things. But that was still no excuse—you don't have to tell me that. It's just wrong somehow that it happened when I was trying to turn around.

"I guess **Down Beat** is going to chew me to shreds like the papers are doing. [P.r. man] Ned Williams has known me ever since I was a little girl—'bout as old as that 14-year-old picture of me they used in the papers. My eyebrows were all off 'cause I tried to shape 'em, and took half of one off by mistake. I never won the **Beat** poll. Guess I never will now. [ed. note: *Holiday* was voted into the *Hall of Fame* via the 1961 Readers Poll.]

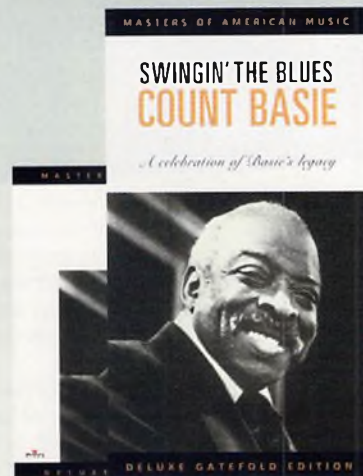
"Don't forget, though. I just want to be straight with people, not have their sympathy."  
DB



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Charlie Parker

## No Bop Roots in Jazz: Parker

Originally run on September 9, 1949, DB held an exclusive interview with Charlie Parker on the nature of bebop. As the title suggests, Bird was outspoken on the subject as it related to jazz.

By Michael Levin and  
John S. Wilson

**B**op is no love-child of jazz," says Charlie Parker. The creator of bop, in a series of interviews that took more than two weeks, told us he felt that "bop is something entirely separate and apart" from the older tradition; that it drew little from jazz, has no roots in it. The chubby little alto man, who has made himself an international music name in the last five years, added that bop, for the most part, had to be played by small bands.

"Gillespie's playing has changed from being stuck in front of a big band. Anybody's does. He's a fine musician. The leopard coats and the wild hats are just another part of the managers' routines to make him box office. The same thing happened a couple of years ago when they stuck his name on some tunes of mine to give him a better commercial reputation."

Asked to define bop, after several evenings of arguing, Charlie still was not precise in his definition.

"It's just music," he said. "It's trying to play clean and looking for the pretty notes."

Pushed further, he said that a distinctive feature of bop is its strong feeling for beat.

"The beat in a bop band is with the music, against it, behind it," Charlie said. "It pushes it. It helps it. Help is the big thing. It has no continuity of beat, no steady chug-chug. Jazz has, and that's why bop is more flexible."

He admits the music eventually may be atonal. Parker himself is a devout admirer of Paul Hindemith, the German neo-classicist. He raves about his *Kammermusik* and *Sonata For Viola And Cello*. He insists, however, that bop is not moving in the same direction as modern classical. He feels that it will be more flexible, more emotional, more colorful.

He reiterates constantly that bop is only just beginning to form: as a school, that it can barely label its present trends, much less make prognostications about the future.



WILLIAM P. GOTTLEB

The closest Parker will come to an exact, technical description of what may happen is to say that he would like to emulate the precise, complex harmonic structures of Hindemith, but with an emotional coloring and dynamic shading that he feels modern classical lacks.

Parker's indifference to the revered jazz tradition certainly will leave some of his own devotees in a state of surprise. But, actually, he himself has no roots in traditional jazz. During the few years he worked with traditional jazzmen he wandered like a lost soul. In his formative years he never heard any of the music which is traditionally supposed to inspire young jazzists—no Louis, no Bix, no Hawk, no Benny, no nothing. His first musical idol, the musician who so moved and inspired him that he went out and bought his first saxophone at the age of 11, was Rudy Vallee.

Tossed into the jazz world of the mid-'30s with this kind of background, he had no familiar ground on which to stand. For three years he fumbled unhappily until he suddenly stumbled on the music which appealed to him, which had meaning to him. For Charlie insists, "Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn."

Charlie's horn first came alive in a chili house on Seventh Avenue between 139th Street and 140th Street in December 1939. He was jamming there with a guitarist named Bidley Fleet. At the time, Charlie says, he was bored with the stereotyped changes being used then.

"I kept thinking there's bound to be something else," he recalls. "I could hear it sometimes, but I couldn't play it."

Working over "Cherokee" with Fleet, Charlie suddenly found that by using higher intervals of a chord as a melody line and backing them with appropriately related changes, he could play this thing he had been "hearing." Fleet picked it up behind him and bop was born.

Or, at least, it is reasonable to assume that this was the birth of bop. The closest Charlie will come to such a statement is, "I'm accused of having been one of the pioneers."

Did Dizzy also play differently from the rest during the same period?

"I don't think so," Charlie replied. Then, after a moment, he added, "I don't know. He could have been. Quote me as saying, 'Yeah.'"

Dizzy himself has said that he wasn't



aware of playing bop changes before 1942.

As for the accompanying gimmicks which, to many people, represent bop, Charlie views them with a cynical eye.

"Some guys said, 'Here's bop,'" he explains. "Wham! They said, 'Here's something we can make money on.' Wham! 'Here's a comedian.' Wham! 'Here's a guy who talks funny talk.'" Charlie shakes his head sadly.

Charlie himself has stayed away from a big band because the proper place for bop, he feels, is a small group. Big bands tend to get overscored, he says, and bop goes out the window. The only big band that managed to play bop in 1944, in Charlie's estimation, was Billy Eckstine's. Dizzy's present band, he says, plays bop, could be better with more settling down and less personnel shifting.

"That big band is a bad thing for Diz," he says. "A big band slows anybody down because you don't get a chance to play enough. Diz has an awful lot of ideas when he wants to, but if he stays with the big band he'll forget everything he ever played. He isn't repeating notes yet, but he is repeating patterns."

It was on a visit to New York, in late 1942 after he had worked out his basic approach to complex harmony, that Charlie heard

Stravinsky for the first time when Ziggy Kelly played *Firebird* for him.

The only possibility for a big band, he feels, is to get really big, practically on a symphonic scale with loads of strings.

"This has more chance than the standard jazz instrumentation," he says. "You can pull away some of the harshness with the strings and get a variety of coloration."

Today, Charlie has come full-cycle. As he did in 1939, when he kicked off bop in the Seventh Avenue chili house, he's beginning to think there's bound to be something more. He's hearing things again, things that he can't play yet. Just what these new things are, Charlie isn't sure yet. But from the direction of his present musical interests—Hindemith, etc.—it seems likely he's heading toward atonality. Charlie protests when he is mentioned in the same sentence with Hindemith, but, despite their vastly different starting points, he admits he might be working toward the same end.

This doesn't mean Charlie is through with bop. He thinks bop still is far from perfection, looks on any further steps he may take as further developments of bop.

"They teach you there's a boundary line to music," he says. "But, man, there's no

boundary line to art."

For the future, he'd like to go to the Academy of Music in Paris for a couple of years, then relax for a while and then write. The things he writes all will be concentrated toward one point: warmth. While he's writing, he also wants to play experimentally with small groups. Ideally, he'd like to spend six months a year in France and six months here.

"You've got to do it that way," he explains. "You've got to be here for the commercial things and in France for relaxing facilities."

Relaxation is something Charlie constantly has missed. Lack of relaxation, he thinks, has spoiled most of the records he has made. To hear him tell it, he has never cut a good side. Some of things he did on the Continental label he considers more relaxed than the rest. But every record he has made could stand improvement, he says. We tried to pin him down, to get him to name a few sides that were at least better than the rest.

"Suppose a guy came up to us," we said, "and said, 'I've got four bucks and I want to buy three Charlie Parker records. What'll I buy?' What should we tell him?"

Charlie laughed.

"Tell him to keep his money," he said. **DB**

Dizzy Gillespie

# Bird Wrong; Bop Must Get a Beat: Diz



*Shortly after the Parker piece ran in DB, Dizzy Gillespie was more or less compelled to answer, especially since Dizzy himself was the subject of some of Bird's comments on jazz. This piece ran on October 7, 1949.*

By John S. Wilson

**T**he Bird is wrong about the relationship of bop and jazz, says Dizzy Gillespie. "Bop is an interpretation of jazz," Diz told the **Beat**. "It's all part of the same thing." Last month, Charlie Parker said that bop had no roots in jazz, was something entirely separate and apart from the older tradition [see adjoining article]. Parker identified the beat as the distinguishing factor of bop.

"It [bop] has no continuity of beat, no steady chug-chug," Parker said.

This lack of a steady beat, according to Dizzy, is what is wrong with bop today.

"Bop is part of jazz," Dizzy said, "and jazz

music is to dance to. The trouble with bop as it's played now is that people can't dance to it. They don't hear those four beats. We'll never get bop across to a wide audience until they can dance to it. They're not particular about whether you're playing a flatted fifth or a ruptured 129th as long as they can dance."

The important characteristics of bop, Dizzy says, are the harmonics and the phrasing. Tossing in a variety of beats isn't essential.

These are conclusions which Dizzy has reached after dragging his big band around the country for more than a year. As a result, he's revising his book so as to turn his outfit into a band which can be danced to.

"We'll use the same harmonics," he said, "but with a beat, so that people can understand where the beat is. We'll use a lot of things which are in the book now, but we'll cut them and splice them together again like you would a movie so as to leave out the



variations in beat.

"I'm not turning my back on bop. My band has a distinctive sound and I want to keep that. But I want to make bop bigger, get it a wider audience. I think [pianist] George Shearing is the greatest thing that's happened to bop in the past year. He's the only one who has helped it along. He plays bop so the average person can understand it.

"Anybody can dance to Shearing's music. By doing that, he has made it easier for me and for everybody else who plays bop."

Main pressure on Dizzy to make the switch has come from his wife, Lorraine, a former dancer, and his manager, Willard Alexander. For the last year, Lorraine has circulated in the audience on his one-niters, getting audience reaction and trying to impress him that a lot of his numbers were making the dancers unhappy.

From Alexander's point of view, the big hurdle with Dizzy's band, as it was, was scarcity of places where a big band which didn't draw dancers could be booked.

"We can't play small places that hold 100 or 200 persons," Dizzy pointed out. "We're playing big auditoriums that hold a couple of thousand, and you can't rely on the extremists to support you there."

Alexander says he isn't asking Dizzy to become commercial.

"Ellington has always made it as a dance band, and nobody accused him of being commercial," he said. "I don't want Dizzy's men to bastardize their instruments or be corny. But I think they should perform and not look bored. Unless bop is improved in the next six months, I think it will die. Shearing is the only thing that's holding it up now."

Under the new setup, Dizzy will carry a dance book, a concert book, and a theater book. New arrangements are being turned out for him by Garland Wilson and Buster Harding. J.J. Johnson has done a pair of medleys for him, each medley consisting of three standards and winding up with a current pop tune. As part of the switch, Dizzy has dropped singer Johnny Hartman and taken on a girl, Tiny Irvin, whom he found in Pittsburgh.

First tryout of the new Gillespie dance book was made on a late August date in Mahoney City, Pa., a big mickey stronghold. Operator, who reluctantly set the date as a favor to Alexander, was so impressed with the results that he burned up the wires to New York with reports of Dizzy's "sensational" success.

"As long as they say I've got a great band," said Dizzy, "I don't care if they say it's bop or what." **DB**



GEORGE HOEFER

Dizzy at the helm of his big band





Miles Davis & Gil Evans

## Portrait of a Friendship

*At the time of this surprisingly casual and revelatory interview, which ran in our February 16, 1961 issue, Miles Davis and Gil Evans were hot stuff, fresh from their acclaimed collaborations Miles Ahead, Porgy And Bess, and Sketches Of Spain.*

By Marc Crawford

In the southside Chicago home of his in-laws slumped a bathrobed, slipper-shod Miles Dewey Davis III with a bottle of Dutch beer on the table and Ravel's *Piano Concerto In G Major* coming from the stereo.

The dishes from the breakfast Miles had prepared (eggs and hamburger and tomatoes, garnished with salts of garlic and celery) rode at anchor in the kitchen sink, and almost forgotten was Miles' earlier refusal on the telephone to talk about his relationship with "Gil." At that time he had

growled: "I don't like discussing Gil. I got too much respect for him to do that. It's almost like asking a man to discuss his wife."

But now Miles was relaxed, and pianist Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli was sending him into several shades of ecstasy.

"Listen to those trills!" Miles ordered. The sound of them was sustained as though they had been made by an electrified instrument, and Miles sat there, his first and second finger aflutter, demonstrating how the effect was created. "You know," he volunteered, "Gil thinks like that."

The "Gil" of whom he spoke was, of course, Jeff-tall Gil Evans, who, with Mutt-short Miles, forms one of the most creative and productive friendships in jazz. Miles appeared lost in thought about the 48-year-old Toronto-born Evans, who wrote the arrangements for the celebrated Davis albums *Miles Ahead*, *Porgy And Bess*, and



*Sketches Of Spain*. Suddenly he picked up the telephone and long-distanced Evans in New York. Miles asked him to catch the next jet flight for Chicago so he could hear Miles and his group at the Cloister and "just hang out." Evans had said he would, and Miles settled back to await his arrival.

"Gil is my idea of a man," Miles said. "Say you had a friend who was half man and half donkey, and suppose he even wore a straw hat and you said, 'Gil, meet George.' Gil would get up and shake his hand and never care what George looked like.

"You ask Gil a question—you get a straight answer. Like in New York, somebody asked him what he thought of Ornette Coleman's tonal organization, and Gil told him: 'That's Ornette's business. If it isn't good, he'll take care of it.'"

Now Miles got up to flip the record to the Rachmaninoff *Concerto No. 4* side. He stabbed the air with a flurry of vicious right and left hooks aimed at a hapless imaginary opponent. He had not been able that day to work out at Coulon's Gym, as is his Chicago custom, and he digressed to say he wished he had. Then he returned to his main subject: "Rachmaninoff and Ravel were way out—like Gil is way out. You know, my ambition has always been to write like Gil. I'd give my right arm to do it—no, my left one, because I'd have to write the notes down."

Words spilled freely from Miles now, which is rare, but then he was talking about what, to him, is a rare human being. "I first met Gil when I was with Bird, and he was asking for a release on my tune 'Donna Lee.' He wanted to make an arrangement for a government electrical transcription of it. I told him he could have it and asked him to teach me some chords and let me study some of the scores he was doing for Claude Thornhill.

"He really flipped me on the arrangement of 'Robbin's Nest' he did for Claude. See," said Miles, placing his left hand on the table that suddenly in his mind's eye had become a piano, "Gil had this cluster of chords and superimposed another cluster over it." Miles demonstrated, covering the left hand with his right so that the fingers of the hand above fitted between those on the bottom. "Now the chord ends," Miles explained, suddenly taking his right hand off the piano, "and now these three notes of the remaining cluster are gone," he went on, removing the thumb, first and second fingers of the left hand. "The overtone of the remaining two produced a note way up there," Miles swore, pointing at the other end of the piano. "I was puzzled. I had studied the score for days, trying to find the note I heard. But it didn't even exist—at least, on paper it didn't. That's Gil for you.

"We've been friends since that first meet-

*'Gil is always listening to Gypsy, South American, and African things. Everytime he comes to my house, he's got some new record for me.'*

ing. I got stranded once in St. Louis, and he sent me \$75. I bet he's forgotten it." The expression on Miles face was fine—warm and rare. All the sneer was gone. Not once had he walked off the bandstand, this Miles Davis in bathrobe and house slippers, alone in the big house with his music. "He's my favorite arranger, yet he's never really made money out of the business."

Miles had finished his own bottle of beer and was taking back half of the bottle he had provided his visitor. "You know, in New York we go over to each other's house, but we don't drop our problems on each other. When Gil is writing, he might spend three days on 10 bars of music. He'll lock himself up in a room of his house, put a 'do not disturb' sign on the door, and not even his wife Lillian can come in. It's torture for her when he's writing. It's like he's out to lunch. Sometimes he'll get in there and play the piano for 12 hours. He's not only a composer and a hell of an orchestrator, he just knows instruments and what you can get out of them. He and Duke Ellington are the same way. They can use four instruments when others need eight.

"Listen to what Rachmaninoff is saying," Miles commanded suddenly, turning his attention again to the stereo. "Gil once said he would like to go to Africa and teach music just so he could hear all those African rhythms."

**N**ow Miles was addressing himself to what Gil calls "a merchandising problem," which he claims has "nothing to do with music at all." Said Miles: "People always want to categorize music—jazz, classical. Put labels on it. But Gil says all music comes from the people, and the people are folk. Therefore, all music is folk.

"I used to write and send Gil my scores for evaluation. Gil used to say they were good, but cluttered up with too many notes. I used to think you had to use a lot of notes and stuff to be writing. Now I've learned enough about writing *not* to write. I just let Gil write. I give him an outline of what I want and he finishes it. I can even call him on the phone and just tell him what I got in mind, and when I see the score, it is exactly what I wanted. Nobody but Gil could think for me that way. He just has a gift of being able to

put instruments together. Some people have it, some don't. Gil has it.

"He is as well-versed on music in general as Leonard Bernstein. And what the classical guys don't know is what Gil knows. They don't know folks. Gil is always listening to Gypsy, South American, and African things. Everytime he comes to my house, he's got some new record for me.

"Hey!" Miles laughed, "you know what Gil will do sometimes? You'll be playing one of his arrangements in 4/4 time and, all of a sudden, you'll come upon a bar of 3/2. That Gil is something."

Since early morning and continuing through a pot of neckbones and pinto beans he had cooked himself, Miles talked about Gil. The street lights along Michigan Avenue had been burning for hours when the phone rang. "That was Gil," Miles said, hanging up. Evans' jet flight had just arrived at Chicago's O'Hare field and he was now en route through town. Less than an hour later, the doorbell rang and silver-maned Gil Evans filled up the door with his six-feet-plus. "Hi, Miles," Gil said. "Hi," Miles said casually. It was as if Evans had been there all day—or at least, had gone out five minutes before to get a pack of cigarettes. Then they sat down and watched TV, with nothing more to say. "Look," Miles would mutter, pointing to the action on TV. "Uh-huh," Gil would answer. But that was all the conversation that passed between them.

The incomplete utterances explained something Miles had said earlier. "Sometimes when I'm playing, I start a phrase and never complete it because it isn't necessary. I have communicated the idea. Let's suppose somebody tells you something that bugs you and then asks your opinion about it. You might just say 'Aw!' and from the way you have said it, they get the message that you don't dig it." And in quite another vein, here was the scholarly, soft-spoken Evans and the sometimes volatile and always hard-spoken Miles Davis achieving absolute communication with the sparsest of sounds.

Next day they watched football games on television, ate well, smoked, drank, talked, joked, and listened to music from other lands, joined by their wives, as in a family visit.

The day before, Gil had told me that he felt Miles was a "first-rate musician." "But," Gil said now, "that is what I felt yesterday. Today I feel he is a genuine artist and there are very few of them in the world today. I also think he's a pretty fine specimen of the human animal in most things he does. Today I admire his approach to life."

On only one thing does Evans seem to have his mind thoroughly fixed: "I only work for Miles and myself." He said he could not do anything he did not want to do, yet insisted he was a "commercial arranger," but



only in the sense "that what I write is popular." And while Evans admitted that each year, his income seems to wind up some \$500 under what his needs require, he rejects Miles' contention that he is just now receiving the acclaim his talents have long deserved. "I haven't been around music for 20 years just waiting to be discovered," Evans said, "nor am I a recent discovery. I am just now able to do the things I couldn't do before. My product just wasn't ready."

And, of course, Gil—christened Ian Ernest Gilmore Green by his Australian parents—is no novice to the musical world. He led his own band in Stockton, Calif., from 1933 to 1938. Skinnay Ennis later took it over, but Gil stayed on as arranger until 1941. Then he became musical architect for the Claude Thornhill Band, remaining with it until 1948.

Evans is a symphony of contradictions. Despite his vast knowledge of instruments, he never played one professionally until he took up the piano seriously in 1952. In recent years, he has been writing big-band arrangements—with no standing big band at his disposal.

In October, however, he resolved some of this contradiction with the formation of his own 12-piece orchestra. "I need a band as a workshop," he said. "In the past, I didn't get to be around a band but once a year, like when Miles and I are doing something. Before, I had to hear music in my imagination." Evans' band recently recorded its fourth LP, titled *Out Of The Cool*, for the Impulse! label. It was released late in January.

The gangling Evans, who strikes you as a cross between Gary Cooper and Henry Fonda, likes to talk philosophy, poetry, travel, politics—but rarely does so with Miles. Yet he insists: "We think alike." Their communication is on the music level. "We are complementary in that we are opposites," Evans said. "My inclination is just less extroverted than his. We both like the same kind of music."

Modern music's Mutt and Jeff, however, rarely sit down and say, "Let's do this type of LP," and then plan around their decision. For an example of how they work, take *Sketches Of Spain*, of which Evans says: "We were just ready for flamenco music and fell into it. We don't have anything specifically planned at present, but we will be doing some more things."

The compatibility of these two diverse personalities was first evidenced in the late 1940s, when Evans helped Miles and Gerry Mulligan set up their historic nine-piece Birth of the Cool band. Ever since then, they have shared a common wish: to go on growing musically together.

All the evidence indicates that they will.

DB

## Count Basie

# My Biggest Thrill? When Duke Roared Back: Basie

By Don Freeman

*This candid interview, from May 16, 1956, revealed Count Basie assessing the worth of his big-band contemporaries. Ellington may have been his favorite, but the list included some real surprises as well.*

Count Basie was munching a sandwich and relaxing between sets of a one-niter at the San Diego Arena. Since Basie, through the years, has brought so much listening pleasure to so many, it seemed pointed to ask the Count what listening pleasures he had received himself.

"My biggest thrill as a listener," Basie said, "came one night back in, I think it was, 1951.

"The so-called progressive jazz was going big then, and here comes Duke Ellington on opening night at Birdland. He had just revamped his band, and no one knew just what he'd have. We all dropped in to catch him—and what we heard! What a thrill that was!

"The Duke was swinging. All this 'progressive' talk, and the Duke played the old swing. He scared a lot of people that night. It was just wonderful. Of course, the Duke has always had the greatest band at all times. There's never been any other band for me, year in and year out.

"I'll tell you another listening thrill. Back in the '30s, no matter where we were every Saturday night, we'd have to hear Benny Goodman's band on the old *Camel Caravan*. That was a wonderful band.

"Anything that the 'Boss'—that's Art Tatum—would play anytime or anywhere was a thrill for me. And Pops, too—I can listen to Louis [Armstrong] play or sing or talk or anything. . . .



"I remember one night when I wandered over to Roseland to see Les Brown. I kind of sneaked in, and Les didn't know I was there. Oh, that's a fine dance band.

"And another is Tommy Dorsey's band. If I'm in town—and the Dorseys are there—I won't miss 'em because they got a fine, swinging band, too. Tommy is a remarkable musician—remarkable.

"I was over to John Hammond's house one night, and he brought out some old Fletcher Henderson records. We sat and listened most of the night. That was a thrill! I never had the chance to hear much of Fletcher's band in person in the old days.

"Same with Lunceford. I was listening to some swinging Lunceford records a month or so ago—that was another thrill. That band had such a beat! I dig that beat. A band's got to have a beat. You can't put down a band that has a beat. Like Ellington—he has that beat always. . . ."

This reporter had a question: You said that the greatest band of all time was Duke Ellington's. Don't you mean—uh, er—with present company excepted?

Basie shook his head. "No," he said firmly. "I do not. I mean that Duke Ellington is the greatest of them all."

DB



Frank Sinatra

## Hokey Tunes 'Bug' Frank

*Just before his career-saving, Oscar-winning performance in From Here To Eternity, Frank Sinatra talked to DB about the problems with finding good songs to sing, a possible big-band comeback, and the music biz. A March 25, 1953 interview.*

By Nat Hentoff

**D**o I still think it's hard to find a decent new pop tune these days?" echoed Frank Sinatra. "Man, it's worse than ever. These trick songs are coming out of my ears. But the situation isn't hopeless.

"First of all, we've got to convince the accepted songwriters to come out of hiding and write again. The way things are now, they feel they'd be wasting their time. Another way is to record and revive more of the standards—like 'The Birth Of The Blues' on my last release—that way we can at least balance the hokey tunes. It's murder now.

"And I don't think the reason for the low

caliber is the public primarily. That square. They certainly were 10 years ago when at least four of the first 10 on the *Hit Parade* tunes.

"I think it's all part of a cycle—the echo chambers and the other—that will exhaust itself. Ever wants to take the easiest way eventually the people who have to say musically will be the survive.

"Future plans? Well, I've been the wonderful part of Maggio's version of *From Here To Eternity*. Jerry Clift, Burt Lancaster, and De will be in the cast, and Fred Zinniker will be directing. I expect to be making more than before but not all straight ones. Roles like this don't come



Muddy Waters

## Last King of the South Side?



*For our October 8, 1964 issue, Muddy Waters gave a fascinating interview that revisited the then-old and new blues scene and without a beat, plugged-in or otherwise, discussed the pressures to change his music.*

By Pete Welding

**I**n the 1920s it was Pinetop Smith; in the '30s, Tampa Red, Broonzy, and Washboard Sam; in the '40s, Big Bill and Sonny Boy Williams; in the last 15 years or so the undisputed king of Chicago's south side has been the spoken, sad-faced Mississippi Delta blues singer Muddy Waters.

The singer was born McKinley Charles Wright on April 4, 1915, in Rolling Fork, Mississippi.



before I started getting into the way of playing blues on harmonica.

"I always did want to play music. I guess I had it in me. So, I learned how to blow a few things on harmonica, and I got to be pretty good with that. No one showed me nothing; I got it myself."

Some four years later Waters began to play the guitar, inspired by the playing of a Clarksdale neighbor a few years older than himself, Scott Bohanna. "I must have been around 17 when I got hold of a guitar," Waters said. The artist who made the greatest impact on him, and on whom he patterned his own singing and playing, was Robert Johnson. Waters heard Johnson perform a number of times in 1937, and earlier he had learned much from Eugene (Son) House, who often played in the Clarksdale area.

"Son House," Waters recalled, "was an older man than Robert. I ran across Son House lots of times. Then I was just trying to begin to pick the guitar. And I liked that style a lot. I used to use a bottleneck to make the slide. Really, I think I'm closer to Robert than anybody that ever played—at least, all the ones I've heard.

"I really liked Charlie Patton's playing and

singing, too. I used to play a little bit of his stuff. He was a real clown with the guitar: he'd pat on the guitar, hit the guitar, he'd whirl it over his head and. . . . He was very good, though. You can hear on some of his records how he'd be patting on the strings. They even do it on electric guitars now."

The singer made his first recordings in 1941 for folklorist Alan Lomax, who was on a recording field trip through the rural south for the Library of Congress.

"Those recordings," Waters recalled, "they were made on Stovall's plantation. I was working for Mr. Stovall. Alan Lomax, he was down talent-scouting. . . . So he came and found me. He heard someone tell I was a pretty good guitar player and could sing very, very good. He came out, and I spent the whole Saturday afternoon with him. And the next year he came back. He recorded a whole bunch of numbers, a lot of them; he was getting everything we had. I cut a whole lot of songs for him, but I think the Library of Congress only pressed those two.

"I always thought of myself as a musician," Waters reminisced. "The different jobs I had back in Clarksdale and so forth, they were just temporary things. I still considered myself . . . if I wasn't a good musician then I

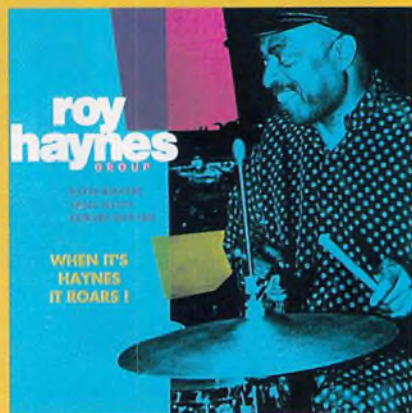
felt that sooner or later I would *be* a good musician. I felt it in me.

"You just make up things when you're working out on the plantation. You just get lonesome and tired and hot, and you start to sing something. And so all that stuff came to be real good. I can remember a lot of records I made, I made those songs up during my work days out on the farm."

Early in 1943 Waters moved to Chicago, feeling that opportunities for musicians were better in a big city. He found the city's musical life, however, far less healthy than he imagined.

"When I came to Chicago in 1943," he recalled, "things were very sad. It was the middle of the war. People at that time were going for Nat Cole, Johnny Moore and the Three Blazes, and Billy Eckstine . . . bebop. And my music, blues, still was very sad, but the people still loved the blues. I played it a little different in them little old small taverns, and we *still* had us some blues lovers. . . . I worked on the west side in a few places, and house parties. At first I played with Eddie Boyd, but he couldn't stand my playing because he wanted me to play like Johnny Moore—you know, sweet blues—which I wasn't able to play. So then I began to build

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up my own little thing. I got one guy named Little Smitty and we began to play around a little bit at those unknown clubs, taverns. We had our small crowd with us, because, as I say, I don't care *what* comes out, there's gonna be somebody that likes the real blues."

In the middle '40s Waters played in clubs and juke joints all over the city, at house parties, and on occasion even on the sidewalks of Chicago's Maxwell Street open-air market area. He had switched to electric guitar, because, as he said, "If everybody's using them, what you gonna do?" He made a few records for Columbia in 1944, but they were never issued, and later for the Aristocrat label in the company of such people as Sunnyland Slim, Leroy Foster, and Little Johnny. These, however, were made in an older blues style and failed to catch on.

Leonard Chess, who, with several others, was operating Aristocrat, was unimpressed with Waters' music and only reluctantly allowed him and bassist Big Crawford to record "Feel Like Goin' Home" and "Can't Be Satisfied." The numbers were recorded in the fall of 1946 and issued in May of the following year. The record became an instant hit in the r&b market.

"When it hit the ceiling," Waters recalled with a grin, "then Chess began to come close to me. Changed his tune, because I was selling so fast they couldn't make them fast enough at that time."

Later on, Waters was able to persuade Chess to record the full group with which he had been working in clubs around the city and through the South. It was these recordings, made with second guitarist Jimmy Rogers, harmonica player Little Walter, and Baby-Face Leroy Foster on drums (he also played guitar), that established the sound of postwar Chicago blues. It was a rough, crude, direct style, the amplified guitars setting up a thunderous rhythm, the harmonica, also amplified, wailing above the others like some shrill, electric banshee. It was a style that allowed for little in the way of subtlety, but it had a power and vital force that was almost singular in the blues of the day.

In explaining the group's approach, Waters stated, "We kept that Mississippi sound. We didn't do it exactly like the older fellows—with no beat to it. We put the beat with it. You know, put a little drive to it. It's like, I would say, when Blind Lemon Jefferson was making records, they changed

whenever they got ready, nothing regular about it. We went to putting time with the stuff. I think Tampa Red, Big Maceo, and them, they were very 'timed-up' people, too, but not exactly like we were. We went to putting time with our lowdown Mississippi blues.

"We put a pretty good group together because we learned the beat, we learned what the people's moving off of. Even if it's the blues, we still had to drive behind it. Another thing is you can change the blues around. Some of my records maybe have 13 bars, like the record I sing, "Just To Be With You." I don't know myself how many bars we do. You don't count it out; you feel it."

Commenting on the present pop-music-riddled blues scene, Waters said, "I think now that everybody is trying to play something that, even if there're people dancing slow, they got a . . . you know, they can feel it with the beat. But at the time I recorded for Alan Lomax, well, you used to take up a guitar and you sit down and play for a house of people without any electric. They danced, but they didn't have all this crazy dancing they have out now—the Monkey, the Bird, and all that different stuff. It was two-step, waltz, Charleston, Black Bottom,

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and the slow dance that's always been."

These days, his style has moved away from the rough, intense country blues to a more commercial orientation. "I think the blues and popular music are getting closer together," he said. "Now, an old guy like Washboard Sam, he couldn't make it today, because his day has been here and gone. And the blues have to change, 'cause the people are changing so fast nowadays. And they're learning all new ideas, and if you are a blues singer you have to be right *now* in this business."

"Young Negro kids now, they're so used to

what they hear on the radio, they just turn away from the old blues. Just last night I played a lot of my old songs—well, I got a very nice hand for them, but still I could feel that they don't feel that same reaction, that movement. It's not the music of today; it's the music of yesterday.

"Is it good for the blues to change like this? I don't think so. I really think that the blues—the real blues—is just what I was doing when I made my first recordings. Back in that time, that's the real blues. Lots of things I've made are commercial nowadays."

One thing of great concern to Waters is

the direction the blues will take after the blues men of his generation die. "I think the blues—the old country-style blues—will die with us," he said sadly. "I don't see any youngsters coming along in that style nowadays. The Negro kids, they don't like it at all; they're more interested in the popular music. And these young white kids that are playing in the old style. Now, maybe they feel the blues like I do, and maybe they can play like I do, but they can't *sing* like I do. So, I don't think that's the answer. I guess maybe the old blues will die, but I don't like to think about that."

DB

Buddy Rich

## The Nouveau Rich

*Always outspoken, Buddy Rich talked to DB for our April 20, 1967 issue about life on the road, the headaches of leading a band, and "know-nothing hipsters." In a related story, we take an earlier look as Buddy made a big career move, from December 1, 1954.*

By Harvey Siders

"Hell, no!" Buddy Rich growled when asked if this interview might continue after his last set tonight. "When 2 a.m. comes, I'm through. No more music, no more musicians, no hippies, no interviews, no nothing. I go right back to my hotel and take it easy. Call me tomorrow—but don't you dare call me before 2 in the afternoon. Is that clear?"

One could hardly misinterpret.

During the Buddy Rich Big Band's last set in the split-level main room of the Chez, in Hollywood, Calif., the crowd was electrified by an amazing display of raw energy. What made the whole scene incredible was the knowledge that Rich, who is twice as old as most of his sidemen (he'll be 50 in June), was the source of energy: he was the one urging them on, exhorting soloists and sections to the point where his young players could hardly take their eyes off him.

Rich sticks to his afterhours embargo and makes no exceptions. And during those precious minutes between sets, competition for Rich's attention is prohibitive. The best time for an interview was his one day off. It was quite a compromise on his part. Why did he leave the security of being probably the highest paid sideman in the business for the headaches of fronting his own band?

"What is security?" he asked. "What are headaches? Is there security in crossing a street? Don't you think a guy who operates his own gas station has headaches? And when he gets home at night he still smells of gas, right?"

But why did he leave the Harry James Band?

The answer was terse: "'Cause we needed some good music in the business."

Then he added, "Sure, I had a good paying job—4½ years. It was beautiful. But for 4½ years I didn't play a goddamn thing. I sat up there; I went through the motions. Night after night, I knew what tunes I was going to play. I even knew what time we were going to play them. I had two solos in the band, and, what the hell—that wasn't for me.

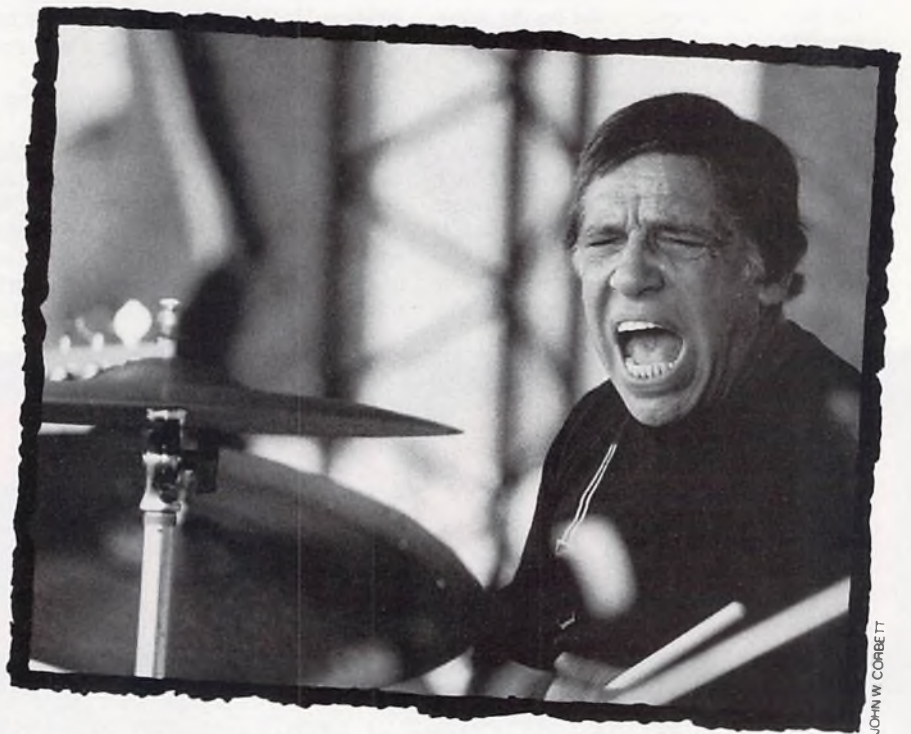
"It was security, all right. But what good is security if you're not happy, and especially if you know you can do better, be more creative, and let your personality come out? But

if you're being held down, so to speak, in somebody else's band, what good is it taking home a heavy check every week? So when the opportunity presented itself, I jumped at it."

The opportunity came a year ago. Is he still happy about his decision?

"Happy? I couldn't be happier. Let me repeat that. I couldn't be happier for anything on this earth. The results are beautiful. The band is excellent, and it's a contemporary band. The kids in it are beautiful to work with. They enjoy what we're doing because we're playing young music, and they project their youth through what they're playing. It certainly latches on to the youth wherever we play. Our young audiences understand it, and, as you can see, the spenders come out, too."

That reminded him of what he had said about the need for good music in the band business, and he launched into an analysis of





the business today.

According to Rich, the attempt to bring back the old bands is self-defeating. His advice is to forget about the old days and the old ways and concentrate on today's sounds.

"You can't fool the public," he said. "You can't go on saying, 'This is the original Glenn Miller Band,' or 'This is the original Tommy Dorsey Band.' You just can't continue putting people on like that.

"The Glenn Miller sound was an insipid sound in 1942. It certainly wouldn't be good enough for 1967. It was contrived and mechanical and had no more feeling to it than if you were hypnotized. You knew every night the arrangements were going to sound the same, the tempos would be the same, even the solos were the same. There was no emotional involvement."

Everything seems to be groovy for Rich, but it wasn't that way 21 years ago. When he organized his first band in 1946 (following a stint with Tommy Dorsey's band and a hitch in the Marine Corps), he had a modern-jazz outfit, with such sidemen as tenorists Al Cohn and Allen Eager and the Swope Brothers (trombonists Earl and Rob). It was a bad time to form a hard-driving band. The

trend toward combos was beginning then, accompanied by the postwar decline in dancing. When ballroom operators asked Rich to tone down the jazz, he got cocky and insisted he would do things his way ("This is what I play; take it or leave it"). The big-band venture didn't last long.

The following year he began his association with Jazz at the Philharmonic. Then, between leading his own small groups, he rejoined Dorsey for a while, and was in and out of the James band a few times.

Going out on his own again provoked criticism from skeptics who predicted the band wouldn't last. In Las Vegas, especially, odds were figuratively posted not on whether but how soon Rich would be back with James, drawing his "heavy check every week."

Did this give rise to Rich's wanting to "show" his detractors?

"Certainly not," he answered. "I couldn't care less about them. And if you know anything about me, you know I don't give a damn about *anybody's* opinion. I do exactly what I think is right for *me*. That shows how much jealousy and envy exists on the part of other people who have led bands or have

tried to start bands but were not as successful as I've been with this band. Sour apples, that's all it is—sour apples."

If the band was such a great success, it must have been a happy band. Why then the noticeable change in personnel between his first and second engagements at the Chez?

"John Bunch, my piano player, quit to work with Tony Bennett," he said. "John's not a youngster anymore, and working with Tony would mean less traveling, and that appealed to him. But I fired a half-dozen others. . . ."

(Naturally, there are two sides to the firing story. Rumors around Los Angeles indicate that the dissatisfaction was mutual in many cases, and a check with two of those who were allegedly fired revealed some confusion as to whether or not the half-dozen were fired, or quit. Whatever the full story is, the dissension with the band seems to have come to a quick end.)

"If I hire you in the beginning," Rich said, "it's because I dig what you're doing, dig how you play, and dig your personality—and for me to have to fire somebody is a big drag. But it's another way of saying, 'You're a detriment to what I'm trying to produce.'"

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Then, as if to justify his actions, he said he believes that the band is a better-sounding unit now.

Singers, Rich feels, have no place with his band. They are merely "a throwback to the '40s." Furthermore, he's convinced they just slow down the pacing of the entire set—unless "they happen to be a Sinatra, a Tormé, or Joe Williams." In seeming contradiction, while he was recording his second live album at the Chez, his 12-year-old daughter, Cathy, sang with the band. They were trying out a new arrangement of a current rock favorite, "The Beat Goes On."

From rock & roll, the conversation swung to the other extreme: the avant garde.

Rich made no bones about his impatience with "know-nothing hipsters who can't even find '1.' They just decide to smash a cymbal here, add a rimshot there. Then other hipsters think that's the thing to do and they follow suit. And that's the story of 'hipdom.'"

He recounted what he calls the funniest contact he's ever had with the "avant garde." It happened at the Pacific Jazz Festival last October in Costa Mesa, Calif. His band had been scheduled to follow the Charles Lloyd Quartet, and Rich was waiting on the plat-

## Buddy Rich Drops Band, Plans to Join Dorseys

Hollywood—The unpredictable Buddy Rich has changed his plans about breaking out with a new band of his own, which was to be financed and backed by comedian Jerry Lewis, and has signed up with the Dorsey Brothers band.

"They made me an offer that was just too good to turn down, not only from a financial standpoint but because they are going to give me full billing with them as an 'extra added attraction.' I'm going to get the kind of presentation that I was supposed to get but didn't when I was with Harry James," said Buddy, who

dropped out of the Jazz at the Philharmonic lineup here at the conclusion of JATP's fall tour.

Buddy played drums with Tommy Dorsey some years ago, but concedes they "didn't get along too well" that time. "We've both calmed down some since those days," he said with a grin, "so I know Tommy and I will get along fine now. He and Jimmy have a great band, too."

Rich said he would join the band around Nov. 15 during their tour of the South and will be with them when they open Dec. 3 at New York's Statler hotel.

form behind the canvas that covered the outdoor stage on three sides. Peering through peepholes used by photographers, he found himself directly behind Lloyd's pianist, Keith Jarrett, who was plucking the piano strings, gesticulating wildly as he reached over from the keyboard.

"That had to be the craziest thing I ever saw," Rich said. "I was nearly hysterical. I

don't think I've ever laughed that much in my life. I just couldn't conceive that they thought they were playing music. And that drummer [Jack DeJohnette]—he had no idea of what the other guys were doing. That must have been the greatest put-on since the Four Stooges."

He began talking about the music and the musicians that were meaningful to him, and

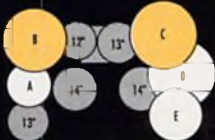
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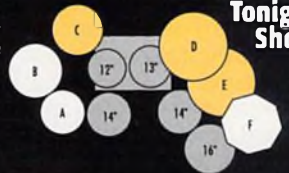
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the first and only band that fit that category was Count Basie's. Rich said that some of the best big-band drummers have worked for Basie: Shadow Wilson, Gus Johnson, Sonny Payne, Louie Bellson. But he named Jo Jones as the best:

"He fit the band the way Freddie Green does. Jones, Green, and Basie, and Walter Page on bass—that's the 'all-American rhythm section' for you."

From Basie's drummers to big-band drummers in general was a natural transition. Among Rich's favorites were Gene Krupa, Alvin Stoller, Sol Gubin, Jack Sperling, Mel Lewis, and Don Lamond—all of whom, he said, could play anything required of them in a big band.

Speaking of big bands, the idea of the two-books concept used by some bands—a book for dancing and one for listening—came up.

Does his band use this method?

"Well, first of all, we play very few dances as such," he said. "We have toured a number of colleges and played what you might call a dance, but actually we played what we play at the Chez or Basin Street East. The big difference today—and another reason why we're so successful—is the big beat. The young crowd has changed their style of dancing so that they can dance to what we play."

Rich will soon find out how European youngsters react to his brand of big-band jazz. This month the band is touring England, Switzerland, and Italy—the kind of traveling the drummer likes.

"That's the beauty of this business," he said. "You get paid to see the world—and I love it. I hate to spend too much time in one place, anyhow. Besides, it'll be great for my

family. Marie [his wife] and Cathy will be with me, and it should be quite an education."

But there are many musicians who wonder just how long Buddy Rich can hold up under his present rigorous routine—not in terms of popularity, but in terms of physical endurance. Rich claims he doesn't look back at what happened seven years ago (the first, and most serious, of three heart attacks).

"I can't worry about that," he said. "I just take care of myself—I got no bad habits—and keep right on working. Any doctor will tell you that if you got a heart condition, you should keep active."

But why does he drive himself to the point of exhaustion? His answer had the direct honesty that cancels any rebuttal:

"Man, 'cause I love it."

DB

## Jimi Hendrix

# An Experience

*At an early stage in the ascendance of the Jimi Hendrix Experience, DB dropped in on the rock legend as he waxed eloquent about influences, his dubious beginnings, and what the future looked like. From April 4, 1968.*

By Valerie Wilmer

**H**e claims to have soaked up influences from "everyone from Buddy Holly to Muddy Waters and through Chuck Berry way back to Eddie Cochran," and one can hear just about everything from sitarlike riffs to crying Delta blues from his screaming strings.

"Cats I like now are Albert King and Elmore James," Jimi Hendrix said, "but if you try to copy them, want to play something note for note—especially a solo or a certain run that lasts over three seconds—your mind starts wandering. Therefore, you dig them and then do your own thing."

When the thin, stooped, sad-eyed young guitarist came gangling into London in September 1966, he gave the floundering local scene a much-needed injection, and,



JIMI HENDRIX EXHIBITION/JEAN LOUIS RANCIERE

with his unkempt mane of bushy hair, started a fashion unprecedented since the heyday of the Presley sideburn. His hairstyle had already made him an outcast in Harlem, and when Chas Chandler, former bass guitarist with the Animals, and the group's manager, Mike Jeffery, first heard him, he had taken refuge from the Uptown

jibes in Greenwich Village. As Jimmy James, he was playing with his own combo of two months' standing, the Blue Flame.

"We just didn't feel like trying to get into anything because we weren't ready," recalled Hendrix (his real name, incidentally); but for the two Britishers, he was saying something.

They foresaw a place for the shy, young



man with the despair-drenched voice and the reverberating electric guitar on the London scene and persuaded him to try his luck there.

"I said I might as well go because nothing much was happening," recalled the guitarist. "We were making something near \$3 a night, and you *know* we were starving."

Hendrix was born 22 years ago on the wrong side of the tracks in Seattle, Wash. He brought with him to England an aura of mystery concerning his origins and musical experience and a tailor-made line of hard-times-and-poverty stories. His colonial version of how he traded the life of an itinerant guitarist for a place in the Isley Brothers' backing group was widely quoted in the British musical press: "Yeah, I'll gig. May as well, man; sleepin' outside between them tall tenements was hell. Rats runnin' all across your chest, cockroaches stealin' your last candy bar from your very pockets." (On his current U.S. tour, he was given a gala reception in his hometown, and presented with the keys to the city by none other than the mayor himself.)

After a spell with the Isleys, the guitarist wandered to Nashville, Tenn., where he joined a package show starring B.B. King, Sam Cooke, Solomon Burke, and Chuck

Jackson, and paid his gigging dues until one day he missed the band bus and found himself stranded in Kansas City, Mo.

"When you're running around starving on the road, you'll play almost anything," said Hendrix ruefully. "I was more or less forced into like a Top 40 bag. Playing the things that I'm doing now would have been very difficult in that area."

In Atlanta, Ga., he found a job with the Little Richard tour, and on the West Coast he played with Ike and Tina Turner. Then Richard's show took Hendrix to New York, where he played with people like King Curtis and Joey Dee's Starliners.

"Oh man!" Hendrix exclaimed. "I don't think I could have stood another year of playing behind people. I'm glad Chas rescued me."

The guitarist has the restless nature of the itinerant bluesman. "I get very bored on the road," he admitted, "and I get bored with myself and the music sometimes. I mean, I love blues, but I wouldn't want to play it all night. It's just like although I like Howlin' Wolf and Otis Rush, there are some blues that just makes me sick. I feel nothing from it."

The chance to improvise is, he said, of prime importance in his playing. "I love to

listen to organized Top 40 r&b but I'd hate to play it," he said. "I'd hate to be in a limited bag; I'd rather starve."

When the Experience was formed on Oct. 12, 1966, three very different personalities were more or less thrown together. Hendrix was united with rock guitarist Noel Redding, who switched to bass guitar, and the explosive drummer Mitch Mitchell. Said the drummer, a devotee of Elvin Jones, "I wasn't at all interested in blues. I was more interested in a sort of pseudo-jazz thing. Noel was very interested in the rock & roll scene of two or three years ago, and so it could have clashed like mad. Instead, we all threw in our ideas, and now we play individually to make one sound."

The first thing that struck Hendrix on his arrival in Britain was the high quality of many of the local musicians and their awareness of "soul."

"One of the first people I ever heard was Eric Clapton with the Cream," he recalled. "I had a couple of his records, but in person he really knocked me out. I didn't know quite what to think, but I guess that if they can dig a cat like Ray Charles, who's one of the all-time greats when you're talking of soul, it isn't too surprising if they come up with that soulful feeling. It just shows that they're

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listening.”

It is obvious from Hendrix' eclectic guitar style that he has not only been influenced by people like Waters, James, King, and, in particular, Buddy Guy, but has done a complete turnaround in Britain, listening to the local synthesizers of blues guitar—people like Clapton, Peter Green, and Jeff Beck.

“I really don't know about that!” he said, smiling. “I listen to everybody, you know, and a lot of the people now are British. But whatever you do, you have an open mind. You don't necessarily *take* things, you just listen and accept.”

Declared Londoner Mitchell, “I don't think this country has anything to teach Jimi, because basically he hasn't changed since he came over. Maybe his outlook has changed a little bit and he's got more scope,

but what he is doing is just an extension of his original ideas.”

From his viewpoint, Hendrix said, “When you have people to work with who will work *with* you, quite naturally you're going to start moving. If you're really interested and really involved in music, well, then you can be very hungry. The more you contribute, the more you want to make. It makes you hungrier and hungrier, regardless of how many times you eat a day.”

The Experience has an enviable reputation for the comparative ease with which it records, one of its singles having made the grade on the second take, something almost unheard of in contemporary rock. This stems largely from group rapport. Hendrix is such a magnetic figure that the two sidemen are stimulated by him, and they, in

turn, free him from the restrictions that less intelligent musicians would impose.

“You've got to be musically one jump ahead to completely interpret what Jimi wants and put yourself into it,” Mitchell said. “Certain times you might feel his equal, and then he comes out with something that stimulates your mind quite a bit.”

At a recent rehearsal, where proceedings were held up for a couple of hours, the restless Hendrix sat down at the drum kit and tried his hand with the sticks.

“Gotta keep it moving,” he commented. “You don't care what people say so much—you just go on and do what you want to do. You never do it quite—I always try to get better and better—but as long as I'm playing, I don't think I'll ever reach the point where I'm satisfied.” **DB**

Wynton & Branford Marsalis

A Common Understanding



*It was our December 1982 issue, and Wynton and Branford Marsalis were just starting to make a name for themselves. Twenty-one and 22, respectively, the outspoken duo locked horns with DB, and each other.*

By A. James Liska

**A. JAMES LISKA:** *Let's start by talking about the quintet—the Wynton Marsalis Quintet.*

**BRANFORD MARSALIS:** That's what they call it.

**WYNTON MARSALIS:** When he gets his band, it'll be called the Branford Marsalis Quartet.

**AJL:** *Are you going to play in his band?*

**WM:** No-o-o-o.

**BM:** He's barred. Let's face it, when you get a personality as strong as his in a band, particularly playing trumpet and with all the coverage, it would become the Wynton Marsalis Quintet.

**AJL:** *Even though it would be your band?*

**BM:** That's what it would be.

**AJL:** *Is that a reflection on your leadership abilities as well as your personality?*

**BM:** We're talking from a visual standpoint. When people come to see the band, the whole image would be like if Miles started playing with somebody else's band. You can't



picture Miles as a sideman at any time.

**AJL:** *Coming from the same family, being close brothers, how did you end up so different?*

**WM:** My mother. My mother's a great woman. She treats everybody the same, so we're all different. When you treat everybody the same way and don't tamper with the way you treat them in accordance to their personality, then they act differently. They develop into their own person. Like Branford and me, we're totally different.

**BM:** Radically different.

**AJL:** *Yet you appear to be best of friends.*

**WM:** Well, we have our things.

**BM:** Appearances can be deceiving.

**WM:** All my brothers . . . we grew up living in the same room, you know? He was always my boy, though. Like, I could always talk to him.

**AJL:** *You two are the closest in age?*

**BM:** We're 13 months apart.

**WM:** I always took my other brothers for granted. When Branford went away to college and I was still in high school, that's when I missed him. But we used to argue all the time. We think totally different. Anything I would say, he'd say just the opposite.

**AJL:** *Just to be obstinate?*

**WM:** Just to say it.

**BM:** It wasn't just to say it. It was because I didn't agree.

**WM:** Nothing I say he agrees with.

**BM:** Some things I agree with.

**AJL:** *Musically, did you agree?*

**BM:** No.

**AJL:** *Still?*

**WM:** No.

**AJL:** *What's the most difficult thing about keeping your group together?*

**WM:** Getting gigs. I worked three gigs in May with the band, and those were like one-hour gigs. You've got to gig all of the time, but you can't make money working in the clubs.

**AJL:** *What about the concert hall situation?*

**WM:** It hasn't hurt the music because the music in the clubs was dying anyway. It might be picking up now, but it was dying for a long time because the music changed.

**AJL:** *How so?*

**WM:** The music was different in the '50s and '60s than it is now. Then you could play popular tunes in the jazz setting and make them sound hip.

**AJL:** *And now?*

**WM:** You can't do that now because all of the popular tunes are sad pieces of one-chord shit. Today's pop tunes are sad. Turn on the radio and try to find a pop tune to play with your band. You can't do it. The melodies are static, the chord changes are just the same senseless stuff repeated over and over again. Back then you could get a pop tune, and people were more willing to come out and see the music because it had more

popular elements in it. They could more easily identify with it.

**AJL:** *Have the pop tunes of back then lost their meaning today?*

**WM:** They haven't lost their meaning, but they're old. You've heard them played so many times by great performers that you don't want to play them again.

**AJL:** *Any suggestions or solutions?*

**WM:** I think one of the biggest problems is that nobody wants to do somebody else's song. Everybody thinks that they can write great tunes, and all the public wants is that it sounds different. Music has to be played before it gets old. The music that Ornette Coleman played, that Miles and Trane played in the '60s, some of the stuff that Mingus and Booker Little and Charlie Rouse and these cats were starting to do . . . that music isn't old because nobody else has ever played it.

**AJL:** *What happens, what is the reaction, if you do play it?*

**WM:** People say, "Man, you sound like you're imitating Miles in the '60s," or else, "He sounds like he's imitating Elvin Jones." So what? You just don't come up with something new. You have to play through something. The problem with some of the stuff that all the critics think is innovative is that it sounds like European music—European, avant garde, classical 20th-century, static-rhythm music with blues licks in it. And all these cats can say for themselves is, "We don't sound like anybody else." That doesn't mean shit. The key is to sound like somebody else, to take what is already there and sound like an *extension* of that. It's not to not *sound* like that. Music has a tradition that you have to understand before you can move to the next step. But that doesn't mean you have to be a historian.

**AJL:** *Wynton, you've expressed an aversion to the word "jazz." Why?*

**WM:** I don't like it because it's now taken on the context of being everything. Anything is jazz; everything is jazz. Quincy Jones' shit is jazz, David Sanborn . . . that's not to cut down Quincy or David. I love funk, it's hip. No problem to it. The thing is, if it'll sell records to call that stuff jazz, they'll call it jazz. They call Miles' stuff jazz. That stuff is not jazz, man. Just because somebody played jazz at one time, that doesn't mean they're still playing it. Branford will agree with me.

**BM:** *(laughs)* No. I don't agree.

**WM:** The thing is, we all get together and we know that this shit is sad, but we're gonna say it's good, then everybody agrees. Nobody is strong enough to stand up and say, "Wait, this stuff is bullshit." Everybody is afraid to peek out from behind the door and say, "C'mon man." Everybody wants to say everything is cool.

**AJL:** *Branford, do you have as strong a*

*feeling to maintain the standards?*

**BM:** Yes, even stronger in some ways. I just don't talk about it as much. A lot of the music he doesn't like, I like.

**AJL:** *Like what?*

**BM:** Like everything.

**WM:** Like what?

**BM:** Like [John McLaughlin's] Mahavishnu [Orchestra]. A lot of the fusion stuff.

**WM:** I don't dislike that.

**BM:** It's not that you dislike it, it's that you prefer not to listen to it.

**WM:** That's true.

**AJL:** *Do you think you're more open?*

**BM:** I don't consider it being more open; it's just that he's kind of set in his ways. What I feel strongly about is the way the business has come into the music. Everything has become Los Angeles—everything is great and everything is beautiful. It's kind of tired. Cats come up to me and say: "What do you think of Spyro Gyra?" And I say: "I don't." That's not an insult to Spyro Gyra. I just don't like it when people call it jazz when it's not.

**AJL:** *Any advice for young players?*

**WM:** Avoid roots.

**BM:** I think the basis of the whole thing is the bass player. The rhythm section is very important. If I've got a sad rhythm section, I'm in trouble.

**WM:** Listen to the music. High schools all over the country should have programs where the kids can listen to the music. Schools should have the records, and the students should be required to listen to them all, not just Buddy Rich and Maynard Ferguson. They should listen to Parker and Coltrane and some of the more creative cats. That should be a required thing. Jazz shouldn't be taught like a course. The students should know more than a couple of bebop licks and some progressions.

**BM:** Never play what you practice; never write down your own solos—a classic waste of time unless you're practicing ear training.

**WM:** You should learn a solo off a record, but don't transcribe it. It doesn't make sense to transcribe a solo.

**BM:** You're not learning it then, you're reading it.

**WM:** And learn a solo to get to what you want to do. You don't learn a solo to play that solo.

**BM:** What people don't realize is that what a soloist plays is a direct result of what's happening on the bandstand.

**WM:** You should learn all of the parts—the bass, the piano, the drums—everything.

**BM:** Right.

**WM:** Music goes forward. Music doesn't go backwards. Whatever the cats couldn't play before you, you're supposed to play.

**BM:** There's a huge movement for the perpetuation of ignorance in jazz. Play, that's all.

DB



Ornette Coleman

## The Color of Music

*Having shook the world with his Free Jazz in the early '60s, Ornette Coleman has stayed the course. This August '87 interview found him discussing his unique views and approach to music.*

with Howard Mandel

**A**lthough instrumental music is really the backbone of all music, except language, it suffers. When I had my place on Prince Street, I wanted to not worry about categories, and have people playing all kinds of music, regardless of instrument—it could be a kazoo, or a violin, anything. In the Western world, there's only a few instruments that people adopt to a lead, like the saxophone or the guitar. You can't have a person with a Jew's harp be the leader of a band. But why not? It's just another sound.

There's not one instrument more refined . . . when you see an African person taking a little handmade instrument and blowing your mind, you know the bassoon is not the only instrument that can have new properties to it. So that's why I'm very much interested in sharing information to every human being on the earth who is interested in playing music, whether they want to be called a musician or not. That doesn't matter.

Basically, all the music in the Western world that's tempered is played on the same notes; the solfeggio system is still used today to get people to say, 'Well, you're flat or you're sharp, you can sing or you can't.' Imagine what it was before they had that. No one was concerned about it. Everyone was concerned about how they felt, how good or bad the person could do what they were doing. To me, lots of intellectual things have eliminated the naturalness in human beings. And it has really castrated lots of the pureness of people's hearts. . . .

I think 90 percent of what's called folk music and primitive music is probably the most advanced thing in melody today. Because how many combinations can you use to write the blues, or to write an aria? All those combinations have been used and used the last 100 years. Somebody that's



growing up and discovers the blues or jazz—all you hear is how he feels playing it. The format is old as water. . . .

I've found that most classical, jazz, and pop people have adapted to the perfect format: the melody. Whatever the melody is. If you hear Sarah Vaughan sing a melody and Linda Ronstadt sing a melody, they both sing beautifully, but some people prefer the jazz version because they like jazz. That's become less of a problem to me because I realize the melody itself will never change. It's the phrasing. Like if you play the melody and you put yellow in it, and I play the melody and put blue, that's all that you really see, the color in the melody; the melody always stays the same. What I want to do is to make the *coloring* the melodies. Not to

*color* the melody, but make the melody the actual statement itself. We do that in Prime Time. That's what it is.

In Prime Time the melody can be the bass line, the modulation line, the melody, or the second or third part. In fact, that's how I see harmonics. That you can take any melody, and use it as a bass line. Or as a second part. Or as a lead. Or as a rhythm. I do it in all the music that I play. . . .

Remember the two things I'm trying to emphasize: that melody is only unison, it's not melody. Melody is only unison. But there are as many unisons as there are stars in the sky. In music, the thing we're talking about in those colors has a lot to do with who's actually playing, and what level they're playing. **DB**



# Key

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



## Sonny Rollins

**OLD FLAMES**—Milestone 9215-2: *DARN THAT DREAM; WHERE OR WHEN; MY OLD FLAME; TIMES SLIMES; I SEE YOUR FACE BEFORE ME; DELIA; PRELUDE TO A KISS.* (56:10)

**Personnel:** Rollins, tenor saxophone; Clifton Anderson, trombone; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Bob Cranshaw, electric, acoustic basses; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Jon Faddis, Byron Stripling, flugelhorn (1,7); Alex Brofsky, french horn (1,7); Bob Stewart, tuba (1,7); Jimmy Heath, brass arrangements (1,7).

★★★★★

*Old Flames* finds Sonny Rollins in a sentimental mood. He embraces this program of standards, predominantly ballads, and achieves a low-key, after-hours ambience. This is a "lion in winter" recording, given to subtlety and insight over raw excitement. The performances are beautiful, but often melancholy, pervaded by feelings of wistfulness and nostalgia. A romantic at heart, Rollins expertly conveys longing and bittersweet memory while exploring nuances in the melodies, taking surprising twists and turns, or dropping quotes.

You want to hear Rollins *appropriate* these songs and make them his own, as he has so many others. He comes closest with "My Old Flame" and "I See Your Face Before Me," which benefit from his most impassioned playing. Rollins convinces you that you hadn't really heard these songs before, and won't hear them the same way again.

Tommy Flanagan is the perfect pianist for this moody album—introspective, graceful, and occasionally Monk-ish. Rollins hasn't recorded with a pianist of this caliber in a long, long time. Jimmy Heath arranged and conducted the brass section, which sympathetically supports Rollins on two tracks, recalling *Sonny Rollins/Brass*, *Sonny Rollins/Trio* (1958). Rollins' energetic "Times Slimes" (a bad review?) throws off sparks, but the laid-back

mood otherwise sustained by *Old Flames* can eventually become monochromatic. The message may be that old flames burn low, but give great warmth.

—Jon Andrews



## Eastern Rebellion

**SIMPLE PLEASURE**—MusicMasters 65081-2: *IN THE KITCHEN; RONI'S DECISION; DEAR RUTH; SIMPLE PLEASURE; SIXTH AVENUE; MY IDEAL; ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE; MY MAN'S GONE NOW; THEME FOR ERNIE.* (56:18)

**Personnel:** Cedar Walton, piano; Ralph Moore, saxophones; David Williams, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

★★★★½

## Cedar Walton

**AS LONG AS THERE'S MUSIC**—Muse 5405: *YOUNG AND FOOLISH; MEANING OF THE BLUES; I'M NOT SO SURE; GROUND WORK; NEWEST BLUES; PANNONICA; AS LONG AS THERE'S MUSIC; VOICES DEEP WITHIN.* (58:33)

**Personnel:** Walton, piano; Terence Blanchard, trumpet; Jesse Davis, alto saxophone; David Williams, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

★★★★★

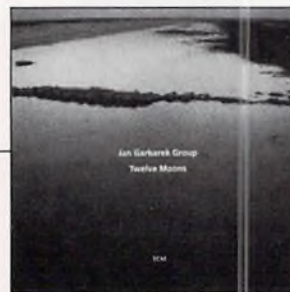
Cedar Walton's immersion in music is total and absolute. True also for Billy Higgins, his alter ego since the mid-'50s. Their delight with the possibilities of artistic expression in the song form is obvious when one hears the many, many sessions they've played on. These two recent efforts are strong additions to their shared discography.

Eastern Rebellion, a longtime Walton-Higgins creative outlet, now with Ralph Moore and David Williams aboard, is one of the best working groups. On the current lineup's second album, recorded in mid-1992, the players flourish in the elated or relaxed moods of Walton compositions as well as various standards. The teamwork is stellar; the younger men possess the same intellectual fervor for musical clarity as the drummer and the pianist. They all swing to the highest reaches on "In The Kitchen" and "Simple Pleasure," and the quartet knows how to embrace tenderness without waxing sentimental, most notably on Walton's song for his mother, "Dear Ruth." One slight imperfection: "All The Things You Are," a stale song where Moore isn't all that surefooted.

In 1990, Walton and Higgins enlisted Williams, Terence Blanchard, and Jesse Davis for *As Long As There's Music*, another date filled with standards and Walton compositions that gets over on delicious swing and a certain grace of style. The horns sing with the fresh-

ness of youth, though Davis, on his first session ever, sounds a bit awkward. Walton's lines spangle with colors, certitude, and deep feeling. Higgins is all over his drum kit as he channels or alters the rhythmic course and intensity. These two staunch friends, plus Williams, mesh wonderfully. Nothing becomes a master more than another master.

—Frank-John Hadley



## Jan Garbarek

**TWELVE MOONS**—ECM 519 500-2: *TWELVE MOONS; PSALM; BROTHER WIND MARCH; THERE WERE SWALLOWS . . . ; THE TALL TEAR TREES; ARIETTA; GAUTES-MARGJIT; DARVANAN; HUHAI; WITCHI-TAI-TO.* (75:27)

**Personnel:** Garbarek, tenor and soprano saxophones, synthesizers; Rainer Brüninghaus, piano, synthesizer; Eberhard Weber, bass; Manu Katché, drums; Marilyn Mazur, percussion, Agnes Buen Garnàs (2), Mari Boine (8), vocals.

★★★★½

No saxophonist today sounds more distinctive, or more immediately recognizable, than Jan Garbarek. No one is more often typecast. In Garbarek's case, the yearning cry of his sax may be too readily associated with fog-shrouded fjords and Nordic gloom. *Twelve Moons* continues and sums up Garbarek's progress toward a multi-cultural music whose ties to "jazz" grow tenuous. This long-playing CD is packed with infectious, hummable folk themes and energetic rhythms ("Huhai" and "Gautes-Margjit"), along with some Scandinavian angst ("Psalm"). Garbarek favors his soprano horn on this date. With an emphasis on mood, tone, expression and melody, he can sound like a cross between Hamlet and David Sanborn (a compliment).

Drummer Manu Katché is an important component in the group sound. You'd expect to hear Katché with Sting or Peter Gabriel, but here, as on Garbarek's *I Took Up The Funes*, Katché contributes a direct, forceful beat, blending effectively with Marilyn Mazur's percussion. Garbarek revisits his region's folk music through traditional tunes and collaborations with singers Agnes Buen Garnàs and Mari Boine. Boine duets with Garbarek's keening tenor on her "Darvanan," a primal, emotional exchange that is easily the album's wildest track. Many, many moons have passed since Garbarek first recorded Jim Pepper's "Witchi-Tai-To." This version glows irresistibly, highlighted by Rainer Brüninghaus' lyrical solo, and adds to *Twelve Moons'* retrospective feeling.

For the record, *Twelve Moons* marks ECM's 500th release.

—Jon Andrews





## Claude Bolling

**PLAYS ELLINGTON: BLACK, BROWN & BEIGE**—Milan 35656: *WORK SONG; COME SUNDAY; LIGHT 1, 2, 3; WEST INDIAN DANCE; EMANCIPATION CELEBRATION; THE BLUES; WAR; SUGAR HILL PENTHOUSE; ROCK WALTZ; SYMPHONETTE; FINALE.* (45:45)

**Personnel:** Philippe Corcuff, Guy Bodet, Michel Delakian, Fernand Verstraete, trumpets; Andre Paquinet, Benny Vasseur, Michel Camicas, Emile Vilain, trombones; Jean Aldegon, Jean Eteve, Claude Tissendier, Pierre Schirrer, Philippe Portejoie, Francis Courmet, saxophones; Patrice Fontanarosa, violin; Bolling, piano; Jean-Paul Charlap, guitar; Pierre-Yves Sorin, bass; Vincent Cordelette, drums; Guylenn, vocal (8).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

## Duke Ellington

**THE GREAT LONDON CONCERTS**—MusicMasters 65106: *TAKE THE "A" TRAIN; PERDIDO; CARAVAN; ISFAHAN; THE OPENER; HARLEM; TAKE THE "A" TRAIN (VOCAL); MOOD INDIGO; C JAM BLUES; DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE; DIMINUENDO AND CRESCENDO IN BLUE; SINGLE PETAL OF A ROSE; KINDA DUKISH/ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM.* (66:40)

**Personnel:** Cat Anderson, Ray Burrowes, Ray Nance, Cootie Williams, Rolf Ericson (1-7,13), Herbie Jones (1-7,13), trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors, trombones; Russell Procope, Johnny Hodges, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney, saxophones; Ellington, piano; Ernie Shepard, vocal (7), bass; Sam Woodyard, drums; Milt Grayson, vocal (10).

★ ★ ★

This is the third complete recording of Duke Ellington's famous magnum opus *Black, Brown & Beige*, and, by and large, this 50th-anniversary recording is a feather in the cap of the repertoire wing of jazz. It supplements the original, recorded at Carnegie Hall in 1943, and a reconstruction by Alan Cohn from the '70s. A "reconstruction" because Ellington was forever editing and adjusting this work. He never really found a final form for it. When the full 1943 concert version was finally issued by Prestige 15 years ago, however, that more or less became the standard.

The Bolling performance is generally faithful to the original. The soloists focus on playing the score within its spirit, not on chasing the cult of personality. A few minor liberties taken along the way are relatively acceptable.

But it runs awry in the finale for no good reason, beginning at about the point where we would expect the brief "Come Sunday" reprise. Instead, we get Bolling's new and gratuitous finale, with a Basie signature mixed in no less. It is unnecessary and inconsistent with the superior rendering that has come before. With that most formidable reservation duly noted, how-

ever, the overall performance is too good to be dismissed on that alone. Ellington buffs will want to ponder this one, and school lab bands may want to see if they're equal to it.

The homecoming of Cootie Williams and Lawrence Brown to the Ellington nest in the early '60s brought fresh vitality to the band's work. But it's only moderately evident on *The Great London Concerts*, which combines two standard live performances from 1963 and '64.

The material is all-too familiar. The hit of the

1956 Newport Festival, "Diminuendo In Blue" (wrongly introduced by Duke and identified; "Crescendo" is not heard), has degenerated sadly by now, and Milt Grayson is cloying on "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." We also get another "Harlem," one of Ellington's most distinguished long works, but no different here than other issued versions from this period. True, "Perdido" gets an unexpectedly brisk chart, and Johnny Hodges gives "Mood Indigo" a novel solo voice. But with all the set



LOUIE BELLSON



BILLY HIGGINS

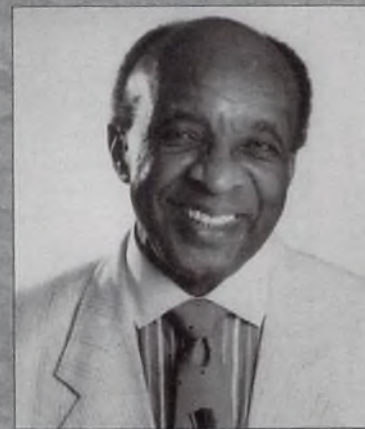
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solos and repeated numbers, all but the hardcore of Ellington fans may wonder: How many versions of this material are enough?

—John McDonough



**Bertha Hope**

**BETWEEN TWO KINGS**—Minor Music 801025: *DE LA SENDRAS; BETWEEN TWO KINGS; A WISE AND WONDERFUL BOY; SOMETHING FOR KENNY; SLEEPIN' BEE; IF YOU COULD SEE ME NOW; HOKKAIDO SPRING; WHAT WILLIS MEANT; DOTTI-DOTTI; THIS COULD BE BLUES. (55:44)*  
**Personnel:** Hope, piano; Walter Booker, Jr., bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Maturity has its rewards, as the fifty-ish Bertha

Hope clearly demonstrates on this impressive trio date. What she has learned over decades of studying with pianists like Richie Powell and her late, great husband Elmo, and working to develop a sound of her own, is the power of clarity and directness. Under her fingers, the keys encounter a sure hand with elegant single-note economy of line; in places, the California-born musician is reminiscent of other West Coasters like Hampton Hawes and Carl Perkins, though she's generally more out-front. Neither brash nor tentative, she's also got a keen ear for left-hand harmonies; she prefers texture to silk, comping emotion without sap.

On *Between Two Kings*—that's Martin Luther and Rodney, in case you wondered—a superb recording captures Hope and her impeccable rhythmists relaxing with a bunch of soulful grooves. Cobb swings solidly and inobtrusively on Harold Arlen's bright "Sleepin' Bee," clacking high-hat stand under Booker's solo, and the drummer is spotlighted on Hope's gorgeous, melodically unusual "Something For Kenny." Indeed, of equal interest to Hope's wonderful playing is her composing, which accounts for all but two cuts. The 10-minute title track, for instance, takes a tender tune from down-tempo, reflective quietude into a buoyant, faster second hearing; likewise, she introduces her dedication to Larry Willis ("What Willis Meant")—which intriguingly mixes Latin drumming with block chords—with a passion-

ate, balladsy preface. The disc ends on a tuff note, with the clever "This Could Be Blues." A great trio featuring an experienced new kid on the block. Hope springs eternal —John Corbett



**Bernie Worrell**

**THE OTHER SIDE**—CMP 65: *WITNESS FOR THE DEFENSE; SET THE TONE/VICTORY; THE MASK; GLADIATOR SKULL; MOON OVER BRIXTON; JUDIE'S PASSION PURPLE; FIELDS OF PLAY. (50:32)*

**Personnel:** Worrell, Hammond B-3 organ, synthesizer, Mini-Moog, wah clavinet, electric piano; Amina Claudine Myers, Hammond B-3 organ (2,6); Fred Wesley, trombone (1,5); Vincent Chancey, french horn (1,5); Marty Ehrlich, bass clarinet (1,5); Janet Grice, bassoon (1,5); Patience Higgins, clarinet (1,5); Umar Bin Hassan, voice (2); Buckethead, guitar (3); Bill Laswell, samples, effects, noise (4-7); Oz Fritz, "sounds" (7).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

On *The Other Side*, Bernie Worrell continues his collaboration with Bill Laswell, the self-styled pseudo-postmodernist music producer whose work so often seems to involve coordinating (and then including himself in) projects that would be better off without him. For instance, here Laswell's largely extraneous "noise"—including a particularly annoying cricketlike buzz—intrudes on Worrell's otherwise excellent B-3 dialog with surprise guest Myers on "Judie's Passion Purple."

Worrell studied at the New England Conservatory before graduating to George Clinton's School for Funked-Up Noise. Like last year's *Blacktronic Science*, *The Other Side* includes a cross-section of Worrell's multiple facets, including jazzier organ encounters with Myers, an apocalyptic rant from the Last Poets' rapper Hassan ("Set The Tone"), a rather pompous, baroque synth piece ("Fields Of Play"), and two fascinating compositions for chamber ensemble. "Moon Over Brixton" is a lush setting for winds and organ, while the more involved "Witness For The Defense" evokes composers from Aaron Copland to Julius Hemphill, suspending groovy trombone riffs by Fred Wesley (who gets arranging credits on both cuts) in a matrix of Americana. A duet with guitarist Buckethead ("The Mask") is the disc's most potent dose of the funk that sends a zap at yer sacroiliac—though it's such a precise nod at Funkadelic that I think I can hear the lawyers circling already.

Like Kip Hanrahan and Hal Willner, Laswell sometimes succeeds at bringing together unlikely partners in fruitful contexts—for example, it's unquestionably cool to have Marty Ehrlich playing with Fred Wesley and Bernie Worrell. If

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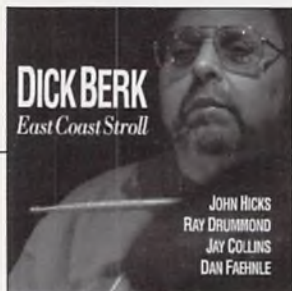
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he'd stopped there, this might've been a more thoroughly enjoyable record. —John Corbett



## Dick Berk

**EAST COAST STROLL**—Reservoir 128: *BATHROBE BLUES; EAST COAST STROLL; EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME; THAT PARTY UPSTAIRS; THE THINGS WE DID LAST SUMMER; SOS; WORKIN' WITH BERK; WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN; KLAC-TOVEEDSETENE.* (65:46)

**Personnel:** Berk, drums; Jay Collins, tenor sax; Dan Faehnle, guitar; John Hicks, piano; Ray Drummond, bass.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Berk and company, known as the Jazz Adoption Agency, are a swinging, mainstream outfit reminiscent of (in this incarnation) Stan Getz and Jimmy Raney. The tenor-and-guitar blend, backed by a supple yet driving rhythm section, also echoes Johnny Griffin and Wes Montgomery. The lead players essay a ballad apiece (Collins on "We'll Be Together Again" and Faehnle on "The Things We Did Last Summer"), and the group cooks agreeably on the rest. Berk guides the action through fluid accompaniment and interplay rather than bombast.

—Owen Cordle



## Craig Handy

**INTRODUCING THREE FOR ALL + ONE**—Arabesque Jazz 0109: *SPINNING WHEEL; ISOTOPE; BRIGHT EYES; E RACER X; CHANT; P.S. I LOVE YOU; ESNARTRIUOS!; ONE!; AMY'S WALTZ; THE AVENUE; TO WOO IT MAY CONCERN; WEST BANK; BEYOND THE BERLIN WALL.* (52:41)

**Personnel:** Handy, tenor, soprano saxophones; Charles Fambrough, bass; Ralph Peterson, drums; David Kikoski, piano (3,5,8-10).

★ ★ ★ ★

As a trio, saxophonist Craig Handy's Three For All plays aggressively and takes risks, with an emphasis on blowing. Handy combines

speed, agility, and power. He reminds you of Wayne Shorter or Joe Henderson, but he's no clone. Ralph Peterson adds raw, percussive energy and rhythmic complexity. Charles Fambrough may be the least conspicuous of the three, rarely soloing, but he contributes swing, along with the best writing. The trio's version of Henderson's "Isotope" (from *Inner Urge*) is a highlight, as Handy references the original without mimicry, and Peterson plays a prominent role. "E Racer X" demonstrates Handy's tremendous quickness and endurance, while

paying tribute to George Adams.

Introduce the warmth and color of Dave Kikoski's piano, and the music changes markedly, taking on more structure and intimacy. Handy sounds Trane-ish on the quartet's clever adaptation of Marvin Hamlisch's "One!" as he welds a new melody onto the original chords, retaining little else. Three Fambrough compositions have the subtle Latin inflections and sway characteristic of his work, with Handy's fluid soprano work on "Amy's Waltz" evoking Shorter effectively.

—Jon Andrews



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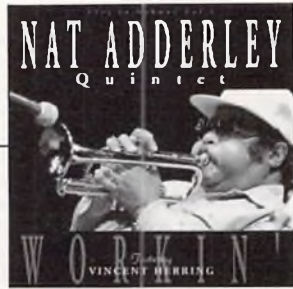
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**Nat Adderley**

**ON THE MOVE**—Evidence 22064-2: MALANDRO; THE LITTLE BOY WITH THE SAD EYES; TO WISDOM THE PRIZE; NATURALLY; THE SCENE; COME IN OUT OF THE RAIN. (56:33)

**Personnel:** Adderley, cornet; Walter Booker, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums; Sonny Fortune, alto saxophone; Larry Willis, piano.

★★★★

**WORKIN'**—Timeless 387: WORK SONG; THE CHANT; PLUM STREET; ALMOST ALWAYS; THE BIG J; THE SCENE. (53:21)

**Personnel:** Adderley, cornet; Walter Booker, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums; Vincent Herring, alto saxophone; Rob Bargar, piano.

★★★

Recorded at San Francisco's Keystone Corner in 1983, *On The Move* finds Nat with the

soulfully lyrical Sonny Fortune and crystalline Larry Willis aboard, men who play as smooth as the wind and cheery as pie. Willis' febrile pen writes three long-spinning modal tunes that lend grace and buoyancy to the entire set. "Malandro," in Mideast minor, sidles in with shaky ensemble but good solos. "The Little Boy With The Sad Eyes" bounces aplenty, but Nat etches a wistful coda. Book states "Wisdom"'s opening theme arco, to profound effect. "Naturally" finds the leader in playful form, sharing another sweet coda with Booker's harmonics. Fortune cups heat and light into every sunny phrase.

*Workin'*, from '92, was recorded at Cologne, Germany's Subway. Overblowing hard blues carries the day, and the set flies by like one long inhalation. Air and agenda are heavy: Herring, with blistering precision and insuperable heart, girds his loins to jericho down The Wall again (for Godfather Julian). Seething rhythms pounce relentlessly ahead of the beat. Rob Bargar churns two-fistedly, straightforwardly. Herring takes a respite from battle on his dreamy, convoluted "Almost Always."

Nat himself plays with headlong excitement and fire on both sessions, but cedes a feature role to Herring. The extra star favors subtlety and elegance over brute strength and Willis' deeper level of writing, though Adderley's Subway set calls are likely just canny audience reading.

—Fred Bouchard



**George Gershwin**

**GERSHWIN PLAYS GERSHWIN: THE PIANO ROLLS**—Elektra Nonesuch 79287-2: SWEET AND LOW DOWN; NOVELETTE IN FOURTHS; THAT CERTAIN FEELING; SO AM I; RHAPSODY IN BLUE; SWANEE; WHEN YOU WANT 'EM, YOU CAN'T GET 'EM, WHEN YOU'VE GOT 'EM, YOU DON'T WANT 'EM; KICKIN' THE CLOUDS AWAY; IDLE DREAMS; ON MY MIND THE WHOLE NIGHT LONG; SCANDAL WALK; AN AMERICAN IN PARIS. (60:43)

**Personnel:** Gershwin, Frank Milne (12), piano roll.

★★★

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It's rather like watching Chaplin without the scratches, jerky motions, and stark, black-and-white imagery. After all, aren't the filterings of early film technology inseparable from the Chaplin esthetic? In the same way, early recording imposed an equally real though unintended component on the esthetic of any artist who worked in the '20s and '30s.

The piano roll, which was invented in 1876 and was the first system of mechanical reproduction of music, delivered pure, live sound. But the recording, which came a year later, delivered the performer. That's why these rolls, in all their sonic splendor, undermine at least one listener's ability to believe them as period Gershwin renderings.

All selections except "American In Paris" were performed by Gershwin himself. Wodehouse notes that several received post-production "overdubbing," meaning notes were added to the roll at the time, either to fill out orchestral parts ("Rhapsody In Blue") or boost the sense of virtuosity ("That Certain Feeling").

Gershwin's playing here is a full, two-handed style calculated to dazzle his listeners and sell a tune. He was a clever manipulator who could make a second chorus as fresh as a first without ever abandoning the melody. But he was not an improviser. Nor was he a blues player. You will hear blues changes on "On My Mind," but the sensibility is pure theater, not barrelhouse.

This is historically interesting material, of course. But the main musical importance here is in the Duo-Art rolls of the "Rhapsody." They capture the dynamics as well as the notes wonderfully when compared to the 1924 and 1927 Victor recordings with Paul Whiteman.

—John McDonough



## Tom Harrell

**UPSWING**—Chesky 103: *UPSWING*; *ANGELA*; *TRAIN SHUFFLE*; *EMERGENCE*; *TIME'S MIRROR*; *BLUES CONNOTATION*; *PROCESSION*; *TUNE-A-TUNE*. (70:59)

**Personnel:** Harrell, trumpet, flugelhorn; Phil Woods, alto sax; Joe Lovano, tenor sax; Danilo Perez, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Bill Goodwin, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Maybe there's an analogy here in Harrell's titles, as in the "Emergence" of a distinct composer and player. The sound of these performances stays with one: a certain modality in the horns, certain orchestrations for the rhythm section, the fiery lyricism of the soloists. The title tune shows the "up" side of the composer, with an arrangement that suggests a little big band.

"Time's Mirror" reflects a legacy of loveliness in jazz: Lovano's melancholy ballad tenor looking back to the tenderness of Woody Herman's saxes, Harrell's flugelhorn hinting at Art Farmer. "Angela," too, builds on the past with cool, modal voicings reminiscent of Harrell's *Sail Away* album on Contemporary.

"Train Shuffle" and "Blues Connotation" are two takes on blues feelings, the latter a reassessment of a tune by Ornette Coleman, the only composer besides Harrell represented on

the album. If these symbolize roots, "Procession" and "Tune-A-Tune" signify the progress of an artist. The former represents a lyrical future, the latter a more complex, agitated picture.

The front line of this band could turn this into a battle of egos. They don't; instead they blend. The less-celebrated rhythm section is equally inspired, especially Goodwin, who produced the album and whose loose, boppish drums are the right balance of tension and relaxation.

—Owen Cordle

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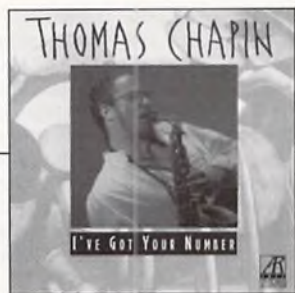
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**Thomas Chapin**

**I'VE GOT YOUR NUMBER**—Arabesque Jazz AJ0110: *I'VE GOT YOUR NUMBER; DRINKIN'; TIME WAITS; MOON RAY; DON'T LOOK NOW; THE PRESENT; THE WALKING WOUNDED; RHINO!* (56:36)  
**Personnel:** Chapin, alto saxophone, flute; Ronnie Matthews, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Steve Johns, drums; Louis Bauzo, congas (5,7).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

**INSOMNIA**—Knitting Factory Works KFWCD 132: *PANTHEON; INSOMNIA; EQUATORIA; TRIO I; COUP D'ETAT; TRIO II; GOLGOTHAM; IOTA.* (69:40)  
**Personnel:** Chapin, alto saxophone, flute; Mario Pavone, bass; Michael Sarin, drums; Al Bryant, Frank London, trumpet; Curtis Fowlkes, Peter McEachern, trombone; Marcus Rojas, Ray Stewart (3), tuba.

★ ★ ★ ★

Thomas Chapin may have established himself as a fire-breathing "downtown" improviser on alto sax and flute, but he first logged years in the more traditional company of Lionel Hampton and Chico Hamilton. *I've Got Your Number* puts Chapin on the inside looking out. You'd expect him to cover Ornette Coleman, not Cy Coleman. Cy's title track joins compositions from Artie Shaw and Bud Powell and Latin-influenced tunes in this strong, diverse set. Playing in a (relatively) conventional style reinforces Chapin's strongest influences, notably Rahsaan Roland Kirk and Jackie McLean. Eric Dolphy informs Chapin's approach to flute, especially on a lovely reading of Powell's "Time Waits." Two originals, "Drinkin'" and "Rhino!" allow for Chapin's most energetic, personalized alto work.

*Insomnia* focuses on Chapin's impressive skills as a composer and arranger with his Trio Plus Brass, recorded live at New York's Knitting Factory. Chapin's inventive arrangements for octet emphasize low brasses and, on "Coup d'Etat," march rhythms. Henry Threadgill's recent bands exert a clear influence, with Marcus Rojas and Curtis Fowlkes from Very Very Circus joining Chapin. "Pantheon" and "Equatoria" set Chapin's flute over intensifying grooves. "Golgotham" is the rousing highlight of the set, a driving, 18-minute stomp featuring wailing alto and a chorus of vocalizing horns.

—Jon Andrews



**Vinx**

**THE STORYTELLER**—Pangaea IRS Records 0777 7 13206 20: *FOREVER YOURS; MOONDANCE; JUST ONE DANCE; ARMIDA PRELUDE; ARMIDA; LIVING IN THE METRO; GRITS & PATE; PLEASE COME BACK; WHAT'S COME OVER ME?; I WILL ALWAYS CARE; EAST OF AWAY; DIAL IT; I KNOW THE WAY; LETTER TO THE KILLER; I FEEL INCREDIBLE.* (65:53 minutes)

**Personnel:** Vinx, vocals, djembe, udu, talking drum, shekere, Moroccan drum, tone log; various artists, including Peter "Usi" Wegner, Django Porter, flamenco guitars (4,5); George Howard, soprano sax (8); Karen Briggs, violin (7,10); Stevie Wonder, piano (10); Cassandra Wilson (10), Beulah Roberts (13), vocals; Mark E. Smith, background vocals (5,8,9,11,12).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

On *The Storyteller*, songwriter/vocalist/percus-

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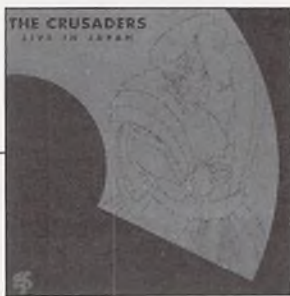
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sionist/co-producer Vinx effortlessly moves from a funk-tinged pop tune into a sensuous-samba-meets-fiery-flamenco number, then returns to the dance-funk zone before turning another corner with a classical violin exordium to a soft & warm quasi-jazz piece. The album also includes a guitar-crunching rocker, an interlude where a street rap and an operatic aria are sung simultaneously, and an African-flavored pop tune that soars with a full gospel choir. One of the many highlights is Vinx's slow, soulful read of and polyrhythmic skip through Van Morrison's "Moondance." The album is marred only by digressions into pop routine and stretches of lyrical mediocrity.

—Dan Ouellette



## Crusaders

**LIVE IN JAPAN**—GRP 9746: *INTRODUCTION; RAINBOW SEEKER; THE HUSTLER; SWEET GENTLE LOVE; DRUM INTRODUCTION; SPIRAL; MELODIES OF LOVE; CARMEL; SO FAR AWAY; BRAZOS RIVER BREAKDOWN; IN ALL MY WILDEST DREAMS; PUT IT WHERE YOU WANT IT.* (78:10)

**Personnel:** Joe Sample, keyboards; Wilton Felder, saxophone; Stix Hooper, drums; Alphonso Johnson, bass; Barry Finnerty, Roland Bautista, guitar; Rafael Cruz, percussion.

★ ★ 1/2

## Wayne Henderson & The Next Crusade

**SKETCHES OF LIFE**—PAR 2021: *STRANGE LOVE; MEN CRY TOO; THE COLOR OF LOVE; I CAN'T GET STARTED WITH YOU; PORTRAIT OF A DREAM; FOR OLD TIME SAKE; SURVIVAL; WE'RE GONNA ROCK YOUR SOCKS OFF; I'LL TAKE YOU THERE; JUST BECAUSE IT'S JAZZ; ANCESTRAL CHANT.* (51:40)

**Personnel:** Henderson, trombone; Wilton Felder, Ronnie Laws (5), saxophones; Rob Mullins, Bobby Lyle (5), keyboards; Dwight Sills, Brian Price, Craig T. Cooper (1), Giovanni Guido (6), guitar; Nathaniel Phillips, Nathan East (5), bass; Rayford Griffin, William "Bubba" Bryant (8,10), Tony St. James (3), Ndugu Chancler (5), drums; Lee Oskar, harmonica; Mailtu Correa, percussion (5).

★ ★ ★

By the time *Live In Japan* was made in 1981, most of the Texas funk that made the Crusaders crossover jazz stars had been replaced by a slicker, less gritty L.A. sheen. Drummer Stix Hooper's "The Hustler" comes close at times, and his "Brazos River Breakdown" has the right pocket. But "Spiral" is running at about 3/4 speed—the notes are there but the band just

isn't digging in. Despite throwbacks to the glory days like "Put It Where You Want It" and "So Far Away," *Live In Japan* lacks the fire and grounding that earlier crusades boasted. They lay heavily into Sample's solo work midway through—it's definitely not Crusaders material, and even the Stix man sounds like he's somewhere else. And truth is, they just plain miss Wayne Henderson's trombone sound in the mix with Felder.

Henderson's *Sketches Of Life* is a cohesive, jazz-funk album reuniting Felder and the trombonist. Neither man is a breathtaking soloist, but their horns really sing together. *Sketches*

begins on the mellow side, classy ("Men Cry Too") but a bit sweet (the standard "I Can't Get Started"). It's not until the hard-hitting ensemble parts of "Survival" that the action gets jamming in a hurry, the boneman starts digging in hard, and things approach the gurgling funk of Crusader classics like "Lay It On The Line" and "Unsung Heroes." "Rock Your Socks Off" is more serious than the title would indicate, and Lee Oskar's harp sounds great on "I'll Take You There." "Just Because It's Jazz (Don't Mean Ya Can't Dance)" is a real nice jazz-hop groove that should get some serious contemporary-jazz radioplay. It's fun.

—Robin Tolleson



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### Adam Holzman

**IN A LOUD WAY**—Manhattan 27299; *No News Is Good News*; *Road Town*; *Hail To The Chief*; *Where Am I?*; *Jane Guitar*; *Pyramid*; *Whoa Nelli*; *Polish Soul Sister*; *Drop Down Daddy*; *Blow Torch Relief Map*; *Global Warming*. (54:59)

**Personnel:** Holzman, synthesizers, piano (4,8,11); Dennis Chambers, drums; Darryl Jones (1-6,9), Steve Logan (7,8,10), bass; Jimi Tunnell, guitar (1,3,5,7-10); Kenny Garrett, alto (1,2,6,9,10), soprano (3) saxes; Mino Cinelu, percussion.

★★★★ 1/2

### Tony Verderosa

**BEATNIK REBEL SCIENCE**—CyberJam 70012; *Tokyo 98*; *Picture This*; *Krantz*; *Dance*; *Guy Smiley*; *Sleepwalking*; *Rain Forest*; *Jellyroll*; *X-Factor*; *Rebel Science*; *Soueat*; *Meet The V-Man*. (57:28)

**Personnel:** Verderosa, drums, bass (1,2,9,10), piano (6), synth (1-4,6); Dave Samuels, vibraphone (1,2,6); David Mann, alto (1,4,7), tenor (6) saxes; Randy Brecker, trumpet (2); Mark Falchook (2,3,4,9), Phil Clendeninn (6), keyboards; Tom Guarna (2,4), Wayne Krantz (3,6), Ted Kumpel (7), guitar; Oscar Carlaya (3,7), Jeff Ganz (6), bass; Mark Cruz, EWI (3); Michael Brecker, tenor sax (5); Diva Gray (2,3), Kim Wertz (2), Arif St. Michael (2), vocals.

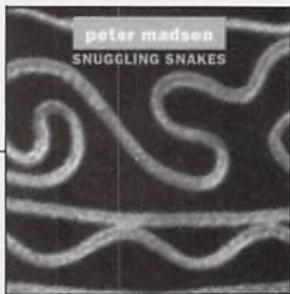
★★★★

Holzman's date, from May '91, is an unashamed blowfest featuring some of today's nastiest players. Whether on a killer funk groove like "Road Town" or a spacious ballad like "Where Am I?" he's tasteful, tuneful, uses good timing, and still has the fire of a Jan Hammer. Dennis Chambers ignites each song with an undeniable groove, and tosses off wildly syncopated flourishes with awesome ease. Pitted with Darryl Jones for much of the album, they are irresistibly funky. Kenny Garrett sears into the snaky funk of "Hail To The Chief!" on soprano, fluttering, defining his ground, then driving hard, slightly ahead of the beat.

On *Rebel Beatnik Science*, Tony Verderosa shows he's an excellent trap-set drummer. But it's his Rebel Science Kit (an elaborate triggering/sequencing system) that makes some fascinating things happen, rhythmically and harmonically. Apart from some sappy vocals that make the project sound like a hip-hop John Klemmer, most of the instrumental sections are handled with care, grace, and precision. The rapping on "Guy Smiley" works with Falchook's strong piano work and Mann's seriously searching alto. While there are several interesting and impressive musical and technical feats here, none shines brighter on either front than "Sleepwalking." Verderosa's duet with tenorist Michael Brecker.

—Robin Tolleson





## Peter Madsen

**SNUGGLING SNAKES**—Minor Music 801030: *SNUGGLING SNAKES; HODGE PODGE; MALOCA; BALLAD FOR STAN; PHOTO FINISH; JOREN'S JUNGLE; THE WEB THAT HAS NO WEAVER; WHERE THERE WAS NO PATH; FRANCESCA; DARKNESS PURSUES THE BUTTERFLY; MONKEY WRENCH.* (60:15)

**Personnel:** Madsen, piano; Chris Potter, saxophones; Anthony Cox, bass; Lewis Nash, drums; Toninho Horta, vocals, guitar (3,9); Rudi Berger, violin (9).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Not one to hone in on a tightly defined corner of the jazz spectrum, the versatile Peter Madsen covers a lot of stylistic ground on these 11 tracks, as if making a statement of eclectic purpose. Even so, a sense of unity fortifies the session, partly thanks to the solidity of the ensemble, the firm-but-fluid rhythm section of Anthony Cox and Lewis Nash, and saxist Chris Potter's sense of focus.

At times leaning toward Bill Evans-like muscular lyricism, the band also gets fiery and, on the closing "Monkey Wrench," informed by bent, Monk-ish wit. On the tunes featuring guitarist Horta, Madsen flexes a Brazilian flair, and on "Francesca," he turns the spotlight over to Horta's guitar and vocal and violinist Rudi Berger's supple, musky lines. —Josef Woodard



## Andy Summers & John Etheridge

**INVISIBLE THREADS**—Mesa R2 79066: *BROKEN BRAINS; MORAVIA; STONELESS COUNTS; LOLITA; NUAGES; THE BIG GLISS; COUNTING THE DAYS; RADIANT LIZARDS; MONK'S MOOD; ARCHIMEDES; HELIOTROPE; LITTLE TRANSGRESSIONS.* (45:24)

**Personnel:** Summers and Etheridge, acoustic guitars, 12-string guitars, acoustic basses.

★ ★ ★

This duo-guitar jam, flavored by a rich stylistic

mix of jazz, folk, classical, rock, and the blues, is at times charming and gorgeous. At other times, *Invisible Threads* is mesmerizingly tiresome. Ex-Soft Machine-r Etheridge and ex-Police-man Summers have been acoustic-guitar buddies for a number of years, and, as a result, they turn in a solid and tight set that exhibits a fair amount of fancy fretwork. The pair impressively covers two ballads, Django

Reinhardt's "Nuages" and Monk's "Monk's Mood," even as they zip their way through originals like the bouncy "Counting The Days," the roiling "Big Gliss," and the brisk "Little Transgressions." There's no doubt these two guitar masters are having friendly fun here, but, at points, you wish they'd challenge each other a little more, and turn up the heat.

—Dan Ouellette

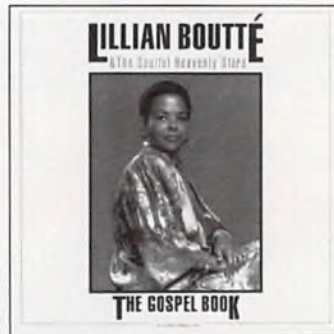


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## The-Girl-Next-Door Songbooks

by Owen Cordle

Any composer or lyricist should be proud to have **Ella Fitzgerald** sing his songs. It is as if the girl next door, who just so happens to be the world's greatest jazz

singer, were defining the song itself. Thus, the series of "songbooks" Ella recorded from 1956 to 1964 stand as perhaps the finest tribute to American popular song ever recorded. As an interpreter of the genre—songs written primarily for Broadway or the movies—she belongs with Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett. All of this is shown by the box set of reissues entitled *The Complete Ella Fitzgerald Song Books*

(Verve 314 519 832-2; 16 CDs, avg. 58 min.: ★★★★★)

In the beginning were the songs, from Irving Berlin's "Alexander's Ragtime Band" (1911) through the next 50 years or so. Melody, harmony, rhythm, and rhyme portrayed romance, whether it was the boy/girl type, the



Ella Fitzgerald: a guileless approach to singing

romance of the big cities, or the idyllic life left behind. These are the definitive composers: Cole Porter, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, Duke Ellington, Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern, and Johnny Mercer (the only lyricist in the set to have his own songbook).

Ella had been recording for Decca for 20 years. Norman Granz, who in 1949 began hiring her for his Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts, finally was able to sign her to his Verve label in 1955. Possessed with a pure timbre and a guileless approach to singing, be it scat or the poetic word, she met her mentor in Granz and her mettle in the songbook concept. Her voice was an instrument, her phrasing and diction the lyricist's dream. In all of this, one cannot overstress the vision and implementation of Granz.

Next came the orchestra arrangers: Buddy Bregman for Porter and Rodgers and Hart, Ellington for Ellington (although here we have some improvised small-group settings, too), Paul Weston for Berlin, Nelson Riddle for the Gershwins, Kern, and Mercer, and Billy May for Harold Arlen. One finds taste and respect for singer and song throughout. Ellington and May provide the jazziest charts. Duke, we're told, did not produce special charts for the occasion, he simply fitted Ella into his existing arrangements and improvised the rest.

Book by book, the impressions linger on: From the two Porter discs (1956), a certain innocence definitely prevails. The classy, end-of-the-swing-era style of pop singing domi-

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nates, as illustrated by "Too Darn Hot" and "Begin The Beguine." "I Love Paris" is a moody, movie-score-like performance with dark strings behind the singer. "It's All Right With Me" shows the more familiar shouting Ella with big band.

The two Rodgers and Hart discs (1956) suggest that Ella, Bregman, and Granz had become more sophisticated with the songbook concept. Some of the innocence is gone. This is a stage, the performances production numbers with the cast looking in the mirror. Nothing phony, mind you, just a feeling that the performers are less approachable.

With Ellington (three discs from 1956 and '57), we are back home: Ella as an instrument on "Rockin' In Rhythm," as sexy as Johnny Hodges' alto on "Day Dream," swinging with Stuff Smith and Ben Webster throughout disc 6, adding another color to the Ducal palette on "I Got It Bad (And That Ain't Good)" and "Chelsea Bridge," among others, on disc 7. The last disc also contains the all-instrumental "Portrait Of Ella Fitzgerald," with superb solos by Paul Gonsalves, Harold Baker, and especially the vastly underrated clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton. There's also some rehearsal talk between takes of "Chelsea Bridge."

Weston's charts on the two Berlin discs (1958) bring us back to the traditional pop settings of the period. The mirror from the Rodgers and Hart performances is gone. Ella's timbre takes on a wonderfully dark, cello-like quality on "Let's Face The Music And Dance." Elsewhere, it's "Blue Skies" on tunes such as "Isn't This A Lovely Day," "Slumming On Park Avenue," and "I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm."

The three Gershwin discs introduce Riddle to the proceedings. Granz worked closely with Ira Gershwin on the project, as he did with Ellington, but with none of the other composers in the series. One senses that these performances are just right, neither drenched in raw emotion nor show-biz role-play, nor cranked out perfunctorily.

Harold Arlen: two discs (1960 and '61). Perfect. The bluesiest composer, the most swinging arranger (May), lovely Benny Carter alto solos, and the most versatile Ella all combine for a grand-slam.

In December 1961, Granz sold Verve to MGM but stayed aboard to produce the final songbooks: Kern in '63 and Mercer in '64, one disc each. More Riddle, more consummate artistry from the singer, and in Mercer the poet laureate of lyricists.

For a prelude to the songbooks, there's *Ella Fitzgerald, The Early Years, Part 2* (Decca GRD-2-623; 63:01/60:24; ★★½) from 1939 to '41. The venerable Orrin Keepnews produced the reissue. Documented are the years when Ella took over the Chick Webb big band, when she was still singing novelty songs, and her voice was that of a child—an extremely talented child—trying to act grown-up. She gains maturity with each session, though, and 1941 appears to be the dividing line. "Moon Ray" (one hears a faint similarity to Peggy Lee here). "The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else," and "I Got It Bad (And That Ain't Good)" stand up especially well and prepare us for the songbooks to come.

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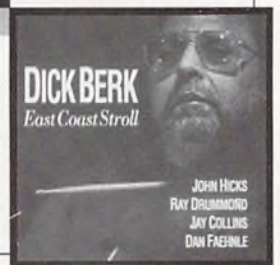
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On *Blonde And Blue* (Rounder 3127; 37:11; ★★★★★), **Angela Strehli** wears her soul on her sleeve, coloring every note and beat with a relaxed sense of expression that advances her emotional honesty. Never foolishly simulating an African-American woman's feelings, the fair-haired Austin blues queen uses the conventions of Memphis soul ("Never Like This Before"), Chicago blues (songs from Little Walter and Elmore James), and other blues types to create an evocative and intensely personal song language. Miss Angela is truly special—and so's her shoot-from-the-hips band, featuring guitarist Derek O'Brien.

Another singer celebrated in Austin, **Keri Leigh**, offering her second album *No Beginner* (Amazing 1035-2; 52:06; ★★★), projects a tougher and wiser sort of exuberance than you might expect from someone fairly fresh to the



Singing tough and tender: Robert Cray

blues crusade. Her strong voice, orderly and expansive, captures different moods, fierily sensuous on paint-peeling blues rockers, eager for answers on ballads, or, better yet, combining relaxation and stimulation on Scots-

man Frankie Miller's "No Beginner At the Blues." Leigh's band, the Blue Devils, has a bad itch for exaggerating modest talent. Also found in Austin, usually at Antone's club, is 25-year-old singing guitarist **Sue Foley**, whose second

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effort, *Without A Warning* (Antone's 0025; 37:25: ★★★), blazes like a fast-working Colt .45. As the singing is often sallow and impassive, it's her guitar playing, with its snapping notes and steady gait, that pulls you into the music. Backed by local players who exercise skill without wanton fuss, Foley has the driving integrity required for overhauling Lazy Lester and Magic Sam chestnuts and for putting over her own shuffles.

**Smokey Wilson** busts a gut on *Smoke n' Fire* (Bullseye Blues 9534; 48:55: ★★★½), showcasing his jarringly forceful singing and the primal eloquence of his fretboard work on rabid Howlin' Wolf covers and charred originals. This Delta born-and-bred performer, based the past 20 years or so in Los Angeles, benefits from the rude efficiency of his South Central Rhythm section, less so from the Homeboy Horns and guest keyboardists Jimmy McCracklin and Ron Levy, who come off as stuffed shirts by comparison. The late West Coast guitarist **Hollywood Fats** was a powerhouse whose prodigious technique was as gripping as his genuineness of expression. *Rock This House* (Black Top 1097; 68:33: ★★★★★), cut in 1979 with his able band, offers 17 song primers on how to render shades of pleasure and hurt without indulging in overwrought feeling. This session shows that Fats had thoroughly soaked up the truths expounded by bosses like Albert King and Muddy Waters and was able to give them back to us in individuated terms that just don't age.

**Mitch Woods**, another Californian, gives heart and soul to jump blues on his latest album, *Shakin' The Shack* (Blind Pig 5008; 45:39: ★★★). As his Rocket 88s rill and romp, Woods sings with smooth ebullience and hammers the piano keys with the unchecked gaiety of mentors Fess Longhair and Amos Milburn. "Cryin' For My Baby" proves that the dapper boogie revivalist, now playing only his own compositions, can take it slow and easy, too.

Bay Area blues institution **Taj Mahal** always sings what is inside him. *Dancing The Blues* (Private Music 82112-2; 48:20: ★★★) finds him rediscovering childhood favorites from, among others, T-Bone Walker, Howlin' Wolf, Fats Domino, and Inez & Charlie Foxx (Etta James spars with Mahal on "Mockingbird"). Two shuffling originals show off his prowess on either harmonica or guitar. Enjoyable, yes, but Mahal recycled the blues with more bite in the studio 20-plus years ago, and one wonders why he tolerates squeaky-clean rock sessionsmen when he might hook up with more rugged and believable players whose ardor for r&b isn't dubious.

**Jeannie and Jimmy Cheatham**, from San Diego, evoke the spirit of swinging Kansas City-style blues. With commanding authority, Jeannie explores the full emotional range of her rich voice on the mostly original songs filling *Blues And The Boogie Masters* (Concord Jazz 4579; 62:53: ★★★★★). "Line In The Sand" shivers beneath the weight of her sensual self-righteousness and "Don't Let Me Wake Up," a second standout track, throbs tenderly with her poignant plea for faithfulness. The striking back-alley moods Jeannie sets are sustained and uplifted by Jimmy on bass trombone, the great Hank Crawford on alto, and the sturdy seven-piece Sweet Baby Blues Band. Vast



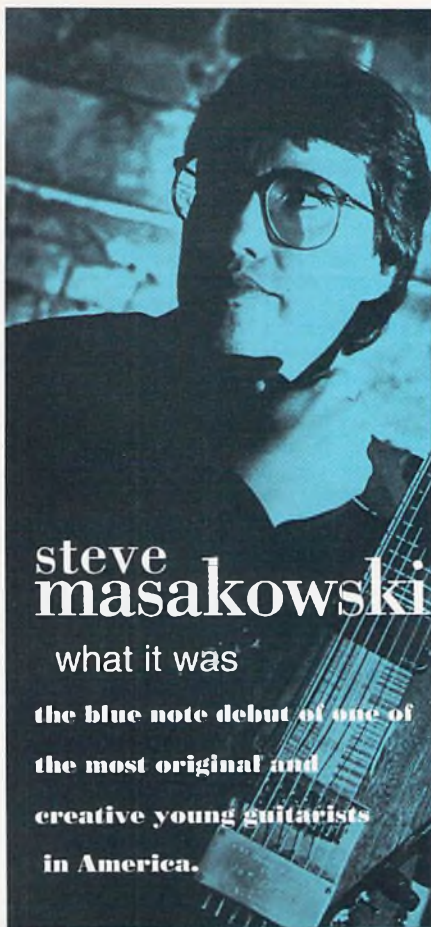
Angela Strehli: soul on her sleeve

popularity hasn't hampered **Robert Cray's** ability to connect with the deep feelings of blues and Southern soul. Throughout *Shame + A Sin* (Mercury 314 518 237-2; 47:54: ★★★½), Cray's impeccably controlled Stratocaster acts as a dagger that jabs the heart again and again, while his singing is at once tough and tender, declarative and understated. Cray, comfortable in his recent role as primarily a songwriter, suggests the power of music as a personal healing agent.

A seven-year veteran of the '70s Muddy Waters Band, **Steady Rollin' Bob Margolin** is one of the leading torchbearers of Chicago blues, but *Down In The Alley* (Alligator 4816; 59:12: ★★★½) is much more than a fond remembrance of times past. Paired with New Englanders (Ronnie Earl's Broadcasters) or Southern musician friends (veteran singer Nappy Brown looms largest), the guitarist favors prudent use of dynamics and intelligent rhythmic shadings over empty theatrics. He brings wit and conviction to his playing, not-so-expert singing, and songwriting. Chicago blues hero John Brim sings on the renovation of his gem "Tough Times."

Margolin kicked off his blues career in Boston in the early 1970s, and that's where and when singer-guitarist **Paul Rishell** started his study of the "devil's music." Margolin moved on but Rishell stayed put in the Hub, building passionate strains of feeling on those three basic chords. Second album *Swear To Tell The Truth* (Tone-Cool 1148; 52:07: ★★★½) features expertly ordered and nuanced updates of acoustic-blues songs—he makes masters like Son House and Robert Johnson speak to us across time—and three electric band numbers galvanized by the tasteful expressivity of guitarist Ronnie Earl.

Lastly, Australian guitarist **Dave Hole** tolerates no concession to delicate or subtle emotions. *Working Overtime* (Alligator 4814; 53:30: ★★★½) has him grabbing for the throat, his wild squalls choked with overwhelming tension. Fortunately, Hole's listen-to-me flamboyance does have musical clarity and direction. On the down side, his songs are little more than frameworks for the guitar and his singing voice is all reedy bluster.



steve  
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**Brits and Kitsch**  
by John Corbett

If your image of the English is as bland, humorless, etiquette-bound stuffshirts, you might be surprised to hear the music of **Steve Beresford**. Among the world's most voracious appetites, with a background in free improvisation (key keyboardist of the so-called "second generation" of British improvisers), Beresford has a genuine love of kitsch and middle-of-the-road musics; he's a devoted television and film hound, has an expansive and colorful imagination and an extremely warped sense of humor.

Exhibit A: *T.V.? Mais Qui!* (Chabada 018 53008.2; 36:37: ★★★★★) by the Melody Four, a trio (of course) that features Beresford with great reedmen Tony Coe and Lol Coxhill. Both Coe and Coxhill have long improvising histories (Coe made a little-known free gem with guitarist Derek Bailey called *Time*), and both have legitimate connections with commercial, jazz, rock, pop, and MOR (Coxhill is certainly the only person to have played with both the Damned and Rufus Thomas). As the Melody Four, here they explore all possible avenues of approach to the universally despised category of TV tunes. If parody is about *making* fun, this



Tony Coe: having fun

is about *having* fun. Drum machines and fake sincerity dot the disc with irony, but they're

equalled by supple improvising and compositions you might suddenly realize were actually good, like "The Munsters" (played by Beresford on overdubbed euphonium choir and annexed to a great, nuts piano solo) and "Bewitched."

Though he's been a brilliant light on the British jazz scene for many years, American listeners know **Tony Coe** best from his tenor solos on the *Pink Panther* soundtracks. Go back and listen to them, they're terrific. *Mainly Mancini* (Chabada 018 53026.2; 37:29: ★★★★★) features two originals ("Hank Neuf," "Mancissimo") and trio versions of five Mancini tunes, including an excellent, entirely new arrangement of "The Pink Panther." Pianist Tony Hymas and bassist Chris Laurence provide fabulous support for Coe's tribute; tongue out of cheek, he blows sweet clarinet on "Crazy World" (from *Victor, Victoria*), moving to breathy, nimble tenor on "Days Of Wine And Roses" and the stunning "Charade."

Another big Mancini admirer, **John Zorn**, is a suitably zany partner for Beresford; together with David Toop and Tonie Marshall they concocted *Deadly Weapons* (nato 018 53021; 38:19: ★★★★★), a record that succeeds better than "Spillane" or *Naked City* at Zornian genre-splice, integrating soundtrack and organ-jazz fetishes, noise, improvisation, film-noir narration (in French), detective-story subplots, and hip-hop drum-program outbursts. Check the perverse aural insinuations of "Jayne Mansfield," replete with whipping sounds and a mean stripper melody shared by Zorn's alto, Beresford's univox, and Toop's reverbed guitar.

Naturally, there is a long line of first-rate non-wacky British jazz. Take Canadian-born trumpet/flugelhornist **Kenny Wheeler**, who's been a resident Brit since 1952. His latest, *Kayak* (ah um 012; 56:20: ★★★★★½), features a large band (averaging 10 pieces) on seven original compositions, all of which are soft and rather gentle, even when swinging up-tempo. The title cut's bouncy chart makes room for Julian Argüelles, whose soprano and tenor solos are a highlight. *Kayak*'s slightly echoey recording emphasizes the impressionistic, slightly pillowy character of Wheeler's arrangements, which can, at times, grow stale. On the whole, though, it's a strong mainstream outing.

UK jazz: may we? Mais, oui! **DB**

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## Left, Right & Center

by Josef Woodard

**W**hat's a contemporary consumer to do, faced with the glut of material in the **David Murray** bin, including the five covered in this composite review? More to the point, will the real Murray stand up and be accounted for? Is he outside? Is he inside? Is he championing both sides toward the middle?



MITCHELL SEIDEL

A beautiful, hope-lined expression of anxiety: David Murray

Be not fooled by the standard-based title: *Body And Soul* (Black Saint 120155; 51:56: ★★★★★) hints at the venturesome Murray who hit the New York loft scene with a vengeance in the '70s and made a potent left-end-of-the-dial impact with his octet, big band, and World Saxophone Quartet projects. Apart from the burnished, timeless, tenor-friendly ballad of the title track—here sung by Taana Running—the album features originals by pianist-deserving-wider-recognition Sonelius Smith as well as four by Murray, all pushing at the edges of a post-hard-bop language. On Murray's ballad "Doni's Song," the saxist wields his impulsively smeary gestural bursts and his vulnerable-sounding, airy vibrato, and then goes intensely *tête à tête* with drummer Rashied Ali on the theme of Ali's "Cuttin' Corners." Here, the corollaries to the Coltrane/Ali duets of *Interstellar Space* provide an illuminating, rather than derivative, vantage point.

Murray is on tamer turf with *Jazzosaurus Rex* (Red Baron 57336; 51:05: ★★★), maneuvering through head-solo-head formatted music and often outshining the material he's dealing with. Pianist John Hicks and drummer Andrew Cyrille are reliable partners on a ride lacking thematic adventure. Most notably, Murray shows his strength as a radical romantic on the balladic material of "Chelsea Bridge" and session-mate/bassist Ray Drummond's "Ballad For David." The album closes, uncharacteristically, with a spoken-word ode to Miles Davis, "Now He's Miles Away," narrated by

Chicago poet G'ar

*Fast Life* (DIW/Columbia 57526; 60:49: ★★★½) comes to us from the David Murray Quartet + 1, the one being special guest Branford Marsalis. The two tenors cut and complement each other nicely, first on the suave Latin contours of "Crucifado," and later blowing with collective might on the title track, a potent, old up-tune from Murray's book. Joined again by Drummond and Hicks, and, this time, drummer Idris Muhammad, Murray strikes a happier balance between the accessible, straight-ahead mode and the impulsive, creative de-touring he once championed.

The context is more intimate—one-on-one, to be exact—on the aptly entitled *Brother To Brother* (Gazell 4006; 46:28: ★★★★★½), a fascinating collaboration with pianist **Dave Burrell** that manages to be the most intriguing new Murray project out of the chute. On witty material echoing early jazz—including Jelly Roll Morton's "New Orleans Blues" and mostly Burrell-penned originals—the pair bounce from snugly fitted melodic arabesques to pre-bop reverence to a sudden cloudburst of "out" playing on the title track. Aside from pointing up some of the saxist's innately archival qualities, the dark sheen and pulsing breath of Murray's tone is also given a flattering showcase.

Much as these titles offer their respective strengths, perhaps the best "new" entry in the Murray bin is the reissue of *Let The Music Take You* (Marge 04; 44:50: ★★★★★½). On this live French date from 1978, Murray is joined by cornetist Lawrence "Butch" Morris, bassist Johnny Dyani, and drummer George Brown, and the quartet plays with a rare vulnerability and ferocity. The album opens with "The Fast Life," with a looser and more organic energy flow in evidence as compared to the hubristic title track of his new Columbia album. Here, on Morris' gentle "Monikole," the back-porch funk underpinnings of the title tune, and the plaintive spaciousness of "The Hill," Murray presents a lyricism always on the verge of breaking apart. His is a beautiful, hope-lined expression of anxiety. **DB**

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**Straight-Up & Stout**

by Howard Mandel

At age 40, the independent Chicago label Delmark is enjoying an injection of energy from producer Steve Wagner, as it did years ago from Chuck Nessa and Steve Tomachevsky. Tenor saxist **Zane Massey's** *Brass Knuckles* (Delmark DD-464; 47:24; ★★½), altoist **Mike Smith's** Quintet date *The*

*Traveler* (DE-462; 66:32; ★★★½), tenorist **Eric Alexander's** *Straight Up* (DE-461; 64:34; ★★★), and trumpeter **Malachi Thompson's** *Lift Every Voice* (DE-463; 61:42; ★★★★★) are not groundbreakers like the first AACM records or as steeped in local color as the label's '70s blues releases, but they're as stout with integrity and uncluttered in presentation of sound as every other album in Delmark's catalog.

Massey, a former Decoding Society member debuting as a leader at age 36, brings brawny New York swagger to eight dark trio outings,



De- and re-constructor Malachi Thompson

including two works by his late father Cal and two by bassist Hideiji Taninaka. Drummer Sadiq M. Abdu Shahid supports the bluesy, melodic/modal, rhythmically loose-thought-structured, and generally gutsy music. Zane plays soprano on his dad's "Assunta" but is more credible on the heavier horn using the deep tone, throaty growls, and harsh cries that have long been accepted in reedspeak.

Altoist Smith, doubling on soprano, is a slick and quite piquant saxist who bounds along in a Cannonball-indebted style he's personalized on two previous releases. His Chicago band demonstrates the cohesion of its six-year association; flugelhornist Ron Friedman, pianist Jim Ryan, bassist John Whitfield, and drummer Bob Rummage compose a well-tempered, instrumentally adept, and decisively *musical* unit. Besides Smith's tunes, the program includes renditions of songs by Wayne Shorter, Jobim, Rummage, engineer Carey Deadman, and Matt Dennis "Angel Eyes."

Tenorist Anderson looks college-age and sounds like an enthusiastic, if young, pro. With veteran pianist Harold Mabern (his teacher at William Paterson College) joining his trumpeter partner Jim Rotondi, bassist John Webber, and drummer George Fludas, Anderson gets a spirited take on his title tune and treats conventional material, including "What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life," "Laura," and "Love Is A Many Splendored Thing," with pliable technique and studious attention to themes. "An Oscar For Treadwell" is an audacious repertoire choice; over time, Anderson may push himself to more originality.

Clarion brassman Thompson is the most ambitious and accomplished composer/arranger among Delmark's new stars. He embeds his limber Freebop quintet (featuring tenorist Carter Jefferson) in five detailed charts for the eight-man Africa Brass, and adds several voices on a swing-inflected version of the unofficial black national anthem ("Lift Every Voice"). A de- and re-constructor, Thompson's conch shell and steer horn return "Old Man River" to its source; he plays Coltrane's "Transition" straight, and ends with an upbeat 10-minute "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen." The program's African-American centrism shouldn't limit interest in Thompson's very good-timey work.

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## Rare Things & Other Beauties

by Kevin Whitehead

If Rhino's Atlantic jazz-reissue program produced nothing but this lavish **Ornette Coleman** box, it'd be well justified. *Beauty Is A Rare Thing: The Complete Atlantic Recordings* (Rhino/Atlantic 71410; 69:48/69:13/73:02/70:51/74:28/68:56; ★★★★★) contains every surviving track the alto (and tenor) saxophonist recorded for Atlantic between 1959 and 1961, among them two "third-stream" pieces from

written structure.

Each member of his quartet had to figure out how to reconcile the leader's concept with his instrument's traditional role. The way Don Cherry blended his raggedy pocket-trumpet voice with Ornette's searing alto did much to define the band's sound, but the rhythm section faced the greater challenge: articulating forms that kept mutating. Blackwell, as noted above, marked the horn players' line-endings wherever they fell, stretching or contracting phrases along with them; the presence of Blackwell or Billy Higgins at the traps makes it clear Coleman never rejected swinging rhythm.



Intelligence wed with instinct: Don Cherry joins Ornette Coleman in the studio

Gunther Schuller's long unavailable *Jazz Abstractions* (notably his variations on Monk's "Criss Cross," starring Ornette and bass clarinetist/flutist Eric Dolphy), the contents of the Japan-only LP *To Whom Who Keeps A Record*, and six tracks heard here for the first time. By no means inferior, they include the lovely "I Heard It Over The Radio," which indeed sounds like an imperfectly remembered pop song of indeterminate origin, and "PROOF Readers," a brilliant example of how Edward Blackwell punctuates Ornette's line-endings with percussive equivalents of commas, semicolons, dashes, and periods.

As these recordings confirm, and as even some detractors admit, Coleman has written some beautiful (if occasionally ungainly) tunes: the Mexicali "Una Muy Bonita" and intricately ambling "The Legend Of Bebop" will always sound fresh. But, of course, Ornette's improvising method is what makes him one of jazz's signal innovators, albeit one still misunderstood. (Witness those experts who tell you the epic *Free Jazz* session contains no written material, as if the double quartet had hit on those orderly interludes by chance.) Ornette didn't throw out chord changes altogether, but he did loosen them up. Instead of jamming on a fixed progression, the quartet might spontaneously alter or suspend a tune's chords, or play phrases of flexible length that distort the

Blackwell may have been Ornette's most sympathetic accompanist, but Charlie Haden may be the most radical. To hear how bold he was, you might listen to a sturdily walking contemporary like Paul Chambers or Wilbur Ware, and then put on, say, "Ramblin'." Haden had grown up in Missouri singing hillbilly songs, and heard in that folk music's simple and unconstraining harmonies a model for playing with Ornette. Strumming chords like a guitarist on "Ramblin'," he sounds as radically backwoods as Coleman himself. (Guess that's why he still trots out that solo, based on the folk tune "Old Joe Clark," on damn near every gig he plays: his once revolutionary act is now an institution.)

Rhino's typically nifty booklet contains a long, erudite essay by Robert Palmer, lots of photos and Coleman quotes, and even decodes the initialized, Freudian titles on the old *Ornette!* LP. I do wish an alternate take of "Blues Connotation" had been bumped from first spot on one CD to the last on the previous one, so it and the master were on the same disc for easy comparison. Regrettably, along with the previously released "First Take" of *Free Jazz*, it's the only extant alternate take: a '70s warehouse fire destroyed other unreleased material. Too bad. But nothing will spoil your day when you put this on. Unplug the phone; you won't want to be interrupted. **DB**

## chet baker

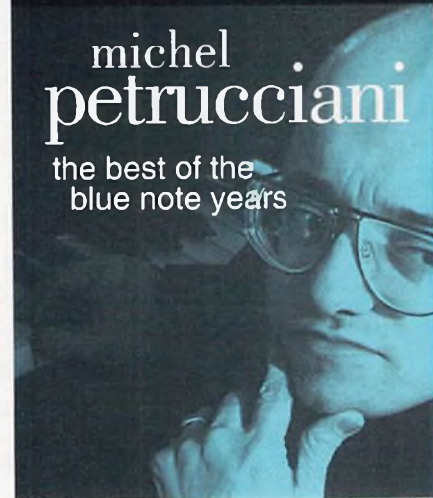
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## Reading Jazz

by John Corbett

How will our seemingly groundless epoch go down in the jazz history books? What sense will be made of the incredible schism between the contemporary (that which pushes the bounds of past accomplishments) and the merely contemporaneous (that which rests on the past's laurels)? And, given their invocation of the past in the present, how will we remember the neo-conservatives when they're dead and gone?

For a telling preview, look at the back cover of the newest (second) edition of Frank Tirro's **Jazz: A History** (Norton, New York; 680 pp., paper). At the end of the 20-entry listening list (available separately on CD) we find Wynton Marsalis' "Delfeayo's Dilemma." In essence, doesn't Marsalis' contribution amount to the same thing as neo-New Orleans of the mid-'40s? There's some great music there—George Lewis, Bunk Johnson—but hardly the path-breaking stuff of which histories are made, particularly evaluative, music-based histories that attempt to do more than simply report a chronology of events, dates, and names. Tirro suggests that neo-classical jazz players build on the foundation of bop and swing in the same manner that he says Stravinsky, Hindemith, Prokofiev, and other classical repertoire neo-cons once did with Mozart and Haydn, creating genuinely new works. But what really *new* additions (save a market share for jazz) have Marsalis and pals added to this venture? How, artistically, does their look backwards fit into the historical ledger in a tradition of innovation? How can a book like this justify devoting so much space to the neo-cons (which, for Tirro, intriguingly includes the World Sax Quartet) and not *one word* to Sun Ra? In the body of Tirro's textbook we find, for the most part, an excellent history, with generous supporting appendices (transcriptions, analyses, historical tables). Indeed, *Jazz: A History* covers fusion and free (neo-cons' evil enemies) better than many historical accounts and gives a good deal more space to free jazz—despite the aforementioned omission—than most, providing, for instance, a solid argument that Cecil Taylor is a jazz musician.

There's a more convincing reason for the Marsalis family's hefty entry in Laura Dankner and Grace Lichtenstein's poppish history of their home town, **Musical Gumbo: The Music Of New Orleans** (Norton, New York; 367 pp., cloth). Of course, the devotion of the book's entire section on contemporary Crescent City jazz (tellingly titled "Back To The Future") to the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, the Marsalises,



Duke Ellington with Billy Strayhorn and band: a split musical persona

and Harry Connick, Jr., doesn't allow room to discuss the importance of Ed Blackwell (referred to merely as a "band mate" of papa Ellis M.), Alvin Batiste, Kidd Jordan, Alvin Fielder, Tony Dagradi, Michael Ray, or Clyde Kerr, Jr. Elsewhere, the book includes chapters that overview early jazz, cajun and zydeco, bluesy r&b, and funky r&b. But tucked in the back, a section called "Where To Hear It—Where To Find It" betrays the real target consumer for the book: tourists. Wait till it's out in paperback, and pack it with your *Let's Go U.S.A.*

A far more detailed, much more serious study can be found in **Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History, 1904-1930** (Oxford, New York; 233 pp., cloth), William Howland Kenney's exploration of the dawn of jazz in our city of wind. Though it is clunkily written, repetitive (musicians are introduced and re-introduced dozens of times), and hung loosely and unnecessarily on a ritual-based view of culture drawn from performance-studies theorist Victor Turner, the amount of research here is staggering, and the resultant picture of Chicago's black and white jazz scenes (and musicians like Mezz Mezzrow, the Austin High Gang, Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and Freddie Keppard) is fascinating. By unearthing the institutional infrastructure—the ballrooms, cabarets, dance halls, black & tans, cultural context of musical, political and racial relations, influence of prohibition—Kenney argues for an interpretation of early jazz that is not limited to recordings, but takes into account the full range of archival materials available. Disappointingly, it does not include photos.

Drawing on the Smithsonian's huge Duke Ellington archive, acquired from Mercer Ellington in 1988, John Edward Hasse's **Beyond Category: The Life And Genius Of Duke Ellington** (Simon & Schus-

ter, New York; 432 pp., cloth) is an excellent musical biography. Chronicling Ellington's split musical persona—as composer, as bandleader—from his earliest days to the years of glory, Hasse proceeds to reassess the years after 1943, sometimes offhandedly dismissed or diminished in deference to the Blanton-Webster band. Hasse suggests that Ellington's career had two great creative arcs, peaking in 1940 and rising again between 1956 and 1968. Of particular interest are the band's financial records, which provide a rare look at the nuts and bolts of jazz stardom in the mid-'40s. The book also contains annotated discographical material in sidebars to each chapter. *Beyond Category* is an extremely even-handed treatment, good for newcomers, and sure to fill gaps for the cognoscenti.

Although it has no publication date in it, I assume that Jan Lohmann's exhaustive **The Sound Of Miles Davis: The Discography 1945-1991** (JazzMedia, Copenhagen; 395 pp., cloth) was actually published a few years ago, since Lohmann took pains to write to me and explain that this book preceded the Miles discography in Tom Lord's *The Jazz Discography*, making Lohmann's the first. "Tom Lord has actually borrowed 99.9 percent of my listing of commercial recording sessions," writes Lohmann. "And that without any credit at all." If this is true, one can understand Lohmann's anger, since the task of laying out all of Miles' work—which in Lohmann's book includes all the known bootleg tapes (what are the ethics of *this?*), radio and TV broadcasts, interviews, and Davis' parts as an actor—must have been a monumental task. A note of caution: this is a hardcore discographer's discography; there's little more than raw data here, with plenty of ways to cross-reference using the index and charts of album equivalents, but nothing



useful for the casual Miles Davis fan. (Jazz-Media: Dortheavej 39, DK-2400 Copenhagen, Denmark.)

Three recent portraits of guitarists are worth checking into. **I Say Me For A Parable** (Norton, New York; 508 pp., cloth) is Texas bluesman Mance Lipscomb's oral autobiography, as taken by Glen Alyn between 1973 and 1976. The long, rambling, story-packed book is transcribed in dialect, which means that it takes a while to get comfortable with. But once into his language, you are immediately entranced by Lipscomb, whose stories of blues and life lead to fascinating sections describing his "discovery" in 1960 and subsequent adventures "playing for the white folks." Necessary supplementary viewing: Les Blank's film about Lipscomb, *A Well Spent Life*. The text of Charles Delaunay's classic 1961 biography of the great gypsy guitarist **Django Reinhardt** (Hal Leonard, Milwaukee; 300 pp., paper) might be known to you, but a large format reprint of the 1981 Ashley Marks edition restores it to its fully illustrated form, with a truly astonishing array of photos, contracts, flyers, and other paraphernalia. In the same series, Adrian Ingram's **Wes Montgomery** (Hal Leonard, Milwaukee; 127 pp., paper) is a copiously illustrated, musician-oriented, uncritical

celebration of the guitarist. It includes a basic biography (with musical examples), descriptive testimonials from various musicians, an out-of-date discography, and fret-charts with instructions for his famous octave technique.

Perhaps the most unusual jazz-related book to hit the shelves lately is **Reading Jazz** (Mercury House, San Francisco; 317 pp., paper). Edited and prefaced by David Meltzer (whose remarks are at times problematic, provocative, and in places haltingly insightful), it is a collection of fragments of all varieties of jazz literature from musicology to criticism to poetry to fiction, featuring Simone de Beauvoir, Philip Larkin, Amiri Baraka, Frantz Fanon, and Roland Barthes (among many others), arranged chronologically and juxtaposed to bring out their most vehement polemical juice. What emerges is a history of the rhetorical construction of "jazz"—primarily by white guys—as an attempt to define and control the music itself. Sure to raise some hackles with its insistent, deep-reaching implications about the racism inherent in even seemingly "pro-black" undertakings such as jazz journalism and CD reissuing, Meltzer's book is a disquieting critique, a healthy injection of self-analysis for jazz fans and critics alike. **DB**

# SANIMIST



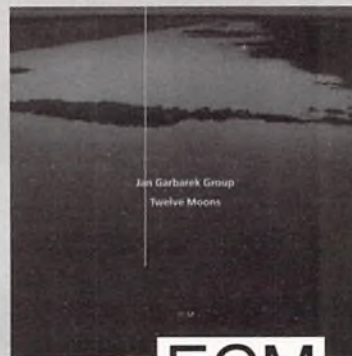
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## 1 Andrew Hill

"Flight 19" (from *POINT OF DEPARTURE*, Blue Note) Hill, piano.

(After about two minutes, Monk rises from his seat, starts wandering around the room and looking out the window. When it becomes clear he is not listening, the record is taken off.)

TM: The view here is great, and you have a crazy stereo system.

LF: Is that all you have to say about that record?

About any record.

I'll find a few things you'll want to say something about.

## 2 Art Pepper

"Rhythm-a-ning" (from *GETTIN' TOGETHER*, Contemporary) Conte Candoll, trumpet; Pepper, alto saxophone; Wynton Kelly, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

He added another note to the song. A note that's not supposed to be there. (Sings) See what I mean?

Did I hear you say the tempo was wrong?

No, all tempos is right.

How about the solos? Which of them did you like?

It sounded like some slow solos speeded up, to me.

How about the rhythm section?

Well, I mean, the piece swings by itself. To keep up with the song, you have to swing.

How many stars would you rate it?

(Indicating Mrs. Monk) Ask her.

It's your opinion I'm asking.

You asked me for my opinion, I gave you my opinion.

Okay, let's forget ratings.

## 3 Dizzy Gillespie

"Medley: I Can't Get Started, 'Round Midnight" (from *SOMETHING OLD—SOMETHING NEW*, Phillips) Gillespie, trumpet; James Moody, alto saxophone.

Dizzy. He had a crazy sound, but he got into that upper register, and the upper register took the tone away from him. That was the Freddie Webster sound, too, you know, that sound of Dizzy's. (Later) That's my song! Well, if that's not Diz, it's someone who plays just like him. Miles did at one time, too.

You like the way they put the two tunes together?

I didn't notice that. Play it again. (Later) Yes, that's the Freddie Webster sound. Maybe you don't remember Freddie Webster; you weren't on the scene at the time.

I remember Freddie Webster. And the records he made with Sarah Vaughan.

## THELONIOUS MONK

From our April 21, 1966 issue . . .

by Leonard Feather

In the 19½ years that the Blindfold Test had been published, Thelonious Monk had not been a subject. The reason primarily was that Monk is not the most voluble of personalities; therefore, it did not seem probable that an interview could be obtained.

During a trip to Los Angeles, the long silence was broken. Monk brought along Nellie Monk, his friend and neighbor since childhood and his wife since 1947. When moments of silence engulfed us, she succeeded in prodding him.

After the first minute of the first record, it became obvious that the only way to complete an interview and retain Monk's interest would be by concentrating mainly on other artists' versions of his own compositions. Accordingly, records 2-5 were all Monk tunes. At this point, he seemed interested enough to



VERYL OAKLAND

listen to a couple of non-Monk works. He was given no information about any of the records played.

Remember "I Could Make You Love Me"? The introduction? Play that for me.

I don't think I can find it. You think Freddie influenced Diz?

Every sound influenced Diz. He had that kind of mind, you know? And he influenced everything, too.

You like the alto player on here, too?

Everybody sounded good on there; I mean, the harmony and everything was crazy. . . . Play it again!

## 4 Phineas Newborn

"Well, You Needn't" (from *THE GREAT JAZZ PIANO OF PHINEAS NEWBORN*, Contemporary) Newborn, piano.

He hit the inside wrong—didn't have the right changes. It's supposed to be major ninths, and he's playing ninths (walks to piano, demonstrates). It starts with a D-Flat Major 9. . . . See what I mean? What throws me off, too, is the cat sounds like Bud Powell. Makes it hard for me to say anything about it. It's not Bud; it's somebody sounding like him.

Outside of that, did you like the general feeling?

I enjoy all piano players. All pianists have got 5 stars for me . . . but I was thinking about the wrong changes, so I didn't pay too much attention to the rest of it. Maybe you better play it again.

(Later) It's crazy to sound like Bud Powell, but seems like the piano player should be

able to think of something else, too. Why get stuck with that Bud Powell sound?

## 5 Bud Powell

"Ruby, My Dear" (from *GIANTS OF JAZZ*, Columbia) Powell, piano.

That's Bud Powell! . . . All I can say is, he has a remarkable memory. I don't know what to say about him—he is a remarkable person, musically.

You think Bud is in his best form there?

(Laughs) No comment about him, or the piano. . . . He's just tired, stopped playing, doesn't want to play no more. I don't know what's going through his mind. But you know how he's influenced all of the piano players.

Of course. I was just questioning whether this is his best work.

Mrs. Monk: (To Monk) You don't think so. Of course not.

## 6 Oscar Peterson

"Easy Listenin' Blues" (from *WITH RESPECT TO NAT, LIMELIGHT*) Peterson, piano; Herb Ellis, guitar; Ray Brown, bass.

Which is the way to the toilet? (Waits to end of record, leaves room, returns. . . . laughs.) Well, you see where I went. (To Mrs. Monk) Could you detect the piano player?

How about the guitar player?

Charlie Christian spoiled me for everybody else.

DB