

# DOWN BEAT

*Jazz, Blues & Beyond*

# 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

ISSUE



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Duke Ellington

BUD BERMAN

- 6 ON THE BEAT**, by Frank Alkyer
- 8 THE DOWN BEAT COVERS**
- 10 IN THE BEGINNING**  
Jelly Roll Morton, W. C. Handy, Bunk Johnson
- 20 SWING SWING SWING**  
"Memories Of Swing," by Bob Blumenthal; The Slanguage of Swing; Billie Holiday; Glenn Miller; Duke Ellington; Gene Krupa; Frank Sinatra; Louis Armstrong
- 28 THE BEBOP BOOM**  
"Memories Of 52nd Street," by Jon Andrews; Thelonious Monk; Dizzy Gillespie; Charles Mingus; Miles Davis; Charlie Parker; Max Roach; Chet Baker
- 42 BLUES ON THE MOVE**  
"Jumpin' The Blues," by David Whiteis; Alberta Hunter; Howlin' Wolf; Buddy Guy; Otis Rush; B.B. King
- 50 JAZZ EXPERIMENTS**  
"Cutting Edge Research," by John Corbett; Paul Bley; Cecil Taylor; Albert Ayler; Richard Abrams; Evan Parker
- 58 FUSION REVOLUTION**  
"Jazz Plugs In," by Bill Milkowski; Weather Report; Tony Williams Lifetime; David Sanborn; Chick Corea; John McLaughlin
- 68 JAZZ ISSUES**  
"Hitting The Issues," by Ed Enright; Racism; Women in Jazz; Jazz Education; Precision Hangups; Starving Artists and the Record Business; John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy Answer the Jazz Critics
- 74 THE YOUNG LIONS**  
"Old Wine, New Suits," by Larry Birnbaum; Joshua Redman; Young Lions—Have They Delivered?; Joey DeFrancesco & Jack McDuff
- 78 THE GREAT BEYOND**  
"Final Frontiers," by John Ephland; Elvis Presley; James Brown; Louis Jordan; Henry Mancini; Frank Zappa; The Doors; Merle Haggard; John Cage
- 84 CLASSIC RECORD REVIEWS:** Duke Ellington; Tommy Dorsey; Cab Calloway; Glenn Miller; Peggy Lee; Billie Holiday; Dizzy Gillespie; Count Basie; Charlie Parker; Dave Brubeck; Miles Davis; Muddy Waters; Chet Baker; Ella Fitzgerald & Duke Ellington; Ornette Coleman; Various Artists: Morris Grants Presents JUNK; Stan Getz; Stan Kenton; Robert Johnson; John Coltrane; Miles Davis; Chick Corea; The Beatles; Anthony Braxton; Various Artists: Woodstock; Herbie Hancock; Weather Report; John Scofield; Pat Metheny & Ornette Coleman; Charlie Haden; Branford Marsalis; Joe Henderson; Cassandra Wilson; Shirley Horn; Joe Lovano
- 102 CLASSIC BLINDFOLD TEST:** Joe Henderson, by Leonard Feather

Cover photos by (clockwise from top left corner): Herb Snitzer (Miles Davis), Bruce Weber (Chet Baker), Herman Leonard (Charlie Parker), Alain Bettex (Chick Corea), PoPsie (Benny Goodman), Down Beat Archives (Frank Sinatra), Ted Williams (Count Basie), Paul Nalkin Photo Reserve (David Sanborn), Columbia Records (Louis Armstrong), Hyou Vielz (Dizzy Gillespie), Ryuichiro Maeda (John Coltrane), Ronald Heard (Joe Henderson), Teri Bloom (Sun Ra—it's a great shot, blasted bar codes), Down Beat Archives (Ella Fitzgerald), Herb Snitzer (Wynton Marsalis), Down Beat Archives (Gene Krupa)

# Reminiscin' At 60

by Frank Alkyer

**T**here's a back room in our offices here at **Down Beat** Central that has no windows; the lighting isn't so great, and to enter it, you have to maneuver through a small maze of shelves and boxes. It doesn't sound like much, but for **DB's** staff, it's one of the most wonderful places in the world.

The room houses the **Down Beat** archives, copies of some 1,200 issues published during our first 60 years. We call that room "the morgue"—a sort of periodical resting place. But there's more living on the pages of those old issues than you or I could squeeze out of a million lifetimes—Jelly Roll Morton and W.C. Handy debating who created jazz; Duke Ellington debuting his classic "Black, Brown & Beige" to mixed reviews; Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton, and Teddy Wilson boldly breaking the color line; the tragic tales of such artists as Billie Holiday and Chet Baker; the musical revolutions caused by bebop and fusion; postmortem tributes to everyone from King Oliver and Chick Webb to Jaco Pastorius and Dizzy Gillespie; the first interview with Miles Davis; the last with Sun Ra.

It's hard to believe that all of this was born out of a photoless, eight-page tabloid that barely made a sound when it hit the street in July 1934. Launched by an insurance agent named Albert J. Lipschultz, that first **Down Beat** held little in common with the magazine today—little, except for a commitment to writing about music from a musician's viewpoint. That commitment continues today with the Maher family, who has owned **Down Beat** since 1944.

In preparation for this special 60th anniversary issue, we've combed every inch of **Down Beat's** archives. We've flipped through every photo in our files. We've fretted, fussed, and grudgingly edited to bring you some of what we believe to be the most interesting reading the music world has to offer. Of course, this issue is not a complete picture of the magazine's history. It's



Down memory lane: *The Down Beat Poll Winner's Show* from 1975 was aired by the Public Broadcasting Service and featured everyone from Sonny Rollins, George Benson, and Quincy Jones to Freddie Hubbard, Bill Watrous, and Chick Corea. Pictured, from left, are Stanley Clarke, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Lenny White, and McCoy Tyner.

certainly not a complete picture of jazz history. There are thousands of names and important contributions that didn't make the final edit. But, the following pages are representative of the care and craziness **Down Beat's** writers, editors, and publishers have poured into this magazine and the artists over the years. We would like to thank those men and women for creating such a lush heritage. It is the foundation for **Down Beat's** future.

Finally, we would like to thank our readers for picking up **Down Beat** every month. The first 60 years have been one long, terrific show packed with grace, grit, entertainment, and joy. Think of this as the encore . . . and, the next show begins in about 30 days.

PS: Watch for exciting news on the **Down Beat/Lionel Hampton Jazz Awards** in upcoming issues. **DB**

## DOWN BEAT

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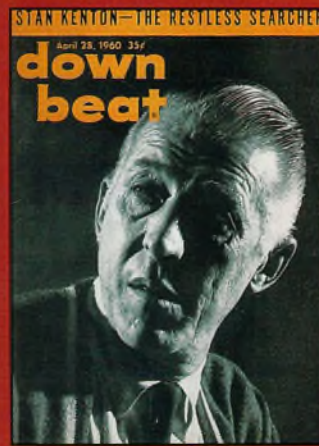
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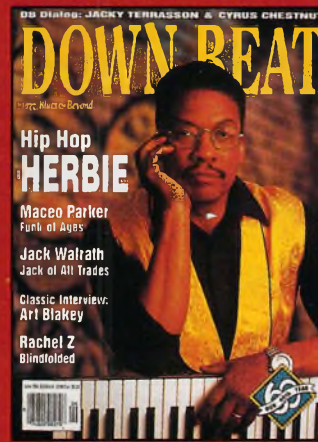
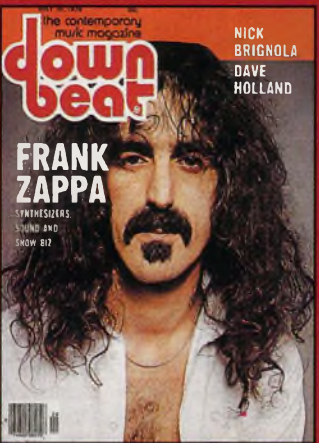
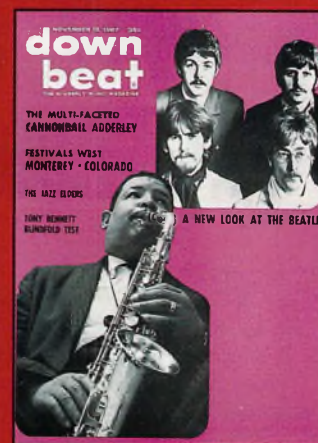
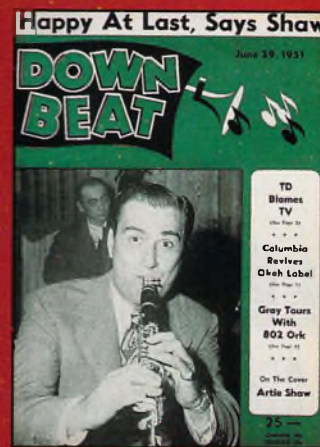
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AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 1938

# 'I Created Jazz In 1902, Not W.C. Handy'

*Down Beat wasn't around for the creation of jazz, but the magazine has contributed plenty of space to how it might have come about. Here are three early slants on the subject by some folks who should know, even though they can't agree.*

By Jelly Roll Morton



Dear Mr. Ripley:

For many years I have been a constant reader of your (Believe It or Not) cartoon. I have listened to your broadcast with keen interest. I frankly believe your work is a great contribution to natural science.

In your broadcast of March 26, 1938, you introduced W. C. Handy as the originator of *jazz*, *stomps*, and *blues*. By this announcement you have done me a great injustice, and you have also misled many of your fans.

It is evidently known, beyond contradiction, that New Orleans is the cradle of *jazz*, and I, myself, happened to be creator in the year 1902, many years before the Dixieland Band organized. *Jazz* music is a style, not compositions; any kind of music may be played in *jazz*, if one has the knowledge. The first stomp was written in 1906, namely "King Porter Stomp." "Georgia Swing" was the first to be named *swing*, in 1907. You may be informed by leading recording companies. "New Orleans Blues" was written in 1905, the same year "Jelly Roll Blues" was mapped out, but not published at that time. New Orleans was the headquarters for the greatest Ragtime musicians on earth. There was more work than musicians. Everyone had their individual style. My style seemed to be the attraction. I decided to travel, and tried Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Tennes-

see, Kentucky, Illinois, and many other states during 1903-'04, and was accepted as sensational.

In the year of 1908, I was brought to Memphis by a small theatre owner, Fred Barasso, as a feature attraction and to be with his number-one company for his circuit, which consisted of four houses, namely Memphis, Tenn., Greenville, Vicksburg, and Jackson, Miss. That was the birth of the Negro theatrical circuit in the U.S.A. It was that year I met Handy in Memphis. I learned that he had just arrived from his home town, Henderson, Ky. He was introduced to me as Prof. Handy. Who ever heard of anyone wearing the name of Professor advocate *ragtime*, *jazz*, *stomps*, *blues*, etc.? Of course Handy could not play either of these types, and I can assure you he has never learned them as yet (meaning freak tunes, plenty of finger work in the groove of harmonies, great improvisations, accurate, exciting tempos with a kick). I know Mr. Handy's ability, and it is the type of folk songs, hymns, anthems, etc. If you believe I am wrong, challenge his ability.

Prof. Handy and his band played several days a week at a colored amusement park in Memphis, namely, Dixie Park. Guy Williams, a guitarist, worked in the band in 1911. He had a blues tune he wrote, called "Jogo

Blues." This tune was published by Pace and Handy under the same title, and later changed to "St. Louis Blues." Williams had no copyright as yet. In 1912 I happened to be in Texas, and one of my fellow musicians brought me a number to play—"Memphis Blues." The minute I started playing it, I recognized it. I said to James Milles, the one who presented it to me (trombonist, still in Houston, playing with me at that time), "The first strain is a Black Butts' strain all "dressed up." Butts was strictly *blues* (or what they call a Boogie Woogie player). I said the second strain was mine. I practically assembled the tune. The last strain was Tony Jackson's strain, Whoa B- Whoa. At that time no one knew the meaning of the word *jazz* or *stomps* but me. This also added a new word to the dictionary, which they gave the wrong definition. The word *blues* was known to everyone. For instance, when I was eight or nine years of age, I heard blues tunes entitled "Alice Fields," "Isn't It Hard To Love," "Make Me A Palate On The Floor"—the latter which I played myself on my guitar. Handy also retitled his catalogue "Atlanta Blues." Mr. Handy cannot prove anything is music that he has created. He has possibly taken advantage of some unprotected material that sometimes floats around. I would like to know how a person

could be an originator of anything, without being able to do at least some of what they created.

I still claim that *jazz* hasn't gotten to its peak as yet. I may be the only perfect specimen today in *jazz* that's living. It may be because of my contributions, that gives me authority to know what is correct or incorrect. I guess I am 100 years ahead of my time. *Jazz* is a style, not a type of composition. *Jazz* may be transformed to any type of tune, if the transformer has doubt, measure arms with any of my dispensers, on any instrument (of course I'll take the piano). If a contest is necessary, I am ready.

The only knowledge that anyone may claim today is strictly what history gives. This gentleman, no doubt, has a greed for false reputation. Through an infringement possibly on someone else's property, which happens to be the undersigned. At this particular time, for world information, I shall get in touch with a few leaders in the early 19th century, namely, John Robicheaux, Manuel Perez, Armand Pirons, and ask them how long they have been playing blues, even before they heard of Handy, let alone any compositions with his name. Happy Galloways played blues when I was a child.

Peyton with his accordion orch, Tick Chambers orch, Bob Frank and his piccolo orch. Their main tunes were different pairs of blues. Later Buddy Bolden came along, the first great powerhouse.

In New Orleans we used a regular combo of violin, guitar, bass violin, clarinet, cornet, trombone, and drums. Freddie Keppard and his band were employed at a dance hall by the name of the Tuxedo. This went badly and he had to cut two men off. Keppard let out violin, guitar, and bass and hired Buddy Christian on piano. That was the first formation of the so-called Dixieland combo.

Please do not misunderstand me. I do not claim any of the creation of the blues, although I have written many of them even before Mr. Handy had any blues published. I had heard them when I was knee-high to a duck. For instance, when I first started going to school, at different times I would visit some of my relatives per permission, in the Garden district. I used to hear a few of the following blues players, who could play nothing else—Buddie Canter, Josky Adams, Game Kid, Frank Richards, Sam Henry, and many more too numerous to mention—what

we call "ragmen" in New Orleans. They can take a 10¢ Xmas horn, take the wooden mouthpiece off, having only the metal for mouthpiece, and play more *blues* with that instrument than any trumpeter I had ever met through the country imitating the New Orleans trumpeters. Of course, Handy played mostly violin when I first arrived in Memphis. Violinists weren't known to play anything illegitimate even in New Orleans.

I hope that this letter will familiarize you more with real facts. You may display this in the most conspicuous places, it matters not to me. I played all Berlin's tunes in *jazz*, which helped their possibilities greatly. I am enclosing you *one* of my many write-ups hoping this may help you in the authenticity of my statements. I am able to uphold all of my statements against any that may contradict. I barnstormed from coast to coast before Art Hickman made his first trip from San Francisco to New York. That was long before Handy's name was in the picture. The first publication with a title "blues" as far as I can remember was a tune written by Chris Smith, who still resides in New York and may be located through Shapiro-Bernstein, Publishers, located one flight above Capitol Theatre Bldg.

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Tony Jackson used to play the blues in 1905, entitled "Michigan Water Tastes Like Sherry Wine." He never sang anything on the stage but blues, such as "Elgin Movements In My Hips, With 20 Years' Guarantee." Blues just wasn't considered music—there were hundreds, maybe thousands who could play blues and not another single tune.

Music is such a tremendous proposition that it probably needs government supervision. There does not seem to be any proper protection for anything in this line. I think one should have conclusive proof before being able to claim a title. I also advocate much more rigid laws so thieves may get their just deserts. There are many who enjoy glory plus financial gain's abundance, even in the millions, who should be digging ditches or sweeping the streets. Lack of proper protection causes this.

My dear Mr. Ripley, I also ask you for conclusive proof, which I am sure that you will never be able to do, due to the fact that the one who inveigled you into this announcement cannot give you any. He doesn't know anything about the foundation. New York itself is just beginning to get wise to jazz and all the decent dispensers either

came from parts that I have educated or from tutors of the good New York musicians.

Not until 1926 did they get a faint idea of real jazz, when I decided to live in New York. In spite of the fact that there were a few great dispensers, as Sidney Bechet, clarinet; William Brand, bass, New York's idea of jazz was taken from the dictionary's definition—loud, blary, noise, discordant tones, etc., which really doesn't spell jazz music. Music is music, regardless of type. It is supposed to be soothing, not unbearable—which was a specialty with most of them. It is great to have ability from extreme to extreme, but it is terrible to have this kind of ability without the correct knowledge of how to use it. Very often you could hear the New York (supposed-to-be) jazz bands with 12-15 men; they would blaze away with all volume that they had. Sometimes customers would have to hold their ears to protect their eardrums from a forced collision with their brains. Later in the same tune, without notification, you could hear only drums and trumpet. Piano and guitar would be going but not heard. The others would be holding their instruments leisurely, talking, smoking reefers, chatting scandals, etc.

Musicians of all nationalities watched the way I played; then soon I could hear my material everywhere I trod; but in an incorrect way, using figures behind a conglomerate of variations sometimes discordant, instead of hot swing melodies.

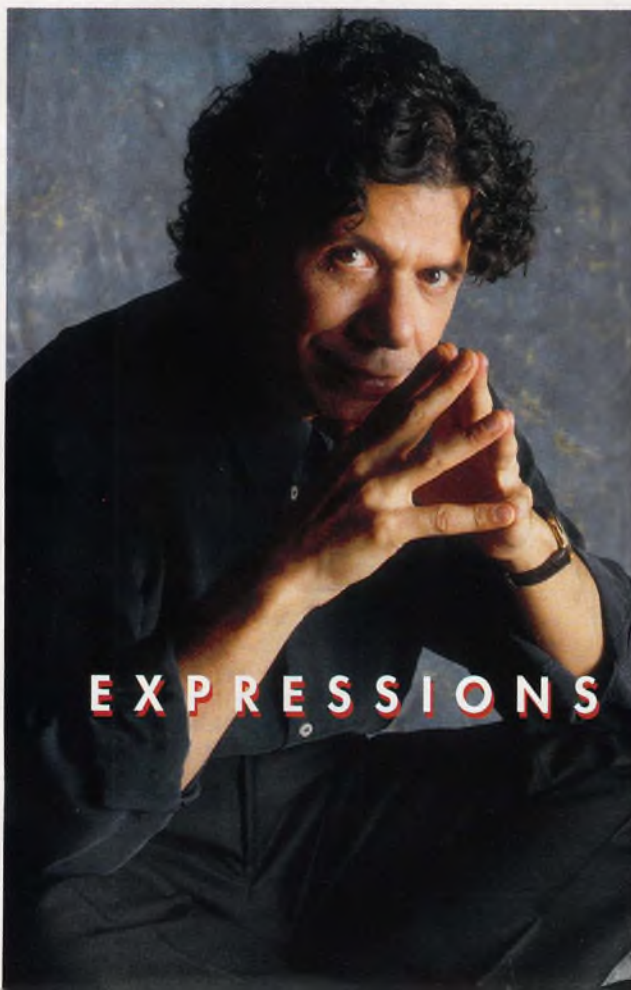
My contributions were many: First clown director, with witty sayings and flashily dressed, now called master of ceremonies; first glee club in orchestra; the first washboard was recorded by me; bass fiddle, drums—which was supposed to be impossible to record. I produced the fly swatter (they now call them brushes). Of course many imitators arose after my being fired or quitting. I do not hold you responsible for this. I only give you facts that you may use for ammunition to force your pal to his rightful position in fair life. Lord protect us from more Hitlers and Mussolinis.

Very truly yours,

(signed)

JELLY ROLL MORTON  
*Originator of Jazz and Stomps*  
*Victor Artist*  
*World's greatest Hot Tune writer*

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AUGUST 1938

## 'I Would Not Play Jazz If I Could'

By W. C. Handy



August 5, 1938.

DOWN BEAT,  
608 S. Dearborn St.,  
Chicago, Illinois.

Gentlemen:

In looking over **Down Beat** I came across an article by Jelly Roll Morton captioned: "W. C. Handy is a Liar!"

For your information: Ripley had me on his program "Believe It or Not," and Mr. Jelly Roll Morton wrote a similar article in the Baltimore *Afro-American*—a Negro Journal. In order to refute such statements by Jelly Roll Morton in the future, we obtained letters and statistics, etc., to make available to any newspaper that would carry such a scurrilous article. We have nothing much to fear from the Negro newspaper but when a paper like yours circulates lies by Jelly Roll's concoction to musicians and other professional people, it is doing me not only an injustice but an injury that is irreparable.

If you want to be fair I am giving you material in this letter that you can assemble and use as a denial. I feel perfectly sure of my position in the musical world and of my ability as a pioneer, creative musician, and composer.

I brought a quartet from Alabama to Chicago for the World's Fair in 1893, which sang native songs of my arrangement. I traveled with Maharas' Minstrels that had its headquarters at the Winterburn Show Printing Co. of Chicago in 1896, in which I arranged and played unusual unpublished Negro music. In 1897 I led the band that started from the same address, giving our first performance at Belvidere, Ill., on August 4, 1896, and in Joliet, Ill., in 1897. I was then arranging music for band, orchestra, and singers with my pen and later played Chicago at the Alhambra theatres, where some of Chicago's ablest musicians followed my band to hear us play original compositions like "Armour Avenue." This minstrel show traveled throughout the United States,

Canada, Cuba, and Mexico. I had a great opportunity to hear what Negroes were playing in every city and hamlet. I lived and traveled all over the South and because of a knowledge of Negro music, and because of my exceptional ability to write down the things peculiar to him, I created a new style of music which we now know as the "Blues," and no one contested in these 25 years my copyrights which I own, nor challenged my ability until this jealous man comes along 25 years later.

I am sending you a copy of the "Jogo Blues," which I as a musician and composer wrote, which was an instrumental following up the success of the "Memphis Blues," which I composed and wrote. In my early compositions I didn't allow anyone to dot an "I" or cross a "T" other than myself. Now, out of this "Jogo Blues" I took one strain and put words to it and composed the "St. Louis Blues." Wrote the words and music myself. Made the orchestration myself and, contrary to Mr. Morton's statement that I was playing for colored people at Dixie Park, I played this composition atop of the Falls Building in Memphis, at the Alaskan Roof Garden, which was an exclusive spot. My band played for the elite of Memphis throughout the South. Almost every state in the South, every society affair. I did control the music at Dixie Park and played there on Sundays but substituted musicians for other days. The records of every steamboat, amusement park, dance hall, exclusive club in Memphis will reveal these facts. The Universities of Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, and Kentucky will also substantiate these claims. Handy's band was a household word throughout the Southland because we could play this music that we now call jazz better than any competitor.

Yes, I remember when Jelly Roll played for Barrasso in Memphis on what we call T.O.B.A. time. But we were too busy to take notice of his great musicianship. Guy Williams, to whom he refers as the originator of

the "Jogo Blues," which I stole and called "St. Louis Blues," was the guitarist in my No. 2 band. I never heard him create or play anything creative, and if I had heard him and plagiarized his idea, he himself would have sought satisfaction 25 years ago.

When A. & C. Bony, Inc., published my "Blues"—*An Anthology*, I was invited to St. Louis to the convention of the American Book Publishers and autographed 300 copies to guests. Guy Williams invited me to his home, where I spent one week with him and his family, which proved our friendly relationship. He always takes advantage of my visits to St. Louis, to extend such hospitality. Never once has he referred to my work other than original.

Morton says that up to 1925, "St. Louis Blues" was as dead as a doornail. I am sending you proof contradicting this statement in the form of a letter from Otto Zimmerman. He printed the first copies in 1914, and you will see that they printed 37,000 the first two years when I was down in Memphis.

In 1921, the Dixieland Jazz Band recorded "St. Louis Blues" on the Victor records, and their first statement (which I am sending you) was 179,440 plus 25,521, plus their third statement of 5,243—records. That's almost a quarter of a million records in 1921 from one phonograph company.

The Brunswick in 1921 paid me for 39,981 records. In 1923 the Columbia Co. recorded 94,071 records by Ted Lewis. In 1924 the Brunswick recorded 30,472 records. In 1925 Columbia recorded 17,945; also in 1925 Columbia recorded 36,870 records by Bessie Smith. Add to these recordings on the Arto, Edison, Emerson, Pathe, Auto-phone, Grey Gull, Paramount, Pace Phonograph Co., Banner, Regal, Little Wonder, etc., and you will find that "St. Louis Blues" has had more recordings, sold more records, than any other American composition.

With all these records being played in people's homes before 1925 and with our tremendous sales of sheet music from 1914

on, say nothing about the piano rolls and vaudeville artists singing it from coast to coast on every stage and in every cabaret, how could he say that "St. Louis Blues" was dead? It was because of the popularity of "St. Louis Blues" that Mr. Melrose sent his representative, Henry Teller, to New York in an effort to acquire the dance orchestration rights only for "St. Louis Blues" for the existing term of its copyright, which expires in 1942.

We reserved the symphonic rights and have ready for publication now a symphonic suite in three movements for a standard symphony orchestra. Mr. Melrose was kind enough to write us a letter that we could use with the *Afro-American*. He refuted Jelly Roll's statement, which we are sending you herewith attached.

For the public's information, you must know that I own the copyright to "St. Louis Blues" but have permitted arrangements for piano, accordion, all kinds of guitars, organs, etc., to be made and sold by firms that specialize along these lines. But they do not own the copyright to "St. Louis Blues." I own that.

Jelly Roll Morton says I cannot play "jazz." I am 65 years old and would not play it if I

could, but I did have the good sense to write down the laws of jazz and the music that lends itself to jazz and had vision enough to copyright and publish all the music I wrote so I don't have to go around saying I made up this piece and that piece in such and such a year like Jelly Roll and then say somebody swiped it. Nobody has swiped anything from me. And, if he is as good as he says he is, he should have copyrighted and published his music so that he could not be running down deserving composers. If I didn't know him I would think he is crazy and it is the act of a crazy man to attack such fine men who have done outstanding work like Paul Whiteman, Duke Ellington. He reminds me of Capt. Higginson, who wrote articles for *The Saturday Evening Post*. He said in one of these articles: "There was an old Negro on the Mississippi River who played the fiddle away back before the Civil War and played the "Memphis Blues" and "St. Louis Blues" before Handy was born," which of course was fiction. I expect to hear such tirades as long as I am living, but I don't expect to see you print them and under such captions as the one in this issue.

Jelly Roll Morton is running true to form. Booker Washington always told a story in

which he likened Negroes to crabs in a basket, when one was about to get out of the basket the other grabbed a hold of him and pulled him back.

Very truly yours,  
W. C. Handy.

May 7th, 1938

Mr. W. C. Handy  
1587 Broadway  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Handy:

Replying to your letter of recent date relative to an article published by the *Afro-American* in which Jelly Roll Morton was credited with making certain claims in connection with your composition "St. Louis Blues," I wish to say that I was indeed surprised at facts thereto. In the first place, Morton had nothing to do with my firm taking over your compositions for orchestra and band. They were accepted by me strictly on their merits and reputation. In the second place, we never at any time published an orchestra arrangement of the "St. Louis Blues" by Morton. It is hard for me to understand why he has made such a claim.

Sincerely yours,  
(Signed) Walter Melrose  
DB

1



**Fletcher Henderson**  
"The Fletcher Henderson Story:  
A Study In Frustration" C3K/C3T 57596

Never given the recognition he deserved, Henderson remains a true jazz giant. Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, and other greats are heard in his orchestra on this three CD/Cassette tribute.



**Max Roach "M'Boom"** CK/CT 57886  
This classic 1979 recording delivers worlds of rhythm by the premier percussionist.

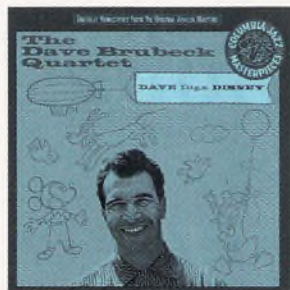
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**"Billie, Ella, Lena, Sarah!"** CK/CT 57638  
The classic collection from four female vocalists so well known that last names are unnecessary. For the record, they are Holiday, Fitzgerald, Horne, and Vaughan.

3

SEVEN MORE REASONS TO



**Dave Brubeck "Dave Digs Disney"** CK/CT 48820  
A delightful compilation that features "Heigh-Ho (The Dwarfs' Marching Song)," "When You Wish Upon A Star," plus two never-before-released tracks.

5



**Thelonious Monk "Big Band And Quartet In Concert"** C2K/C2T 57636  
For the first time anywhere, the entire critically-acclaimed December 30, 1963 Philharmonic Hall concert.

6

JUNE 1939

# This Isn't Bunk; Bunk Taught Louis

By Park Breck



So many articles have been written by phonies who claim they started jazz that I hesitate to reveal the truth.

Through an investigation that has been made with great care and thoroughness by eight "critics" and record collectors during the last six months, startling facts have been uncovered. The facts have been checked and rechecked and are as close to the truth as will ever be known.

In a letter to William Russell, owner of the world's most complete record collection, Willie "Bunk" Johnson, the cornetist who taught Louis Armstrong his first music, tells the story:

"Now here is the list about that jazz playing: King Buddy Bolden was the first man that began playing jazz in the city of

New Orleans, and his band had the whole of New Orleans real crazy and running wild behind it. Now that was all you could hear in New Orleans, that King Bolden's Band, and I was with him. That was between 1895 and 1896, and we did not have any "Dixieland jazz band" in those days. Now here is the thing that made King Bolden's band the first band to play jazz. It was because they could not read at all. I could fake like 500 myself, so you tell them that Bunk and King Bolden's band were the first ones that started jazz in that city or any place else. And now you are able to go ahead with your book."

Bunk has been acclaimed by many of the old-time jazz musicians as the greatest cornetist of his day. There were three great cornetists, they say—Buddy, Bunk, and

Louis. Their music was passed from one to the other. Bolden played a real "stomp trumpet," and Bunk added fast fingering, runs, and high notes with a sweet tone. Then Louis combined the two styles with his own ideas to become the man who is recognized today as the greatest hot musician.

The influence of King Oliver upon Louis has been exaggerated, but through no fault of those who claim that Oliver taught him how to play.

Said Louis: "Bunk, he's the man they ought to talk about. What a man! Just to hear him talk sends me. I used to hear him in Frankie Dusen's Eagle band in 1911. Did that band swing! How I used to follow him around. He could play funeral marches that made me cry!"

DB



4

Louis Armstrong

"Satchmo The Great" CK/CT 53580

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Includes an interview with Edward R. Murrow.



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7

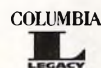
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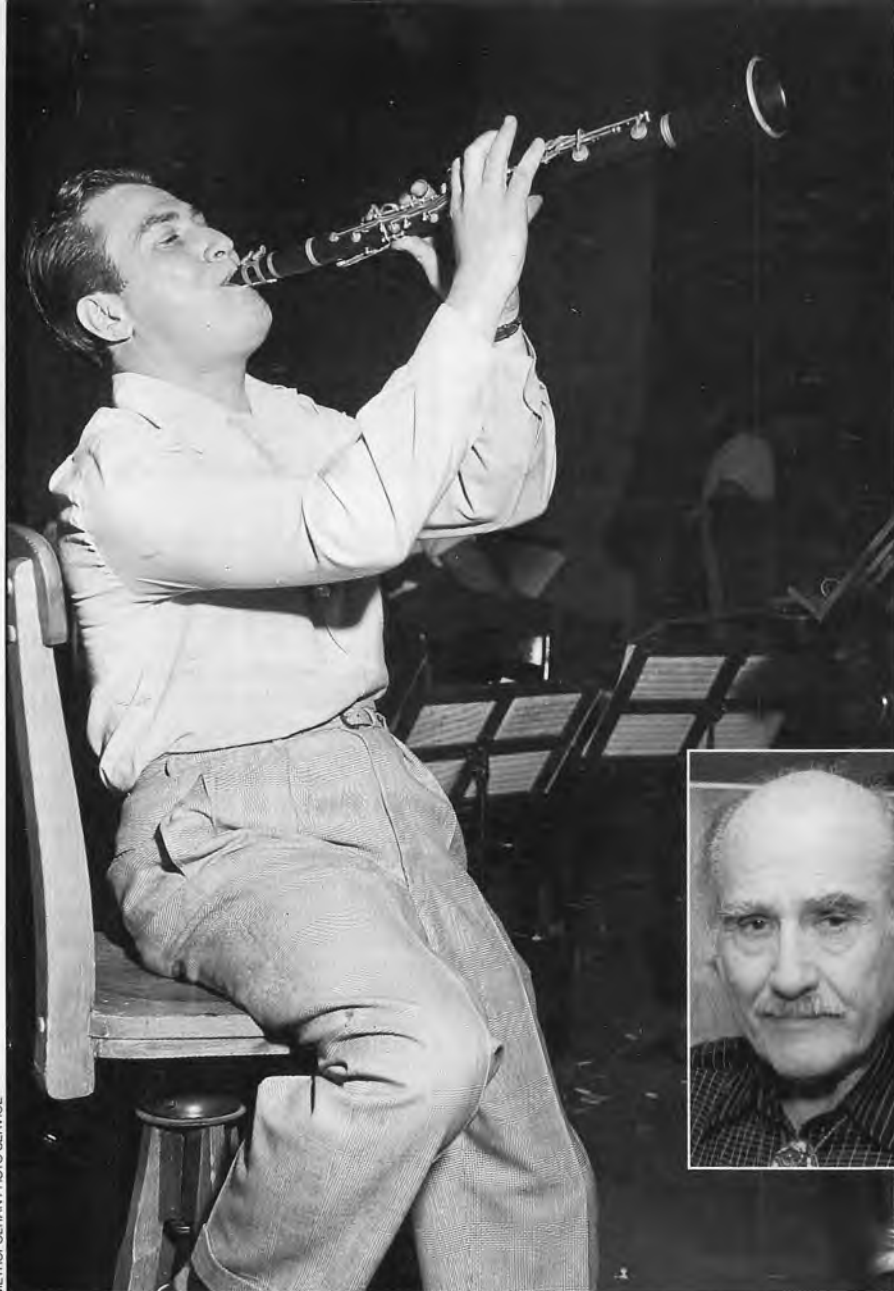
# First- Person Memories Of Swing

By Bob Blumenthal

**S**wing is not a noun or an adjective," Artie Shaw insists; "it's a verb." The legendary clarinetist and bandleader, who gave up performing 40 years ago, fought the commercial trends that created a musical and cultural revolution known as the swing era during *Down Beat's* first decade, even as he became one of the period's biggest stars. He prefers to remember swing as "a very great looseness that I first heard in the Jean Goldkette band, when Bix [Beiderbecke] was in it. Jimmie Lunceford was another influence in the late '20s and early '30s. Hearing Lunceford for the first time was a revelation. When I had my band I tried to retain that looseness, that feeling of improvisation."

Lionel Hampton, who rose to prominence in the period as a featured vibes soloist with Benny Goodman, feels that organization was as important as spontaneity. "Before the swing era, the guys were doing a lot of jamming, making up arrangements on the bandstand," he recalls. "When arrangers came in, people were able to get more interested."

Perhaps it was the tension between freedom and structure, played out on the expansive canvas of the big band, that made swing such an all-encompassing phenomenon. Triggered by the popular success of Benny Goodman's band in 1935, it soon spread to varying degrees throughout the dance band world. "There was a camaraderie and a competitiveness between Duke [Ellington], Count [Basie], Woody [Herman], even the sweet bands like Kay Kyser," recalls bass



METROPOLITAN PHOTO SERVICE



MITCHELL SEIDEL

Then and now: Artie Shaw

giant Milt Hinton, who anchored Cab Calloway's orchestra for 16 years. "We all made the same circuit, and we all tried to be better and provide variety. A dance band like Mal Hallett's might have preceded us in a ballroom, and we could give them dance music; but Cab had a visual thing, too, just like Duke. Variety was everything—Guy Lombardo was sweet, Woody was hot, but we all had camaraderie."

"All of the territory bands were good as well," adds Harry "Sweets" Edison, who blew for over a decade in Count Basie's trumpet section and who, like Hinton, remains in great demand. "There were no bad bands in those days—all of them could swing."

Audiences, who relied on music for dancing, demanded no less. "That's what people did in the evening," Shaw explains. "They went out and danced. It was a polite form of sex until people discovered the jitterbug. Then it became a party, a way to expend energy, like rock & roll today. It wasn't just

the music, it was also the accompanying turmoil that went with it."

"The main object of playing music back then was to make people happy," Edison confirms, "and in those days people loved to dance. There were dancehalls all over the United States, which is why we played as many as 250 one-nighters in a year. Even the notorious Savoy Ballroom was a dancehall, and if you didn't swing in there, you didn't stay in New York too long."

The major medium for disseminating the sounds of swing was radio. According to Mercer Ellington, who began his bandleading career at the height of the swing era and continues to lead the Duke Ellington orchestra today, "Radio broadcasts were the difference between Duke Ellington being a local band in New York and an international phenomenon. That radio line in the Cotton Club put his music all over the country."

Hinton agrees. "Radio was the biggest instrument in popularizing the bands. Cab was never a recording star, yet he was a star

because of radio, especially the nightly broadcasts from the Cotton Club. People heard us and imagined what we looked like; then, when we went on tour, they couldn't wait to see us."

If the remotes "helped freshen people's thinking," as Hampton puts it, they also sustained a network of ballrooms throughout America.

"The bands were criss-crossing the country," Shaw recalls, "playing in every little hamlet, even in amusement parks. We would play five hours of music, night after night. We brought the music to the people, and we became the princes of music."

Shaw feels that fans were responding to the technical and expressive breakthroughs of the leading instrumentalists. "At that time," he says, "what Benny Goodman played was startling to people. They had never heard a clarinet do that. I don't think you could ignore Louis [Armstrong], or Benny, or me, or Tommy Dorsey, who [approached] the trombone as a singing ballad instrument where it had previously been plodding. We all made a specific sound on our instruments, in the same sense that you can immediately spot a Matisse, a Picasso, or a Cezanne when you walk into a gallery. That's what these guys had."

Edison echoes the point when he says, "Thank God I've developed a sound I can be identified with. In my era, everybody wanted to be an individual, to be identified by a sound. Nobody sounds like Billie Holiday, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Bobby Hackett, Chu Berry, Roy Eldridge, Bunny Berigan. Time can march on; but when you play a record by any of those artists, there is no doubt who they are because of their sound."

Not all of the dominant personalities were leaders. "Everybody not only came to see Count Basie," Edison recalls, "they came out to hear Lester Young and the rest of us as well. We had as many fans as Basie did."

Hampton agrees. "People never saw the guys brought out in front of the band before, and they loved that. When I started my band, I would put my best players out front, too. I discovered Illinois Jacquet, Dexter Gordon, Dinah Washington—I changed her name from Ruth Jones—and later on Brownie [Clifford Brown], Art Farmer, Quincy Jones."

Hampton's presence, along with pianist Teddy Wilson, in the Benny Goodman quartet was particularly notable, since the small group that Goodman used to spell his big band was the first working ensemble to feature black and white musicians together. As such, it made social as well as musical history, and paved the way for future



Mill Hinton

achievements. "I truly feel," Hampton says, "that the Benny Goodman quartet opened the door for Jackie Robinson coming into major league baseball. The integration of musicians started a lot of things happening. They weren't used to integrated bands in the South when we played there, and later, when my band played a black dance, they would only allow white people to go upstairs and sit in the balcony. Yet our music was so forceful that the white people would come downstairs and stand around the bandstand. Two of my white fans in Little Rock actually put shoe polish on their faces so they could get into our performance."

"The musicians never said to each other, 'We don't want to play with you,'" Hinton emphasizes. "We appreciate each other by how we sound, not by our ethnicity. Benny Goodman started that publicly, although it had been going on after-hours for years. In fact, Benny and I took lessons together as kids at Hull House in Chicago. When the time came where he had the power to do something, he hired Teddy Wilson and Hamp."

Ellington agrees with Hinton. "Musicians were always the people who could get along with each other best, and it holds true today, even in foreign countries where you can't speak the language."

"If you can play and swing," Edison adds, "what difference does it make if you were black or white? But the black musicians were the pacesetters—Lester Young, Cole-

man Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Louis Armstrong—and you can put Louis at the top of the list. He was the great ambassador, as far as this cultural form goes, all over the world."

Shaw admits that "Goodman and I hired black musicians because they could give us something that white guys couldn't. I featured Roy Eldridge, Hot Lips Page—I hired Billie Holiday when it was unheard of for a white band to feature a black woman. But I could never have more than one or two black musicians. When my band with strings was touring, the Southern dates wanted to cancel because I had Lips Page. When I refused to fire him, they suggested that I seat him 15 feet from the band, so we just canceled the tour. You had this Charlie Chaplin *City Lights* thing happening, where they wanted the black musicians' autographs at the performance, then wouldn't let them eat in the restaurants."

As Hinton points out, "Once society grew more integrated, there were no more big bands." Indeed, by the end of *Down Beat's* first decade, the decline had already set in. "The war, gasoline shortages, public taste," Shaw explains, "it's hard to believe that the cataclysm that was World War II wouldn't change anything. It suddenly came into sharp focus that reality wasn't all 'Happy Days Are Here Again.' Tastes changed in literature and painting, so why not in music? It became easier to fill those big halls with four heavily amplified guys anyway."

NOVEMBER 1935

# The Slanguage Of Swing

By Carl Cons

**A hot plate**—a hot recording.

**Barrelhouse**—when every man swings out for himself.

**Balloon lungs**—a brass man with plenty of wind.

**Bleed all choruses**—no intro, no verse, no change of key—just choruses.

**Break it down**—get hot!! go to town!!

**Barn**—ballroom with acoustics.

**Corny**—to play as grandpa would.

**Chill ya'**—when an unusual "hot" passion gives you goose pimples.

**Freak lip**—a pair of kissers that wear like leather; one who can hit high C's all night and play a concert the next day.

**Gate**—greeting between musicians.

**Gutbucket**—low-down swing music.

**Hot man**—one who can swing it.

**Hand me that skin**—a big expression for "shake, pal."

**Maneuvering a horn**—putting it through the paces.

**My chops is beat**—when a brass man's lips give out.

**Modulate**—a high-brow word meaning to break the monotony.

**Pops**—greeting between musicians.

**Platter**—record.

**Reedy tone**—a sound not unlike that of frying eggs.

**Ricky tick**—see rooty-toot.

**Rooty-toot**—unadulterated corn.

**Rub the "C"**—playing around in the higher register previous to hitting a high "C."

**Satchelmouth**—liver lips.

**Swing out**—to embellish a melody in rhythm; a spontaneous rhythmic phrasing; "to lay it in the groove."

**Sugar band**—a sweet band; lots of vibrato and glissando.

**Schmaltz it**—play it "long-haired."

**Starvation jaunt**—a series of one-nighters on percentage.

**Take the acid**—ability to take the bumps and rough spots.

**The Warden**—secretary of the union.

**That correct feeling**—a jig quality necessary to get in the groove.

**Wax a disc**—cut a record.

**Wah-wah**—a brass effect, gotten by favoring the bell of a horn with a mute.

**Brass blaster**—one who breaks wind in a horn.

**Boogie man**—critic.

**Cats**—folks who like swing music.

**Joe below**—a musician who plays under-scale.



POPSIE

INSET: HYOU VIELZ

Lionel Hampton

While Hampton feels that "the [big] bands lost popularity because the major leaders got rich and stopped touring," Edison looks more to economics to explain swing's decline. "So many clubs opened with small groups like the [Nat] King Cole trio and John Kirby's sextet. People began listening in the clubs, and dancing became obsolete. And everything became so expensive that a bandleader couldn't afford to sustain a band. When I joined Count Basie, I made \$9 a night; but you could get a room for 50¢ and a meal for a quarter. I had a furnished apartment on Seventh Avenue for \$8.50 a week."

Many observers also attribute the decline of the bands to the growing popularity of vocalists, epitomized by the way in which Frank Sinatra rose from the ranks of the Harry James and Tommy Dorsey bands to become a bigger attraction than either by the end of 1942. It did not help that the American Federation of Musicians had initiated a strike against the recording industry at the beginning of the war, leaving only singers (who were not AFM members), accompanied by other singers, to make records; or that a total ban on recording was imposed for over a year. "Singers also had the best promotion going," Ellington notes. "Jazz artists rarely got the backing that singers received, then and now."

Changes in the music were also leading to smaller ensembles. Hinton, who participated in some of the earliest explorations of modernism with Calloway-bandmate Dizzy Gillespie, explains that "with all the one-night stands and limited solo space, guys in the band wanted the opportunity to stretch out and play. We had to find someplace, which led to clubs like Minton's, just at the point where small combos were becoming more economical. Then the big soloists like Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, and Roy Eldridge realized that there was more money to be made with a combo. Ultimately these guys started going out alone and playing with local bands, which was cheaper."

Hampton left Goodman as well, though not to form a combo like those he put

together for his classic series of recordings during the period. "Doctors told Benny he had sciatica and had to retire, so Benny told me he would back me if I went out and started my own band. I just followed Benny's example of how to build a dance book and conduct a dance. I got my basic training from Benny Goodman."

These lessons have served Hampton well for over a half-century. "I still play dance music," says the most venerable bandleader of them all, "and it's still crowded when we play. Where do you think rock & roll came from? It came from our heavy beat, and people's ability to dance to it."

Mercer Ellington sees a different basis for his father's ability to survive the financial troughs. "When everybody had trouble paying bills, Duke still had royalties coming in from his compositions; but he had also sustained the interest of the musicians. Guys who left the band would all come back at one time or another, if only just to hang for a bit. So he had wealth in a lot of ways."

It is that group spirit that the swing stars miss the most today. "We even had baseball teams that played each other," Hinton recalls. "In those days, everybody wanted to *hear* each other, too. Benny Goodman wanted to hear Jimmie Noone, every tenor player wanted to hear Coleman Hawkins and Bud Freeman."

"You learned a sense of brotherhood in a big band," Edison affirms. "You were unselfish, because you sat next to a guy as good as you were. We paved the way for the younger musicians, whether they realize it and are grateful or not."

For Hampton, the lure of the big bands remains as vivid as ever. "I like to hear all those saxophones and trombones, the four or five trumpets. I know I could go out with a small group—I'm very successful when I perform with the Golden Men of Jazz—but that big sound does something to me. When I was with Benny Goodman and the quartet wasn't playing, I would always be sitting there, listening to the band. I just dig that sound." **DB**

NOVEMBER 1, 1939

## 'I'll Never Sing With A Dance Band Again'

By Dave Dexter Jr.

**Y**ou sit with Billie Holiday and watch her smoke cigarets chain fashion. The first thing that strikes you is her frankness. "I'll never sing with a dance band again," she tells you. "Because it never works out right for me. They wonder why I left Count Basie, and why I left Artie Shaw. Well I'll tell you why—and I've never told this before.

"Basie had too many managers—too many guys behind the scenes who told everybody what to do. The Count and I got along fine. And the boys in the band were wonderful all the time. But it was this and that, all the time, and I got fed up with it. Basie didn't fire me; I gave him my notice.

"Artie Shaw was a lot worse. I had known him a long time, when he was strictly from hunger around New York, long before he got

a band. At first we worked together okay, then his managers started bellyaching. Pretty soon it got so I would sing just two numbers a night. When I wasn't singing, I had to stay backstage. Artie wouldn't let me sit out front with the band. Last year when we were at the Lincoln Hotel the hotel management told me I had to use the back door. That was all right. But I had to ride up and down in freight elevators, and every

night Artie made me stay upstairs in a little room without a radio or anything all the time I wasn't downstairs with the band singing.

"Finally, it got so I would stay up there, all by myself, reading everything I could get my hands on, from 10 o'clock to nearly 2 in the morning, going downstairs to sing just one or two numbers. Then one night when we had an airshot Artie said he couldn't let me sing. I always was given two shots on each program. The real trouble was this—Shaw wanted to sign me to a five-year contract and when I refused, it burned him. He was jealous of the applause I got when I made one of my few appearances with the band each night."

You ask Billie why she didn't make more records with Shaw. You remember that the only side she made, on Bluebird, was a thing titled "Any Old Time" and was really wonderful.

"That's a laugh," she answers. "Artie has never paid me for that record. Just before it came out I simply got enough of Artie's snooty, know-it-all mannerisms, and the outrageous behavior of his managers, and left the band. I guess Artie forgot about 'Any Old Time.' I know he never paid me. With Basie I got \$70 a week—with Artie I got \$65. When I make my own records I get \$150. That's another reason I left Shaw." **DB**



WOLF

FEBRUARY 1, 1940

## 'I Don't Want A Jazz Band' — Glenn Miller

By Dave Dexter Jr.

**I** haven't a great jazz band, and I don't want one."

Glenn Miller isn't one to waste words. And he doesn't waste any describing the music his band is playing these nights at the Hotel Pennsylvania here. Soft-spoken, sincere, and earnest in his conversation, Miller is now finding himself at the top of the nation's long list of favorite maestri.

"We leaders are criticized for a lot of things," says Miller. "It's always true after a



The triple switch—Harry James, Glenn Miller, and Sammy Kaye ham it up on each other's instruments

band gets up there and is recognized by the public. Some of the critics, **Down Beat's** among them, point their fingers at us and charge us with forsaking the real jazz. Maybe so. Maybe not. It's all in what you define as 'real jazz.' It happens that to our ears harmony comes first. A dozen colored bands have a better beat than mine."

Small talk irks Glenn. He's no tin god, and he has his faults like all of us, but he isn't the kind to bellyache about competition. He's had plenty of it, all down the line, and until eight months ago, when his platters started clicking and sent the band's stock up bull-

ishly to the heights, he was a pretty sad and disillusioned guy.

"I thought I had swell ideas, and wonderful musicians," he recalls. "But the hell of it, no one else did."

Then it happened. Glenn remembers the night, and so does his wife. "We were playing the Meadowbrook early last spring," he says, "and up front, all of a sudden, the band hit me. It was clicking. For the first time I knew it was playing like I wanted it to. It sounded wonderful. I didn't say anything—just drove home and told the wife. But I prayed it would last." **DB**

FEBRUARY 15, 1943

## Duke Fuses Classical & Jazz

By Mike Levin



GENE LESTER

a potpourri of tutti dance passages and solo virtuoso work. The dance part used some pretty corny riffs, too. Unprovoked modulations, a passage in 5/4, paraphrases on well-known tunes that were as trite as the tunes themselves, and recurrent climaxes that impeded the piece's progress. Between dance numbers there were 'symphonic' bridges played out of tempo. This dangerous tendency to tamper with the tempo within the piece showed far too many times in the evening. If there is no regular beat, there can be no syncopation, and thus no tension, no jazz. The whole attempt to fuse jazz as a form with art music should be discouraged. The two exist at such distances that the listener cannot get them both into focus at the same time. The rhythms were never jumpy or breathless, and the saxes often played in unison, which eliminated the thick-sounding choir these instruments form in many bands."

Henry Simon (*PM*): "First movement all but falls to pieces . . . can't compare with the second movement . . . but there's no doubt of his importance to American music."

And so on, too far into the night. **DB**

**D**uke Ellington has taught me a lesson I'll never forget—namely, never blow your top before the third time over lightly. Three weeks ago he and his band gave a concert in Carnegie Hall. It lasted for three hours, including a 48-minute work entitled "Black, Brown And Beige." At three minutes to 12, an exhausted audience filed out of the hall, each excitedly asking the other what his opinion was.

It was obvious that most were a little confused, but in general delighted with the last half of the program. Of "BBB," the more honest ones said, "I don't get it." Others

vociferously liked certain portions; many said it was a complete failure.

The critics said:

Robert Bagar (*World-Telegram*): "It is too long a piece. . . . Mr. Ellington can make some two dozen brief, airtight compositions out of "BBB." He should. . . . It is far from being an in-toto symphonic creation."

John Briggs (*N.Y. Post*): "Mr. Ellington was saying musically the same thing he had said earlier in the evening, only this time he took 45 minutes to do it."

Paul Bowles (*N.Y. Herald-Tribune*): "Formless and meaningless. . . . Nothing but

FEBRUARY 1, 1940

## Krupa Rakes Sideline Jivesters

By Gene Krupa



ARSENE STUDIO

people who like Sammy Kaye and Guy Lombardo, because we can shell out soft lights and stardust just as seductively as they. We're not competing with memories of Bix, fading notes of Teschemacher, or any art in jazz. We just want to entertain the public.

A dance band can never be completely free from the bondage of commercial music. It is a simple fact, and must be recognized. I'm not agreeing, though, that a band must be hackneyed. When we played something like "Blue Rhythm Fantasy," I know that it is artistic. Yet, it happens to also contain the flavor of commercialism. The public will accept it, but not for any art value. It happens to be entertaining, so it is requested. But the public also requests a lot of incidental popular stuff, and we play it because we are paid to play it. Try to meet a \$2,500 a week payroll by not playing a goodly share of commercial stuff!

I don't want any artistic temperament in my outfit. I want capable musicians who can play the kind of music we are paid to play. And that kind of music is listenable and danceable music. The Bohemians in jazz can hide away to the confines of the swing clubs. I'm no Bohemian in jazz. I'm a bandleader, and I try my damndest to play entertaining music. **DB**

**I** think it is all a lot of bunk! This talk circulating about whether a jazz musician is a musical prostitute for compromising with his *art* and playing "down" to the public.

I think those sideline jivesters and Monday morning quarterbacks ought to get lost! It is pretty obvious to me and almost every other bandleader in the business today exactly what the purpose and duty of a dance musician and leader is to his public. And there are no Pulitzer Prizes in dance music!

I don't say to hell with the art. I'm all for good taste in playing swing or jazz, or whatever you want to call it. But I call it

dance music. Why? You are damned right, because I get paid for playing dance music!

When a hotel manager buys my orchestra to play for his spot, my job is to entertain the people who come there. I know my musicians won't have to stand on their heads to make the people like them. I also know my band can stand or fall on its music. But the public wants danceable music, so I'll give them that. There's no pretense from the beginning that every tune we play is worthy of comparison to the best. We're not trying to outdo anyone. We don't want to be king. We just want to entertain.

And we'll try our best to entertain the



SEPTEMBER 15, 1940

# MCA Pays Off For Sinatra

By Mike Levin



ACME PHOTO

However, Tommy Rockwell's General Amusement Corporation is still in there for 10 percent. Under the terms of the deal as it now stands, GAC will continue to share in Sinatra's earnings for the balance of the Sinatra-GAC contract. Some informants said that GAC would cash in on this for seven years, others that the pact has a life of only 14 months.

The actual handling of Sinatra has been taken over by MCA. MCA execs claim that the agency will "earn nothing on Sinatra" except the "prestige of handling him" until his GAC pact expires. However, it is believed that GAC figures only in the singer's RKO deal, a contract under which Sinatra can make one "outside" picture. MCA could easily get its money back on one such picture.

Nevertheless, MCA isn't a sure winner. Many a shrewd observer of the music and entertainment business sees a strong possibility that the publicity build-up of Sinatra has been overdone. They believe there is a good chance that the Sinatra bubble has been blown up to the point where it may disintegrate with a pop into thin air, or just deflate as the public finds new stories in the headlines. **DB**

**T**he Swami of Swoon is out of escrow at last, following the filing of a series of "I-want-my-cut" suits, all of which were settled at conference tables here, over which attorneys huddled as the man who tosses the well-known Sinatrance prepared to embark on his movie career at RKO.

The newspaper stories said that Frankie is his own boss again, after buying out the interest held by Tommy Dorsey and Leonard Vannerson for a sum placed at \$60,000.

What actually appears to have happened is this: MCA, which has had longing eyes on the Great Swooner for some time, negotiated a re-financing deal in which the Stein agency put up all or part cash to buy out the Dorsey-Vannerson interest. (RKO is also said to have put up some money and Frankie, himself, may have chipped in with some of the dough to get himself out of hock, but the singer couldn't have put up more than a few thousand at most.)

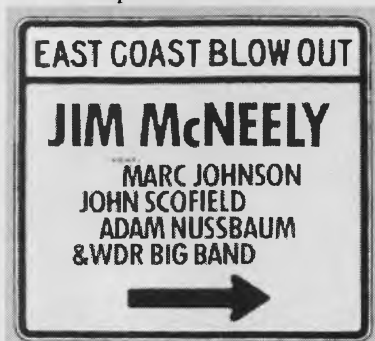
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JULY 14, 1950

## Ulceratedly Yours, Louis Armstrong

By Louis Armstrong



**H**ere I am in my dressing room after beating out one of those fine shows, "killing" the "cats," and now getting ready to knock out a big delicious malted milk with two eggs in it . . . much different from those Schnapps I was devouring over in Europe with the natives . . . Tee Hee. . . . Yessir—every time they raised their arm and said "Skol"—I said it right along with them. . . .

And one morning I went to get out of bed and fell flat on my face . . . ha ha ha. . . . So after a few stomach aches, and stuff—I am back on my baby diet again. That includes milk and cream, constantly, or should I say, disgustingly. Anyway, I had a whole gang of

fun everywhere we went in Europe. And I kept my appetite for that good food they served us.

I get started talking about my trip abroad, and I almost forgot what I actually sat down here at this li'l ol' Swiss typewriter to talk about.

What I really want to say is I am so happy, at the age of 50, still blowing my little Satchmo trumpet, still enjoying the fine things in life, still love everybody, and everybody still loves me, and from one end of the world to the other, to me, everybody's just like one happy family.

And folks, that's the way it has been with me (inwardly) all of my life. And musically

everybody's been all reet with me at all times. Of course we all have had our little say, as to what they liked and what they didn't particularly didn't like (musically, I said), but when one would hear the other fellow play, deep down in their hearts they would say, gee, that's great.

I have been quoted as saying this and that about bop, and they've given me hell to boot. But any time we would run across each other, there would always be a lot of warmth amongst us . . . ya dig? And the public, they'd think, My Gawd, those guys pan each other so bad, they really must be enemies. Shucks, pay it no mind. We musicians have always loved each other. . . . **DB**

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# Memories Of 52nd St.

By Jon Andrews

America was flush with success from World War II when bebop took 52nd Street by storm. Sweeping downtown from Harlem, it took shape in after-hours clubs like Minton's Playhouse on 118th Street, and Clarke Monroe's Uptown House on 138th. Only when bebop confronted the jazz mainstream in clubs like the Three Deuces, the Spotlite, and the Onyx, were the boppers positioned to catch the waves of promotion and infatuation that followed.

The new music arrived on the street fully formed, complete with its own fashions, manners, and attitude. As a young drummer in Harlem, Art Taylor was taken with the look and sound, the mystique of bop culture, recalling, "I was engrossed in it. Just the sound of it was something new, a departure. What I liked more than the music was the way that people looked a little different from the normal run of musicians. Guys like Miles, Max Roach, Roy Haynes were among the best-dressed in America."

Dizzy Gillespie was the kingpin of the new bop style and object of mass adulation. **DB** poked fun at the attention given Dizzy's appearance by probing the connection between his goatee and horn-playing, determining that the "strictly utilitarian" goatee afforded both Samson-like strength and protection (June 3, 1946). Swept up in Dizzymania, **DB** gushed, "Never before in the history of Jazz has so dynamic a person as Dizzy Gillespie gained the spotlight of acclaim and idolization." While praising Gillespie's artistic vision and remarkable technique, impressionable fans were urged to avoid copying Dizzy's appearance, clothing, laugh, and posture (Feb. 11, 1946). The Dizzy cult would lead impresario Norman Granz to complain to **DB** in 1945 that "Jazz in New York stinks! Even the drummers on 52nd Street sound like Dizzy Gillespie!" Granz also dismissed Charlie Parker's group at the Three Deuces as "too rigid and repetitive" (Aug. 15, 1945). Like many early doubters, however, Granz eventually came around.



A young Milt Jackson with Dizzy Gillespie

IRVIN GLASER

Gillespie and Parker quickly ascended to star status on the Street. When Ray Brown arrived in New York in 1945, the Street was an exciting, hopeful place, alive with possibilities: "The same night I got into New York I went down to 52nd Street. I was looking at all the signs: Billie Holiday, Art Tatum, Coleman Hawkins, and I saw Hank Jones. We had been in the YMCA together in Buffalo, my first job away from home."

Jones promptly introduced and strongly recommended Brown to Dizzy Gillespie, who happened by. "Dizzy said, 'Can you play?' I said 'Well. . . .' He said, 'You want a job?' and I almost jumped in his pocket! I went to his house the next night, and there's Dizzy, Charlie Parker, Max Roach, and Bud Powell. Unreal. My second day in New York!" With Gillespie's band, Brown quickly established himself as a top-ranked bassist in the new music.

For an underage Art Taylor, 52nd Street fueled his dreams and presented heroes as large as Babe Ruth. "I couldn't go into clubs, I was too young," recalls Taylor. "I would stand outside, and the doorman would run me away, and I'd come back and listen and watch the musicians as they came out. On one side of the street you had Erroll Garner and Slam Stewart. Then you had Dizzy Gillespie's big band with Milt Jackson and Ray Brown. You go down the street, there's Charlie Parker with Max and Miles. The Bud Powell trio would be there—it was too much! Then they had dixieland further up."

If bebop injected new life into the Street, signs of trouble were apparent as early as 1946, as **DB** mourned the passing of clubs like the Onyx, and warned the jazz public against "zombies."

"Zombies" included hipsters, con men, greedy record producers, junkies, and other undesirables who preyed on musicians and

discouraged decent patrons. **DB** also noted that stabbings, assaults, and verbal insults did not help the Street's popularity (Feb. 25, 1946).

Competition for work in this volatile marketplace added to friction between the bop generation and the conservative "moldy figs." According to Dan Morgenstern of the Institute of Jazz Studies, "The decline of the big bands was in part economic. Things had become expensive during the war and traveling was difficult. There was also a feeling among some of the older musicians that bebop was over the head of the public, and bad for business. A lot of this was stirred up by critics at **Down Beat** and *Metronome*. **Down Beat** was more objective, and *Metronome* was strongly on the side of bebop."

Ray Brown recalls the complaints from unsympathetic listeners: "They claimed they couldn't tap their foot; they couldn't hear the harmony." Milt Jackson, who joined Brown in Dizzy's band after being recruited by Gillespie, blames the press. Jackson argues, "Critics wrote bebop was too sophisticated; to really enjoy it you had to sit and listen to it as opposed to dancing to it. That's no good. It's not the case that, if you go to a bebop concert, you have to sit there and be cool. When Dizzy Gillespie's band played at the Savoy Ballroom, we kept that place packed every night, and people would dance from 9 o'clock, when we hit, until 4 o'clock in the morning when we stopped."

Louis Armstrong became the most prominent opponent of bebop in the jazz community. In 1948, **DB** reported Armstrong's attack on the "modern malice," in which he blasted boppers as "young cats who want to carve everyone else because they're full of malice, and all they want to do is show you up. . . . So you get all them weird chords which don't mean nothing, and first people

get curious about it because it's new, but soon they get tired of it because it's really no good and you got no melody to remember and no beat to dance to" (April 7, 1948). Art Taylor adds, "Louis rejected it, said nothing was happening. I think he changed his mind a little later. I heard him play with Dizzy."

As the Street's reputation declined amid strip clubs and drug dealers, bebop's center of gravity moved to Broadway, where clubs like Birdland and the Royal Roost ("the house that bop built") welcomed boppers and their patrons to comparatively wholesome establishments. The Roost (aka the Metropolitan Bopera House) peaked in 1948 after adopting a bebop-oriented booking policy. **DB** hailed the Roost for "the biggest jazz crowds in New York," which included hardcore bop fans as well as tourists (Aug. 25, 1948). At the Roost, Milt Jackson renewed his relationship with Thelonious Monk, which dated back to Minton's Playhouse. "It was an interesting experience for me, playing and performing with Monk. I got to learn how he would write a composition, for example, and make a mistake in it and experiment with it, and suddenly, it wasn't a mistake any more. That's very



BRUNO OF HOLLYWOOD

Ray Brown, then

clever." Changing the Roost's booking policy the following year, excluding bop, was not clever, and the club quickly closed (June 17, 1949).

The obituary for 52nd Street hit when Erroll Garner fled the Three Deuces, the Street's last modernist stronghold, for Birdland (Feb. 24, 1950). At the beginning of the new decade, the public's craving for bebop seemed to have lessened, and Gillespie was forced to dismantle his bebop big band. Gillespie, left "without a recording contract

and with no definite plans for the future," told **DB**, "It really broke my heart to break up that band. But there just wasn't any work for us. Right now it's rough. Everybody wants you to play what they call dance music. What they mean is that ticky-ticky-tick stuff. Man, that ain't dance music!" (Sept. 8, 1950). Obviously, bebop continued on without 52nd Street, changing and evolving; but it would not enjoy the same level of fanfare, sense of freshness, and public fascination. **DB**



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JULY 25, 1956

## Just Call Him Thelonious

By Nat Hentoff



JOE ALPER

**T**he most frequent word used in relation to the personality—musical and otherwise—of Thelonious Sphere Monk has been “enigmatic.”

Part of the reason for this supposed opaqueness about Monk lies in the man himself, for he seldom verbalizes about his music.

His conversation on most subjects is spare enough. But with regard to his own work, his feeling appears to be that whatever communication there is in his music can be obtained only by listening and that words only obscure the issue. Monk, therefore, has written no articles about his credo and has engaged in no public debates. When he has something to say, he says it in his music.

As a result of this disinclination to talk much about his work—coupled with a cryptic sense of humor—Monk has not been an easy interviewee. Several European critics who tried to discuss music with him during his 1954 appearance at the Paris Jazz fair were baffled.

In this country, part of the fault for Monk-the-enigma is chargeable to the jazz writers. And for lack of words from the source, writing and talking about Monk by non-musicians often has been unusually expressionistic.

There is, for example, this note on his melodies by German critic Joachim E. Berendt: “I like to think of them as ‘al fresco melodies,’ painted directly on ‘a blank wall’ with nothing under it but hard stone. You cannot take them with you as you can with paintings which are framed. You have to come back. You will if you ever get their message.”

Then there is the view expressed in Chicago: “Monk’s playing is like a painter who stands across the room and throws paint at a canvas. You can’t object too much to the way it turns out because he has chosen such beautiful colors to throw.”

Musicians who have been influenced or deeply stimulated by Monk know better. Monk’s melodies *can* be taken with you, and his harmonic colorations are hardly conceived in a Jackson Pollock manner. Monk

knows what he’s doing. Yet here again, because of his own disinterest in self-exposition, there is no detailed analysis available of Monk’s harmonic system.

Also to be mentioned are those listeners, critics, and some musicians who put him down as an eccentric, deliberate or otherwise, who has made peripheral contributions to modern jazz but is far from a key figure in its development. This writer disagrees with this latter view.

In any case, Thelonious Sphere Monk, named after his father, was born in North Carolina, not in New York, as the reference books say. Monk’s answer concerning his birth date is: “When shall I be born? I’m just playing a game like everybody else.” Leonard Feather gives his birth date as Oct. 10, 1920.

His mother was Barbara Monk. He went to Public School 141 in New York City, where the family moved when Monk was 4. He attended Stuyvesant high school, where sources other than Monk say he excelled in math, physics, and music and was expert in basketball.

The rest of his story, in what, as far as I know, is the first interview with Monk to have been written in many years, is told by the pianist with occasional comments from other sources.

“It’s hard to go back. Like what happened 82 bars ago. At least it’s hard to go back earlier than 10 years ago. I remember fooling around a piano when I was 5 or 6 years old, picking out melodies.

“No, my parents weren’t musical. I did have a few lessons when I was pretty young, around 10 or 11, but what I’ve learned since I’ve mostly taught myself. I never picked no special musicians to follow. I’ve liked something about nearly every musician I heard, but I never patterned myself after any particular one. Of course, you have to go

through certain stages to learn how to play the piano, but that doesn’t necessarily mean you’re copying somebody’s style. I’ve learned from numerous pianists.

“I had decided to go into music full time ‘way back, when I first took lessons. While still in my teens, I went on the road with a group that played church music for an evangelist. Rock and roll or rhythm and blues. That’s what we were doing. Only now they put different words to it. She preached and healed and we played.

“We had trumpet, saxophone, piano, and drums. And then the congregation would sing. We would play in some of the biggest churches in the towns we went through. We traveled around the country for about two years.”

(It was probably during this period that Mary Lou Williams heard Monk for the first time in Kansas City. As she describes it:

“Thelonious, still in his teens, came into town with either an evangelist or a medicine show—I forget which. While Monk was in Kaycee, he jammed every night, really used to blow on piano, employing a lot more technique than he does today. He felt that musicians should play something new and started doing it. Most of us admire him for this. He was one of the original modernists all right, playing much the same harmonies then that he’s playing now.”)

**M**onk continues: “Back in New York, I tried to find jobs. I worked all over town. Non-union jobs, \$20 a week, seven nights a week, and then the man might fire you any time and you never got your money. I’ve been on millions of those kinds of jobs. I’ve been on every kind of job you can think of all over New York. I really found out how to get around this city. Dance halls. Every place. How long did this scuffling go on? It hasn’t stopped.

"As for my style, I've always been told way back that I was unique, but I never lost a job on account of that. I first met Dizzy when I was in my early 20s. There were a lot of places all over Harlem that had three or four pieces, and there the musicians felt like blowing. Charlie Parker? I met him in Vic Dickenson's room where he was visiting one day. Charlie wasn't well known uptown around this time.

"Really, I don't remember all these details. I met a whole gang of musicians, and I wasn't paying anything that much attention. I was playing a gig, tryin' to play music. While I was at Minton's, anybody sat in who would come up there if he could play. I never bothered anybody. It was just a job. I had no particular feeling that anything new was being built. It's true modern jazz probably began to get popular there. But as for me, my mind was like it was before I worked in Minton's.

"Some of those histories and articles put what happened in 10 years in one year. They put people all together in one time in this place. Over a period of time, I've seen practically everybody at Minton's, but they were just in there playing. They weren't giving any lectures. It got a little glamorous

maybe on Monday nights when Teddy Hill, the manager, would invite the guys who were at the Apollo that week. As a result, all the different bands that played at the Apollo got to hear the original music, and it got around and talk started going about the fellows at Minton's.

"Another story about that time is that Dizzy began to write down what Bird was doing. Why should Bird get Dizzy to write something down? He could write it down himself. I can't answer for what Bird thought of me, by the way, but I always went for his playing.

"Bud Powell? He wasn't on the scene at first. Nobody knew about Bud until I brought him along. I met him in a juice joint uptown. At first at Minton's, Kenny Clarke didn't want Bud to sit in at the piano. The way I would put those years at Minton's and other places uptown was that we were just fellows working, and all the musicians would come by and jam."

(Other musicians have declared that matters were not entirely so unplanned at Minton's. Gillespie and Clarke agree that there were often afternoon sessions and also caucuses on the job when Monk, Dizzy, Clarke, and Joe Guy would work out new

chord progressions both to discourage incompetent sitters-in that night and also because they became more and more intrigued with the possibilities of these changing approaches to jazz.)

Feather's *Encyclopedia Of Jazz* states accurately that except for a brief date with Lucky Millinder's band in 1942—"a week or so at the Savoy," Monk remembers—and a 1944 engagement with Coleman Hawkins on 52nd Street, Monk has always worked on his own in recent years heading a small combo.

"The first records I ever made," Monk said, "were with Coleman Hawkins." (These were in 1944.) "Hawkins can play, as far as I'm concerned. Nobody can pick up a tenor without playing some of him. He's the first one who started playing tenor. He created a very good job for the tenor players."

In 1954, Monk made his European debut at the Paris jazz fair. His playing, according to most observers, could be characterized as inconsistent at the least. Monk's recollection: "I enjoyed the visit very much. The only drag was I didn't have my own band with me. I couldn't find anybody to play with me that could make it. All the good jazz seems to be in the United States. But I'd like to go back over with my own group."

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Monk, talking with characteristic slowness and long pauses between carefully phrased statements, covered several areas concerned with Monk-the-legend as opposed to Monk-seen-by-Monk:

"Do I think I'm difficult to understand? Well, like what? Tell me a particular number. Some of my pieces have melodies a nitwit can understand. Like I've written one number staying on one note. A tone-deaf person could hum it.

**W**hy system of composing? I compose as it comes, as I hear it. I have no formula for composing. For people who've never heard any of my work before, and would like to know where to start, I'd say just listen to the music in the order that I've recorded it. Get the records, sit down, and dig.

"Am I planning any long works? I'm not planning anything. I write as the idea hits me. What's supposed to happen will happen, so I've heard. As for writing for full orchestra, I've done that years back for all kinds of pieces. I haven't been doing it because I'm not the kind of person who likes to arrange, and they don't pay enough for arrangements, anyway.

"I'd like to talk about the lies that have been told about me that I'm undependable on jobs and the like. I don't know how that kind of legend got around. Some fools talk a big lie, that's all. Those lies get started, and you just can't stop them. Without even investigating, people go for them, and the lies get to the booking agencies. They believe it, too, so fast and condemn you before investigating. I think the booking agents and the public should investigate if rumors are true about people before they believe them.

"I have never messed up; I have never goofed a job in my life. Sometimes my *name* has been used in places that I knew nothing about, and the promoters never tried to get in touch with me. So when the public comes and I haven't shown up, the promoter blames me when he explains it to them. But I *do* have a sense of responsibility about work."

(A reliable Chicago observer notes that during Monk's last date there some months ago, "he wasn't elusive or uncooperative. . . . On his two nights off, he played a veteran's hospital benefit one night and a college concert-jam session the next. He did well at the Beehive and was held over. Actually, the owner had an odd number of days left before the next booking, and Monk happened to be

available, but this particular owner never would have kept Monk on unless Monk was doing good business for the place.")

Monk's comments on the present scene: "I keep up. I know what's going on. I've heard some so-called progressive music that sounded weird intentionally. Some people have the idea that if it sounds real weird, it's modern progressive. When you sit there and the music comes out weird, that's different. You can tell the difference when something is composed weird intentionally and when it just flows out weird. I don't like the word 'weird' anyway, but people got accustomed.

"About original writing in jazz today," Monk added, "what I've heard hasn't sounded too original. It all sounds the same almost. The same chords. The melody might change a little, but there's been nothing really original in the last six or seven years.

"Some people say I haven't enough technique. Everybody has his own opinion. There is always something I can't express that I want to. It's always been that way and maybe always will be. I haven't reached perfection. Maybe those people with those opinions have reached perfection. I went through a whole gang of scales like other piano players did." **DB**

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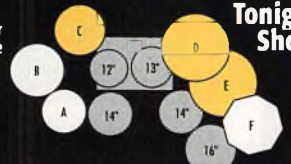
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SEPTEMBER 8, 1950

## Bop At End Of Road, Says Dizzy

By John S. Wilson



**B**op apparently has come to the end of its road. Dizzy Gillespie, who reaped the greatest harvest of publicity during the bop furor and who was considered the leading proponent of bop by the general public, is currently without a band, without a recording contract, and with no definite plans for the future.

Diz dropped his band in June.

"It really broke my heart to break up that band," he told the *Beat*. "But there just wasn't any work for us. Right now it's rough. Everybody wants you to play what they call dance music. What they mean is that ticky-ticky-tick stuff. Man, that ain't dance music!"

Dizzy admits that the audience for bop has dwindled in the past year. He's not sure what happened to it, but he feels that the boppers themselves contributed to the disinterest.

"Like the guys that come into my band, they seem to have a different state of mind from guys going into other bands," he said. "They don't think about showing. They think it would be a drag if people were to think they like what they're doing. They think it's enough if they just blow.

"If you've got enough money and can afford to play for yourself, you can play any way you want to. But if you want to make a living at music, you've got to sell it."

The only thing definite about what Dizzy

will do next is that he won't form another big band. He sees three immediate possibilities: (1) working with a small combo, (2) touring the "Jazz at the Philharmonic," or (3) his favorite project, fronting a woodwind ensemble. This latter idea has apparently been spurred by Charlie Parker's success with strings.

Once he gets a woodwind combo, Dizzy plans to go on tour with Parker, with the Bird fronting his strings and Diz with his woodwinds.

"It would be a good thing for us to be together," he said. "All we'd need is Charlie and me and a rhythm section. We could play concerts and clubs, picking up the woodwind and string men wherever we go. There wouldn't be any trouble about that. They'd all be longhairs and they wouldn't have to swing. All they'd have to do is read what's in front of them. They could pick it up in one rehearsal. The way I see it, Charlie would play a set with his strings, then I'd play a set with the woodwinds, and then we'd wind up all together.

"And we'd stress entertainment. Every time we went on a stage, it would be just like a show. We'd make people think we like what we're doing." **DB**

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MAY 6, 1953

# Mingus In Job Dilemma, Vows No Compromise

By Nat Hentoff



**C**harlie Mingus is facing a dilemma. The man regarded by many as the most technically expert bassist in jazz and perhaps the most adventurously creative finds it hard to make a living out of music—at least, out of the kind of music he wants to play.

Charlie explains it this way: "I've come to the point, musically and personally, where I have to play the way I want to. I just can't compromise anymore."

Speaking frankly about the employment problem that confronts many Negro musi-

cians, he said, "A lot of guys could make it with a studio band. Personally, the kind of music you have to play there wouldn't knock me out, but let's face it, those studio contractors won't hire Negroes."

Charlie was asked about his long-range aims. "We've now fallen into standardization. Great artists like Bird, Pres, Dizzy, Max Roach, Blanton, and Charlie Christian have worked and suffered to develop their own style. Then the copyists come, singing their praises while stealing their phrases. And worse yet, these copyists have more

success than the creative artists from whom they have stolen.

"Personally, to unmask those who copy, I have no other solution than to write and play my own music in accord with the real emotions of the moment when I am writing and playing."

Charlie went on to describe how, in large part, the clown has taken over jazz. "Good jazz is when the leader jumps on the piano, waves his arms, and yells. Fine jazz is when a tenorman lifts his foot in the air. Great jazz is when he heaves a piercing note for 32 bars and collapses on his hands and knees. A pure genius of jazz is manifested when he and the rest of the orchestra run around the room while the rhythm section grimaces and dances around their instruments.

"The impresarios bill these circus artists as jazzmen because 'jazz' has become a commodity to sell, like apples or, more accurately, corn.

Charlie had one more thing to say. "I don't want this to sound as if I thought I personally have that important a thing to say musically. I don't know that, myself, yet. But there are others who do know they have something to say. And all of us are certainly going to keep on trying." **DB**

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JANUARY 27, 1950

## Nothing But Bop? 'Stupid,' Says Miles

*This is Down Beat's first  
interview with Miles Davis.*

By Pat Harris



I don't like to hear someone put down dixieland. Those people who say there's no music but bop are just stupid; it just shows how much they don't know." This was Miles Davis speaking, and he rose to defend the universality of jazz, while decrying the much less than universal respect given the jazz musician.

Miles, whose definitely modern trumpet has been heard for the last month at the Hi-Note here, is a mild, modest, quiet young man of 23, and he has a lot of respect for his elders.

"Sidney Bechet—we played opposite him at the Paris jazz festival last year—played some of the things Charlie Parker plays, particularly a riff on 'Ko-Ko.' We talked to Bechet for some time over there, and asked him where he had gotten the riff. He told us it was from an old march, and had been transposed from a flute or clarinet part. I've heard Parker do a lot of things that show a Bechet influence, and Johnny Hodges, too.

"No, I never played dixieland myself. When I was growing up I played like Roy Eldridge, Harry James, Freddie Webster, and anyone else I admired. You've got to start way back there before you can play bop. You've got to have a foundation."

When Miles went to New York and to Juilliard in 1945, 52nd Street was in its heyday. Coleman Hawkins was working on the Street and Joe Guy was with him on trumpet. But half the time Guy didn't show up, so Miles sat in. He was working pretty steadily, without pay, and going to school all day. Then his wife (he married at 17) came to New York, and Miles had to look around for a job that would include a paycheck.

First one he found was at the Spotlite, with tenorist Eddie Davis; Rudy Williams, alto; Ernie Washington, piano; Leonard Gaskin, bass; and Eddie Nicholson, drums. He had been playing there anyhow on the nights Guy did show up for Hawkins, so he just moved in on a business basis. This job lasted a month.

Most of the bands Miles has worked with were similar units, and the jobs were none

too steady. He ruefully describes his life as months of no work, interspersed every quarter year or so with a two-week job.

"I've worked so little," Miles says, "I could probably tell you where I was playing any night in the last three years."

It doesn't seem to bother him very much, though. He likes to play what he believes is non-commercial bop; a middle-register horn, subdued and soft, with a many-noted complexity few other trumpeters can match.

"I play high when I work with a big band," Miles says, "but I prefer not to. A lot of trumpeters, Gillespie is one, have trouble controlling their tone when they play low. I don't want to have that trouble."

Davis worked at Minton's with Sir Charles [Charlie Parker] and a drummer for a short time, and also played, for pay this time, with Coleman Hawkins. Then, two years after he went to New York, Miles quit school and went home to East St. Louis.

Benny Carter was playing the Riviera in St. Louis, and Miles joined him for the trip to the West Coast. Parker was on the coast then. Miles and Charlie are very close friends, Charlie having lived with the Davises for a while in New York in 1945. Miles says that when he plays with Parker or with Lee Konitz, "it sounds like one horn."

When the Royal Roost opened, Miles went in with Allen Eager, Kai Winding, Tadd Dameron, Max Roach, and Curley Russell. His second date at the Roost was with a 10-piece band, including Konitz, Gerry Mulligan, Roach, Al McKibbin, John Lewis, Junior Collins, trombonist Ted Kelly, and Bill Barber on tuba. Pancho Hagood sang with the unit. The first Roost date lasted eight weeks; the second, two.

The Capitol recording contract followed, with eight sides cut. Those issued already are "Move/Budo," "Godchild/Jeru," and "Boplicity/Israel." Fourth release, "Venus De Milo/Rouge," will be out soon. On Miles' first recording, a blues with Herbie Fields, he says, "I couldn't be heard, 'count of I played into a mute and was frightened." He's recorded a number of sides with Parker,

including a couple of albums, and some things including "Milestones" and "Half Nelson" under his own name on Savoy.

On the Parker "Ko-Ko," Dizzy Gillespie was playing piano and had to double on trumpet for Miles because Miles said he was too nervous to play. The label has Miles' name on it as trumpeter, and has caused some confusion.

The Eckstine band, he believes, was the best of all modern units, with the possible close second of Claude Thornhill's band when Gil Evans was writing for it and Lee Konitz was in the reed section.

"Thornhill had the greatest band of these modern times," Miles says, "except for Eckstine, and he destroyed it when he took out the tuba and the two french horns. It was commercially good and musically good. For the Capitol records I made last year I wanted to get a band as close to the sound Evans writes for as I could.

"I'm going to try to get Evans to do four more arrangements for our next record date with Capitol, and have John Lewis and Gerry Mulligan do some writing too. I'll use the same instrumentation, and the same men."

Miles' favorite musicians, who form a huge, formidably heterogeneous group, including Lewis, whose composing and arranging skill he greatly admires; Evans; Will Bradley, "who writes like Stravinsky"; Parker; Konitz; Freddie Webster; Vic Coleson (who worked with Hawkins before Joe Guy, and is now out of the business); Fats Navarro, whose ability to play high and fast and still sound pretty he finds amazing; Bechet; Billie Holiday; Louis Armstrong; Gillespie, who Miles says is still progressing; and on and on. In fact, it would be difficult to find a musician for whom the easygoing Miles wouldn't have a good word.

He has nothing good to say, however, about band promoters ("look what they've done to Dizzy") and club operators. The night club operators especially. "They don't treat musicians with enough respect," Miles complains. "They think all jazz musicians are irresponsible drunkards." **DB**

JANUARY 28, 1953

## Counterpoint

*Counterpoint was a popular regular column during the 1950s.*

By Nat Hentoff



and don't forget, classical music has that long tradition. But in 50 or 75 years, the contributions of present-day jazz will be taken as seriously as classical music. You wait and see."

The Bird went on to talk about some of the men in contemporary jazz he especially admires. "As long as I live, I'll appreciate the accomplishments of Thelonious Monk. And Bud Powell plays so much.

"As for Lennie Tristano, I'd like to go on record as saying I endorse his work in every particular. They say he's cold. They're wrong. He has a big heart and it's in his music. Obviously, he also has tremendous technical ability, and, you know, he can play anywhere with anybody. He's a tremendous musician. I call him the great acclimatizer.

"And I like Brubeck. He's a perfectionist, as I try to be. And I'm very moved by his altoist, Paul Desmond."

Talk of perfectionism led Charlie to ruminate about his records. "Every time I hear a record I've made, I hear all kinds of things I could improve on, things I should have done. There's always so much more to be done in music. It's so vast. And that's why I'm always trying to develop, to find new and better ways of saying things musically."

And that is also why Charlie Parker has become so respected here and abroad as one of the focal figures in the evolutionary history of jazz. **DB**

**W**hen I recorded with strings," said Charlie Parker, "some of my friends said, 'Oh, Bird is getting commercial.' That wasn't it at all. I was looking for new ways of saying things musically. New sound combinations.

"Why, I asked for strings as far back as 1941, and then, years later, when I went with Norman [Granz], he okayed it. I liked Joe Lipman's fine arrangements on the second session, and I think they didn't turn out too badly.

"Now," said the always far-ranging Bird, "I'd like to do a session with five or six woodwinds, a harp, a choral group, and full rhythm section. Something on the line of Hindemith's *Kleine Kammermusik*. Not a copy or anything like that. I don't want ever to copy. But that sort of thing."

Charlie is really in love with the classics and unlike a number of people who say they

are, Charlie knows them intimately. "I first began listening seven or eight years ago. First I heard Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite*. In the vernacular of the streets, I flipped. I guess Bartok has become my favorite. I dig all the moderns. And also the classical men, Bach, Beethoven, etc.

"It's a funny thing, listening to music, any kind," Bird went on. "What you hear depends on so many things in yourself. Like I heard Bartok's *Second Piano Concerto* over here and later, I heard it again in France. I was more acclimated to life, then, and I heard things in it I never heard before. You never know what's going to happen when you listen to music. All kinds of things can suddenly open up."

Charlie doesn't feel, as some musicians do, that modern jazz and classical music are becoming too closely interrelated. "They're different ways of saying things musically,

JUNE 3, 1949

## Stravinsky, Bird, Vibes Gas Roach

By Nat Hentoff



Pershing Hotel's Beige room and were waiting for a dance date in Gary, Ind., which would start a string of one-niters to take them back East.

"What would I like to do? I'd like to teach or write. I'd like, most of all, to make some money."

Max, who never used the word bop—even when under pressure—doesn't like stereotyped phrases for types of music. "It's all got four beats to a bar," he said, "and it started long ago, even before dixieland. These cats would play for the chicks to dance—that's how they got the word jazz, from the way the girls danced—and jazz has been dance music ever since.

"Chick Webb was my favorite drummer. He died in 1939, when I was still pretty young, so I didn't get much chance to hear him. But he had a natural dance rhythm that was unailing.

"I like Krupa, too. He has constant rhythm and taste. Buddy Rich is often mostly noise. They're both showmen. No, I've never done anything like that—thrown my sticks in the air and made faces. I probably would if I had to; I'd work with a big band, too, if I could make more money. A commercial band? Sure!" **DB**

**S**travinsky gasses me," Max Roach said. "He really knows how to make the most of those instruments." He pulled green socks over slim brown feet, laced up a pair of brown shoes, and went over to a small vibraharp in his hotel room. "I've been playing this all day," he said. "I've got one at home; a friend here lent me this one."

He experimented with chords, ran through some scales a few times. "You know, they think it's easier to learn an instrument by yourself! That's a lot harder, really." Max wasn't speaking about his own study of the

vibes; he had Freddy Albright as a teacher.

"My aunt taught my brother and me piano when I was about 8," Max said. "We lived at her house in Brooklyn for a while. She was an old maid, a real fanatic about the piano. My mother was a singer. Now she sings in a chorus for the little social things they have."

Max' vibes had the same antiseptic sound his drumming has, though such clear crispness normally is less a part of the drum sound than it is of vibes.

The spectacled, scholarly looking Max was in town with the Charlie Parker band. They had just finished two weeks at the

JULY 30, 1964

## Chet Baker's Tale Of Woe

By Ira Gitler



CHARLES STEWART

In the middle 1950s, Chet Baker was the young Lochinvar out of the West, the fair-haired boy of critics and laymen alike, riding in on his golden trumpet. Rising to prominence with Gerry Mulligan's pianoless quartet, as the West Coast jazz movement began its popular sway, he won the New Star award in *Down Beat's* first International Jazz Critics Poll in 1953. Then Baker formed his own quartet and went on to win both the *Down Beat* and *Metronome* readers polls for the next two years.

Now, approximately 11 years after the first flush of success, he has returned to the United States from a five-year European odyssey that included the sweet smell of success—but only in whiffs. More often the odor was of creosote in jail.

From September 1955 to April 1956, Baker had toured Iceland, England, and the Continent with a quartet. During that period his pianist, Dick Twardzik, died in Paris of an overdose of heroin. Baker came back to the United States. As he tells it:

"When I came home, I started using drugs. I got busted several times, went to the federal hospital in Lexington [Ky.]—then I got busted in New York and did four months on Riker's Island, and I decided to leave the United States for a while."

At the end of July 1959, Baker departed for Italy alone and on his arrival formed a quartet with local musicians. But if he had expected to find a more lenient attitude toward his drug addiction, he soon found he was mistaken.

For 17 months he languished in an Italian jail. While he was serving his sentence, a film company from Rome approached him about bringing his life story to the screen. Baker wrote the script, and the company worked out several different versions of it but "couldn't make up their minds," according to Baker.

By the time he was released from prison, the prospect of his life story on film, directed by a top-flight man—Dino DeLaurentis had been in at the beginning of the idea—had

evaporated. But another opportunity presented itself almost immediately. A good friend of Baker's had become owner of the Olympia, the largest nightclub in Milan.

"He had a small room there that they didn't use," Baker related, "and he let me have that. He gave me a waiter and a bartender and put a sign outside: CHET BAKER CLUB. It was very elegant—plush, upholstered chairs, wall-to-wall carpeting, columns in the middle of the room, beautiful little bandstand, velvet drapes on the walls, the lighting was beautiful, and it seated about 80 people comfortably."

Baker played there for a short time, but the official opening never took place.

"I went to play a concert in Munich," Baker explained, "and I had trouble there. Nothing happened, but there was a lot of publicity in the newspapers, and when I got back to the Italian border, they wouldn't let me in. I had signed a contract with RCA Italiana, and I lost that. And they tied a lot of my money up—about 3,000,000 lira."

Baker had made some recordings for the firm and said he was to do two more albums, but these never came to pass. When he was refused re-entry to Italy, Baker went to Paris, where he worked at the Blue Note for three months.

Then he received an offer to do a movie in England with Susan Hayward and spent nine months there. "I was trying to wait out the one-year waiting period so I could join the union and work in England," he said, "but I had trouble there and was deported."

"The movie was originally supposed to be called *Summer Flight*, but I think they changed the name to *Stolen Hours* or something. Susan Hayward, in the story, is ill, and she's going to die, and she throws a big party, which most of the story is around. I'm the leader of the band at the party. I did a lot of the soundtrack for the movie, and I believe the opening shot is a close-up right on the bell of my horn."

After England had sent him back to France, Baker worked at Paris' Chat Qui

Peche for about eight months. It was here he teamed up with Melih Gurel, a Turkish french horn player who is a graduate of the Ankara Music Conservatory. From there, Baker went to the Club Jamboree in Barcelona, Spain, as a single.

"It was a pitiful rhythm section," Baker said. "Kenny Drew had been there just before me, and he had walked out on the job and told them they shouldn't even be playing. He gave them a terrible complex, so when I got there, they were really scared to death."

After a month in Spain, Baker returned to France where he received an offer to play at the Blue Note in Berlin. He played there one night and promptly was arrested. He spent 40 days in a German hospital and then was deported, but this time it was back to the United States, on March 3, 1964.

Why, when there are several other musician-addicts in Europe, did a pattern of harassment seem to follow Baker?

"I don't know," he said. "It just seemed like a field day for the police department whenever Chet Baker came to town. It seemed to be a tie-up between the police department and the newspapers—the publicity bit—because I was always very cool. I never bothered anybody. I never sold any drugs to anybody. Everything I did was for myself."

Now, finally back in the United States, did Baker, pursued at every turn, justly or unjustly, feel that some organized force was against him? "Well, I might have had that feeling," he answered quietly. "I really don't know. . . ."

Yet his current playing displays optimism and a real desire to play, certainly not the marks of a defeated man, especially today, when so many musicians do not sound as if they even enjoy what they are playing.

"Well, that's really the one thing they can't touch," he said, referring to his spirit. "I have a great deal of disrespect for the police department and the correctional people and the way they handle drug addiction, and I've suffered greatly at their hands. Not for very long, usually, but so many times that I made up my mind not to let it affect my playing in any way because, after all, that's the only thing I know how to do."

"I've always been an optimist," he said with a half-laugh. "It's funny, but I'm kind of mixed up because, by nature, if I'm not playing, I'm depressed usually—melancholy, quiet—but if I'm playing, it seems to change. Now I play very 'hard.'"

Had he heard any of the "new thingers" since he had been living in Denver, Colorado, for a while?

"I haven't heard Ornette Coleman, and I've only heard Coltrane on records," he said. "The people I've heard since I've been back have been Charlie Mingus at the Five Spot—I went down there and wasn't impressed

at all by what was happening. On the ensembles the things were ragged. Maybe it was because of the constant changing of men in the group. And Mingus was continually saying things and screaming at different personnel in the band. I went down to Birdland and listened to Gerry Mulligan's Concert Band, and that didn't kill me either—Gerry stopping the band in the middle of a tune and starting them over again . . . kind of a rehearsal, audience participation, and so forth. Maybe it was because there weren't too many people there, and he felt he might as well rehearse or something. And I went down to hear Zoot Sims and Al Cohn at the Half Note. I think Al Cohn is marvelous. I like Zoot, and I have a lot of respect for Zoot, but hearing him play alongside Al Cohn, it just seemed to be in a different class. Zoot can *play*, too, but Al is so much stronger, so much more definite. He knows where he's going, and it comes out so natural."

Although he has not heard Coltrane in person, Baker decried the marathon solo: "Forty-five minutes is a long time to be blowing; a lot of people get bugged. He gets hung up playing a little rhythmic figure, keeps on playing the same thing, just breaks

up the time differently. I'd rather listen to Stan Getz or Al Cohn, myself. But I have heard him play some things that are really beautiful.

"I think there's still a lot to be said within the framework of the standard tunes and standard progressions," Baker continued. "I don't say you shouldn't blow in those modal veins—they're interesting too—but I don't think you should do it hour after hour, every night."

As a recent repatriate, how did Baker feel about the increase in the influx of U.S. jazzmen into Europe?

"If I were a colored musician," he answered, "with a halfway decent name, any name at all, that's where I'd go to live, to get out of this mess over here, because you certainly don't run into it over there."

What was his reaction when he encountered the European philosophy that says only Negroes can play jazz really well?

"I never ran into that, myself, but I know that does exist. But I'm back, and I'm glad to be back because all those people who say and feel that jazz is for the colored man *only*—I'm not going for that. And I'm going to do everything in my power to show them that that's not right. There are many white

musicians who can play. I'll put them up against any colored musicians. The styles may be different—maybe it's just a matter of taste—they certainly have got as much to say."

Of his early successes in the '50s, he said, "I never really believed in that, and I never really believed that I deserved it. I felt that it was as though during that period people had been more or less just waiting for something new, and when it came about, they gave it more than it had due. I don't believe at that time I deserved to win the **Down Beat** or the *Metronome* polls as the best trumpet player. I know I'm playing 10 times better now—and I'm not even mentioned in the polls."

Whether or not he was the best trumpet player then, Baker's playing had an emotional quality that went right to many listeners' hearts. He still has that emotion in his work, those lyric qualities, and his self-expression has never been more assertive. If his music continues to be such a strong force within him, it won't be long before his name is again on the poll lists. This, by itself, is never a complete measure, but it will be another reminder that Chet Baker has come back. **DB**

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# Jumpin' The Blues

By David Whiteis



Bonnie Raitt checks in with John Lee Hooker

The blues are like Dionysus or Jesus—every time they're given up for dead, they come back stronger than ever.

But the blues have changed drastically through the years, sparking "authenticity" debates among critics similar to the arguments that have long raged in jazz. At least since 1938, when the battle between W.C. Handy and Jelly Roll Morton over who truly "invented" jazz raged in our pages (see page 10), **Down Beat** has been at the center of such storms.

The early 1960s were the days of the first great U.S. blues "revival," when a new audience of folk and jazz aficionados rediscovered this rich lode of musical and cultural inspiration. Blues artists began to appear on festivals and in clubs and coffeehouses where they'd never before been seen; record labels began to reissue classic sides; eager producers corralled both veterans and younger musicians into producing some of the first major new blues recordings to hit the market in almost a decade. **DB** responded to the tenor of the times. Since then the blues have enjoyed periodic resurgences, both artistic and commercial: Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, B.B. King, John Lee Hooker (with, and without, pop star Bonnie Raitt), the late Albert Collins, Robert Cray, and pianists Pinetop Perkins and Sunnlynd Slim are only a few of the artists who've graced **DB**'s pages.

Thus we've chronicled the modern evolutionary transformations the music has undergone. Muddy Waters told **DB** in 1964 that he'd created his famous postwar sound in Chicago nearly 20 years before by being both modern and true to roots: "We kept that Mississippi sound," he said. "We put the beat with it. We went to putting time with our lowdown Mississippi blues." He added that "the blues have to change, 'cause the people are changing so fast nowadays."

He also felt, however, that there was a point past which his beloved art form might mutate beyond recognition: "I think the blues and popular music are getting closer together. I guess maybe the old blues will die, but I don't like to think about that."

Other musicians, perhaps more urbane in their perspective, have been amenable to more radical change. B.B. King told **DB** in 1992 that "the blues has never been just one big thing." He defended himself against purists who'd decry his excursions into pop, synthesized arrangements, and collaborations with the likes of U2: "I will do things now I probably wouldn't have done years ago, because I didn't know how to do these things then. They think it's some kind of betrayal, but I'm the one who feels betrayed. It's not fair to me. You can't stand still."

In 1990, Carlos Santana went even further: "They play the blues in Russia," he told **DB**. "They play the blues in El Salvador and in Italy. In Italy they call it opera."

The debate goes on. The recent commercial blues resurgence has focused on a densely packed, guitar-oriented sound with roots in the postwar Chicago style. It's highly rock-influenced and it's being marketed primarily to white audiences. This has led many to conclude that the blues are either dead or dying in the community whence they originally evolved.

A quick tour around the chitlin' circuit reveals a more complicated reality. To be sure, Snoop Doggy Dog or Janet Jackson will command a much larger black following than Luther Allison or even B.B. King. But a plethora of artists—Latimore, Bobby Rush, J. Blackfoot, Denise LaSalle, etc.—continue to sell records and draw respectable crowds in blues venues from Mississippi to Memphis to Chicago and beyond. It's just that (1) they usually perform in places few whites ever see and (2) much of their music isn't considered "blues" by the (mostly white) critical establishment.

More complicated reality: the old canard about the blues being "depressing" (or sexist, or simplistic) is a gross oversimplification. The blues celebrate the human condition in all its flawed beauty. They neither judge nor pontificate; rather they embrace contradiction, even at its most tormenting, as the essence and spice of life.

As for the argument that a blues musician, to be "authentic," must adhere to the tradi-

tional 12-bar form—in the real world, it just ain't so. To pick some examples almost at random: the music of the late Albert King, B.B. King, Latimore, and both Taylors (Johnnie and Little Johnny) was and is considered "blues" by the artists' admirers, no matter how much certain critics might cringe at Albert's mellifluous crooning on "The Very Thought Of You," B.B.'s excursions into synth-drenched balladeering, or Latimore and the Taylors' predilection for funky soul music.

The fact is that blues musicians have always diversified. They've never been holy primitives howling at the moon, regardless of the patronizing romanticism that's arisen over the years. Robert Johnson included polkas and pop songs like "Tumbling Tumbleweed" in his performances; Blind Willie McTell and Charlie Patton both sang vaudeville-style novelty tunes. Today, Little Milton outrages white purists even as he wins black women's hearts with his over-the-top rendition of "The Wind Beneath My Wings." At risk of being tautological, the blues is in fact pretty much whatever its purveyors and its indigenous listeners think it is. And that changes with time, trends, and tastes.

There are, of course, those to whom the blues comprise a repertory whose sacred texts must never be violated. You'll hear them in the clubs and on records, worshipfully backing up veterans with arrangements they learned note-for-note from old recordings. The oldsters are flattered by the attention and certainly deserve the payday, but ultimately this approach does little to either preserve tradition or advance the music.

That's because in blues as well as jazz (are you listening, Wynton?) the tradition is change, the tradition is experimentation and diversity, the tradition is to go boldly where none have gone before—even as we retain the artistic, emotional, and spiritual integrity of the form. The blues is not a canon of works to kneel before, it's a living art form dripping with funk in which you must immerse—and lose—yourself. Too much reverence can drain the music of its blood. **DB**



JANUARY 1, 1941

## Alberta Hunter, Born On Beale Street, Has Sung In 25 Countries

By Onah Spencer

**T**he Marian Anderson of the blues." That's what they call Alberta Hunter, race singer extraordinary, who has sung blues in 25 different countries on the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Alberta was born on Beale Street, Memphis, the capital of the blues. She claims to have introduced "St. Louis Blues" to that city before it was known or recorded elsewhere.

"I introduced a lot of old-timers," says Alberta. "'A Good Man Is Hard To Find' was one of my specialties. I taught it to Sophie Tucker, who has featured it ever since."

She has personally written at least 75 per cent of the blues she made famous. "'Draftin' Blues' was a killer in the last war. I'm thinking of reviving it again," she says.

Her most famous blues is "Down Hearted Blues," the biggest blues seller of all time. Alberta wrote the words and music.

In 1926 Alberta introduced "St. Louis Blues" to Great Britain. London audiences went wild over her rich, golden voice and her feeling for the blues. One paper described her singing by saying, "She translates the patterns of life, the hopes, the joys, the sorrows—all its shades, into the nuances of sound and cadence of the Negro Blues."

Meanwhile Alberta goes on singing the blues—and waiting. **DB**

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DECEMBER 14, 1967

## Howlin' Wolf— 'I Sing For The People'

With Pete Welding



GEORGE GILMORE

your mind off it. Your singing ain't gonna help you none; the problem is still there.

Now, I don't consider myself a professional musician. I couldn't say I'm a professional 'cause I don't know too much about music. I'm just an entertainer; I can entertain pretty well in my way of doing. There's some good musicians out there, way better than I, got better sound than I have perhaps. Of course, I have my own sound.

But if you are a musician and you're going out to play music, you have to make up a song. It wouldn't sound right if you sat up all night and played and didn't sing nothing. People wouldn't be interested in it; I don't care how pretty music it is. It needs a song in it to make it blend. You got to fit your words into your music without any spots and spaces.

When I go out, I sing for the people. Before I became an entertainer, though, I sang for myself. Anything I set up and figured was good, I made up a song about it. I just watch people, their ways. I play by the movement of the people, the way they live. Probably, over there at that house there might be people—I don't think they're living right, they do things not becoming. You see, everything that I sing is a story. The songs have to tell a story. See, if you don't put a story in there, people won't want to listen to it, because people mostly have been through the same emotions. Since I'm an entertainer, that's what I have to give the people who come to hear me, buy my records. But me, myself, I just like music period, regardless of what kind it is. If it's played right, got a good sound, and pleases my ear, and isn't too loud, I listen to it.

Now, I don't think my music has changed much over the years. Not much really; but, of course, I did have to step up with the tempo. I used to play very slow, but I had to come up with the tempo of today. I went to school for my chords and positions on guitar after I got here. See, I didn't know my positions when I was playing those slow blues, but over the last few years I went to the Chicago Music School, and they taught me my positions.

On those early records, even the ones for RPM, I was the one told the guys what to play, how the music was to go. Now, the bass patterns on those records, they are mine—that's my bass. Some of those numbers are just on one chord. There's no changes to them; that's something I got from the old music. But the music, the songs, the sound—they are mine all the way out, from coming up playing guitar.

I always tried to play a different sound from the other fellow. Well, now, near about everybody got that rocking sound; well, I just tried to make mine short and have a good sound, to play something different. My music. **DB**

was born in West Point, near Tupelo, in Monroe County, Miss., on June 10 in 1910, and I left there in 1923 when I came to the Mississippi Delta, around Ruleville, Miss.

I didn't start to fooling with guitar until about 1928, however, and I started on account of on the plantation—Young and Mara's plantation, where our family was living—there was a guy at that time playing the guitar. He was called Charlie Patton. It was he who got me interested. . . .

I felt like I got the most from Charlie Patton and Lemon Jefferson—from his records, that is. He came through Mississippi—in different areas—but I never did see him. What I liked about Lemon's music most was that he made a clear chord. He didn't stumble in his music like a lot of people do—*plink*. No, he made clear chords on his guitar; his strings sounded clearly. The positions he was playing in—that made his strings sound clear. There wasn't a smothered sound to his chords.

As a kid I also heard records by Lonnie Johnson, Tampa Red, and Blind Blake—they played nice guitar. I heard tell of Tommy Johnson, too, but never did see him and also ran into Tommy McClennan later. . . .

It was in the late 1920s when I decided to go out on my own, to go for myself. I just went running 'round through the country playing, like Charlie and them did. . . . In the '30s, it was Sonny Boy Williamson—the second one, Rice Miller—who learnt me harmonica.

It was somewhere around this time that I met Robert Johnson. Me and him played together, and me and him and Sonny Boy—Rice Miller—played together awhile. I met Robert in Robinsonville, Miss.; his mother and father stayed out there in Robinsonville. I don't know what happened to them, but I know what happened to *him*. He got poisoned by a woman down there. I think he was getting too many girls and didn't pay her too much attention. This took place somewhere around Greenwood, Miss., out there somewhere. I don't know exactly when—it's been so long I've forgotten what year it was. It was in the '30s, though. . . . I believe Son House mostly taught him because Son and Willie Brown. . . . I used to play a little with

them. . . .

By 1948, I was calling myself Howlin' Wolf. They also called me Foot. I don't know for sure how that name started—just because they say I had big feet. And some of them called me the Bull Cow. They just give me different names. But I just stuck to the Wolf. I got that from my grandfather. He used to tell me stories about the wolves in that part of the country, how they used to do way back in the days before they cleaned up this country. . . .

I came here in the winter of '52, before Christmas. I came here to cut the records, and I've been going ever since in the business. I left the other guys back in West Memphis and came up to Chicago by myself—they was afraid to take the chance. I went back down there a year later and picked up some of them, brought them back with me. But at first I was using guys that Chess furnished, the studio band that I recorded with—bassist Willie Dixon, guitarist Robert Lockwood Jr., and so on. A little later I got guitarist Hubert Sumlin. . . .

When I first got here, a lot of these jazz musicians, they wouldn't even look around at me because I was playing blues: "Who's that, a blues singer? I don't like no blues." But things have changed a whole lot. . . . The reason is hard to say. It's just in the people's minds—what they want. People get these different ideas. Now, take you and me, we might want to hear "How High The Moon," "Sunny Side Of The Street," or "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More." Here's a bunch over here, want to hear "Hey Baby, Where'd You Stay Last Night?" Now, me, I just like blues because to me it sounds good.

People ask me what the blues are. I think the blues is problems: when a man doesn't have no money and no job and has a family to look after and connections don't meet right for him. So that's what I call blues—when you don't have good connections for yourself. But singing about them doesn't really make things easier, I think—it just takes



OCTOBER 31, 1968

## Doin' It Right: Buddy Guy

By Michael Cuscuna

**T**wo years ago, Buddy Guy was a guitarist of high regard and low income in Chicago blues recording circles. Today he is the dynamic leader, vocalist and guitarist whose band is in demand at every rock auditorium and blues event in the country.

Most of Guy's success must be attributed to his talent and to people in and out of music who have helped him, for he is not a person to grab at fame. He does not even care for widespread success if, as he has said, "it will interfere with my own life to the extent that I can't walk the streets or see the people who have been so kind to me or play to the kids on my block in Chicago. Look at James Brown—how tied up he is and how hard it is to get in touch with him. No, I wouldn't want that."

Born into a poor family near Baton Rouge, La., Guy left for Chicago in 1957 to find better work as a laborer. From an early age, he had made crude, guitarlike instruments, his first being a wire tied around two nails in the wall.

"One night in Chicago, before I had even started drinking alcohol," he said, "a fellow named Mitchum persuaded me to have a drink and sit in with the band. He liked my playing so much that he bought me a \$50 guitar. I haven't seen him since, but when I find him, he has \$50 and a lot of thanks waiting. Those days were really rough. The owner of the 708 Club heard me sit in with the Otis Rush Band there and hired me for the next week. When he asked me if I had a band, I said yes, even though I didn't know any musicians. Finally, he had to help me form one."

Guy has been leading that band in one form or another ever since, a band that would not exist had it not been for encouragement from a number of people in Guy's life.

"The music business is very tough," he said. "I was never sure that I would want to be a professional musician, but a lot of people helped my career and prevented me from quitting. B.B. King gave me a great deal of encouragement and instruction and urged me to keep playing. Magic Sam got me my first recording dates with him and Otis Rush on Cobra records. Later I went to Chess, where I made some of my best



material although I was having time problems."

Guy's lead guitar was soon in demand for many blues singers' record dates. Junior Wells has said he would not make a record without him, and indeed, much of the musical and commercial success of Wells' *Hoo Doo Man Blues* and *It's My Life, Baby* albums are due to the presence of Guy's guitar.

As for Guy's music, "If a gimmick is necessary, I use it. At our Central Park concert in New York, I almost got the crowd going during the first set—but not enough. So in the second set, I leaped off the stage to

audience level. Everyone had to stand to see me. When I got back on stage, they were still standing. At the end of that set, the cops couldn't stop them. They demanded me back on stage to play more. You know I loved that!"

As he talked, Guy began to reveal a great interest in and respect for jazz. In 1967, he had the unique experience of touring Europe with George Wein's Guitar Workshop (which was recorded in Berlin by Saba Records).

"George Benson, Jim Hall, and Barney Kessel were amazing," he said. "I had a hard time keeping up with them musically; but I want to really get into that music. I had to use a jazz rhythm section for my blues performances, and they were very good but had a different feeling. The experience was great."

Upon listening to a test pressing of the newly recorded suite by jazz guitarist Pat Martino, entitled *The Clear Evidence*, and to George Benson's performance on Miles Davis' *Miles In The Sky* album, Guy remarked, "This music inspires me to learn more. I really dig the jazz people."

When I suggested that Guy's modesty, warm personality, openness, and rapidly growing talent might someday earn him the title "Wes Montgomery of the Blues," his reaction was: "Oh man, I wish I could come close to what he was playing." **DB**

APRIL 7, 1977

## Otis Rush— The Worrisome Woes Of A Workingman

By Charles Carmen



**I**t was one of the sub-zero days of the Ice Age of 1977, and when Otis Rush opened the door of his house on Chicago's far South Side, he had a mop in his hand. The previous night a water pipe had frozen, and a second had frozen and broken just prior to our arrival. Our discussion was punctuated by the comings and goings of the plumber, who was not having an easy time finding the

necessary parts on a Sunday afternoon. Throughout the afternoon, symbolic counterpoint to the soft-spoken Rush was provided by the vicious barks of the Doberman in the basement.

Because the guitarist has played with the same band for several years and work has not been steady as of late, it seemed natural to ask how the band got by during such

periods. "They're working day jobs," Otis said. "And I'm looking for one. If things keep turning out the way they're going now, I'm going to have to get *two* jobs, if I can find something that is worthwhile taking that is paying something. There aren't many things I can go into, either, but I've got to do something. Quite a few musicians have day jobs because music is spaced. Contracts don't come around too often, and when they do everybody has their hands out saying 'we want you, we want you' on the same dates."

When questioned about the element of jazz in his own playing, Rush replied: "It depends on what tune I'm playing. If we start off on a real bluesy tune then we should remain that way. But if we start on a jazzy number then it stays that way. It blends out nice if everybody stays together, but if one guy goes way out on a limb we have to try to get him back."

Otis' previous unit preferences included rhythm guitar, saxophones, and trombone in addition to piano, bass, and drums. Yet Otis and many other blues musicians are limited to a four-piece band at most times by brute economics. The intense sound of the best modern electric blues bands is attributable to this limitation. The sounds in the mind of the musician may be made by eight pieces, yet when there are only four to work with, alternatives must be found.

"I think of horns because I really love to work with horns," Otis says. "But financially it's so bad that I just have to cut the pieces down and use the rhythm section. You also have to play harder." Extremely fast chord-ing helps on jazz-influenced tunes like Jimmy Smith's "Midnight Special." "Yeah, that holds the background up so it sort of makes up for the horns, because that's what they would be doing. Horns would be more relaxed, easier on everybody in the band. But when it's only four of us, we've all got to play."

The most personal aspect of Otis' music is expressed through his lyrics. His stage persona is almost identical to the man himself. Rush is a guarded man, yet the years of exploitive contracts and the brutalizing life of an uncompromising musician striving for success have not rendered him unwilling, at least at times, to try to explain his feelings, which he acknowledges as the source of his lyrical expression.

If it is true, as Nietzsche says, that "a joke is an epigram on the death of a feeling," Otis Rush must have his feelings intact. Although not a humorless man, his wit is expressed more often through a soft ironic laugh in reference to his own life. Because Otis sings directly from his own life and feelings, he achieves an authenticity of lyrical expression which is awesome and not a little frightening. A possible weakness of this is that the tunes with which he is primarily identified,

and which are the foundation of his life performances, express a limited emotional range.

"I look for a good, solid story. . . . Like I say, I'm sad. I'm not sad all the time. I just got problems, man, and I'm trying to work them out, and when I get on the stage I think about playing the blues. That's what I do. It

doesn't solve my problems. My situation is sad right now, man, and that's why I'm playing sad music. If I ever get happy, I'll let you know. I'll change my rap on the stage and start singing happy tunes. A miracle, if that happens, I'll be glad. But right now it's sad and that's the way I play, that's the way I feel. I'm drowning, man, on dry land." **DB**

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FEBRUARY 1992

## B.B. King— E Pluribus Bluesman

By Gene Santoro

**B**lues revivals—starting with the first big one of the mid to late '60s—have been good to Riley B. King. Though the 66-year-old is still on the road an average of 275 days a year—much more than his more famous devoted students—he's looking fat and prosperous. And why not? Named Blues/Soul/R&B Musician of the Year in *DB's* 1991 Readers Poll, he's been collecting awards and playing high-ticket venues like Las Vegas and Lincoln Center as well as lounges in Alaska; opening his own club, the Blues Bar, on the famed Beale Street of Memphis, where the Blues Boy got his radio nickname and his start; donating his collection of 20,000-plus rare recordings to the University of Mississippi; continuing to work for the Foundation for the Advancement of Inmate Recreation and Rehabilitation (FAIRR), which he co-founded with F. Lee Bailey, and the John F. Kennedy Performing Arts Center, of which he's a founding member; pulling in Grammys and making the talk-show rounds; playing for Queen Elizabeth and at the White House for George Bush's 1989 inaugural; popping up on documentaries aired over PBS and HBO. No matter how you look at it, B.B.'s been staying very visible.

So in the midst of this latest blues revival, which finds Jeff Beck and Eric Clapton jamming with Buddy Guy and Bonnie Raitt sitting in with John Lee Hooker, it's not surprising that his time has come—again. After all, he not only helped to further insinuate diverse strains like gospel and swing into the blues via his smoothly crying vocals, but also helped shape the sound of single-string blues guitar playing by mixing an eclectic array of sources.

According to B.B., eclecticism has been his musical game from the get-go. "I grew up liking people like Johnny Moore and the Three Blazers, and his brother Oscar Moore, who played with Nat Cole," he intones in the same gospel-inflected cadences that power his singing. "In fact, Robert Jr. Lockwood, who was in one of my earliest bands, brought that same jazzy influence into it. I also liked Jimmie Rodgers and Hank Williams; Jimmie Rodgers was one of the first white country singers to sing blues that black people liked. Believe it or not, Gene Autry did some things with that



feeling, too. Lonnie Johnson. I was crazy about Louis Armstrong, the big-band sounds of Duke Ellington, and Count Basie and Woody Herman and Benny Goodman and Charlie Christian.

"This is long before I was a disc jockey. They used to have these video jukebox setups where you see a short film of the performers; each of them was about three-to-five minutes long. That's how I was introduced to the big bands and people like Ella Fitzgerald and Nat Cole and Cab Calloway. And then, when I was a dj, I discovered Django Reinhardt: I loved his vibrato and sense of melody, especially when he recorded with just a regular rhythm section." Given this list, maybe it's not surprising that B.B. shares heroes like Cole and Louis Jordan with Ray Charles, another towering African-American artist who's blithely sailed over externally imposed categories to commercial success.

He sees his musical broad-mindedness as the key to outings like his sharing a stage with rockers U2 for that band's concert film and album, *Rattle And Hum*, or his own synth-laden *King Of The Blues: 1989*. "None of this has changed my way of working," he insists. "It's just given me more to think about while trying to perform. When I first started to play, the audience was my age and older, and it kept being that way until the late 1960s. Then we got a new following—all the white teenagers who heard about the blues from their idols, like Eric Clapton.

"The audience now is a much wider range of people, from the very young on up: two-thirds of my audience ranges between eight and 30 years old. My association with U2 has brought even really young kids in to hear what I do. So I will do things now I probably

wouldn't have done years ago, because I didn't know to do these things then. For instance, I survey each audience and see musically as well as visually how they take certain tunes. So if I do a couple of tunes that get no real reaction—I'm talking about it in terms of having an apple and seeing a kid who wants it—I shift to different lines. I've got to try and be a pleaser."

The self-contradictions—and the suppressed anger behind some of them—clearly indicate B.B. King's sense of defensiveness about his current sounds. There are those, including me, who dispute his contention about exactly how deep his commercial need to please any crowd may be. The way he responds, with some modulated irritation in his voice, runs like this: "It's really strange that the same folks who support you when you're struggling, turn their backs on you or start running you down when you've gotten somewhere. They think it's some kind of betrayal, but I'm the one who feels betrayed. That just doesn't seem like a good reason. It's not fair to me. Why would you support somebody only when they're struggling and not be happy for them when they've made it? You can't stand still."

There's more than a touch of truth in what he says, of course. Devotees of folk forms like the blues tend to get overpoweringly defensive when they see their notions of a genre's "purity" or "integrity" messed with. It's a misplaced sense of possessiveness rooted in some good intentions, like the idea that these forms have their own very real value that shouldn't be condescended to; and some not-so-good, like the idea that the older forms were more "spontaneous" or "natural." This mishapen Romanticism implicitly, if sometimes inadvertently, denies

# Notes From Rayburn

its subjects the benefit of either artistic consciousness or continuing growth. No room is left to ask what allowed kidnapped Africans to adapt strange instruments and musical formats to their own forbidden music and produce peculiarly American strains like blues and jazz. And if these sounds are natural how can they possibly be tampered with, never mind improved?

That I see B.B.'s recent albums as a series of esthetically unchallenging efforts to recast his already-hybridized blues, via ubiquitous synthesizers, for the MTV crowd is based on an artistic difference of opinion. It isn't driven by a set of notions trafficking in misplaced and imaginary blues purism. It strikes me that the late-'60s, early-'70s meshing of his singing, vocalic guitar with the Atlantic Records soul-music house rhythm section produced both chart-busting and esthetically satisfying results. Albums like *Live And Well* and *Completely Well* yielded a challenging blues fusion as well as his big crossover single, "The Thrill Is Gone."

Defending his latest directions, B.B. reaches for a revealing observation. "I don't want to compare myself to President Bush," he begins. "But in my own small way, doing what I do, I have to make some of the same kinds of decisions he does. He has so many different constituencies to please—so many more than I do, of course. But he has to walk a fine line about what they want. In my way, so do I."

Again, true enough as far as it goes. But this points to one part of what is most troublesome to a fan about B.B.'s attitude toward his music today. Asked why he's doing what he's doing, he doesn't provide an artistic rationale, as he could and did with those great breakthrough albums of two decades ago (as a similarly beleaguered Miles Davis could and did when disgruntled critics blasted pioneering efforts like *Bitches Brew* or *On The Corner*). Instead, B.B. draws on the circular logic of a demographic justification. If you want to watch the circle break down, go back and reread the quote where he explains how he hasn't really changed what he does, then explains why he's changed what he does.

Then, too, there's the simple and undeniable fact that, through his Grammys, and TV talk-show appearances, and constant touring, B.B. King is hardly an unknown. If anything, he's become—rightly—a kind of icon. The portions of his audiences who are coming to see him via his U2 connection, for example, are coming to see *him*. They're there to learn more about him and celebrate what he does, not to walk out. As B.B. puts it: "I've been lucky—my music has been accepted by more kinds of people and been heard in more kinds of places than any other blues." **DB**

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# Cutting Edge Research

By John Corbett



Ornette Coleman listens as Don Cherry plays during a 1959 recording session

Take a look at the heading to this section, then ask yourself: Is the second word a noun or a verb? How you read that word is a fairly sensitive jazz-temperament litmus test, a barometer of how you think jazz works.

On one hand, if you see a noun, then what we're talking about are discreet events in jazz history, those "experiments" that punctuate the jazz timeline like great exclamation points or, better yet, like giant question marks. Either these experiments have failed or succeeded; either they have led jazz down the path to perdition or set it straight on the road to recovery. The debate over the success or failure of one such experiment was the topic that **Down Beat** orchestrated back in January '92, using Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz* as its locus. "There comes a point in the life of every *avant garde* when it must either put up or shut up," opined John McDonough, duking in the air, seeking to marginalize and dismiss the influence of free music on contemporary jazz. John Litweiler countered by directly addressing Ornette: "You certainly altered the mainstream of jazz." Free jazz as fumble or forward stride, always a fighting matter.

Of course, you could read the word "experiments" more broadly as a specific type or style of jazz—experimental jazz, otherwise known as *avant-garde* jazz. In art history, when critics refer to the *avant garde* they often mean a specific period in art, an *historical* *avant garde* of the 1920s that included movements like dadaism, surrealism, and futurism. Defined according to this perspective, experimental or *avant-garde* jazz conjures an equally specific moment in time—the 1960s—and brings to mind the particular musical practices known as free jazz and free improvisation. Indeed, the invective "anti-jazz" that was lumped on the music at this juncture was also drawn from the art-history lexicon. *Avant gardists*, specifically dadaists, were dubbed "anti-artists" as an indication of their attacks on bourgeois high-art standards. Taken this way, experimental or *avant-garde* jazz lives on as an

affront to the politeness and gentility of the mainstream, as an ongoing musical revolution, not just a new musical style—neither will it put up nor shut up, thank you much!

On the other hand, perhaps you read the word "experiments" as a verb and "jazz" as its subject. Thus, experimenting is what jazz does—*jazz experiments*. Experimentation is the lifeblood of jazz. Given this interpretation, we no longer have to look for the grand movement, the major statement, the genre-shifting, ground-leveling, concept-shattering stab-in-the-dark. Like scientific experimentation, from this perspective we have a tradition—a set of conditions, hypotheses, and controls—that the individual jazz artist tests, fiddles with, adjusts, makes his or her own, and perhaps breaks with in order to dare new, sometimes minor and incremental innovations.

Experimenting is how jazz moves, how it grows. All new techniques or structures were experiments at one time, it's just a question of whether we tolerate (or relish) new ones or rest on (or enforce) the ones we already know. Without the subtle kick of experimentation, the *free play* that makes it so serious and enduring a form of music, jazz is like a lifeless prehistoric bug trapped in an amber bead.

The **DB** portraits you'll find in the following pages are testament to the viability of both notions of jazz experimentation. Accurately anticipating the big changes that he would help usher in with Ornette Coleman, young pianist Paul Bley's prophetic words appeared in the magazine in 1955. Along with Ornette, Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler helped renovate the language of jazz, advancing the tradition while breaking with some of the precepts of the jazz mainstream. Their struggle to survive, and their trials of playing on the edge of commercial existence, were documented by **DB** through the turbulent years of the '60s. (Note: Innovators Coltrane and Dolphy appear in other sections of this issue, though they could fit comfortably in this section, whether you see their experiments as a verb

or noun . . .).

Ripley's believe it or not: Nat Hentoff's tête-à-tête with Albert and Donald Ayler was a cover story. In the '60s underground, comix writer Harvey Pekar wrote record reviews, and Leroi Jones (now Amiri Baraka) had a regular column, "Apple Cores," which kept track of New York's emergent underground goings-on (he spotted the "Loft Scene" in '63, long before it was regularly referred to as such). Jones also raised debates over the role of **DB** and white criticism in defining the direction and meaning of jazz. The 'zine was on top of fresh developments: Jeanne Lee and Ran Blake were spotted as early as '62, Steve Lacy back in '61, and Jimmy Giuffrè's new direction was the topic of an unusual amount of ink in the early '60s. Later, a seemingly endless round of articles and debates kicked around the pros and cons of the "new thing." Toward the end of the decade, John Litweiler diligently scribed the Chicago re-structuralists, like (Muh) Richard Abrams.

Though the '70s are often misrepresented as dire years for jazz, folks like Henry Threadgill and Anthony Braxton made such stereotypes laughable. And on the other side of the Atlantic, in the '70s European improvised music brought its different sense of free play to full fruition, particularly through the work of players like Peter Brötzmann, Han Bennink, and Derek Bailey. Few American press outlets turned an ear to this music (included here is a 1987 feature on British saxophone innovator Evan Parker).

In a 1962 **DB** essay considering the role of atonality in jazz, Bill Mathieu wrote: "Future jazz will discover its own new freedoms and its own new disciplines. The question becomes: which ones?" Thirty-two years later, this question still resounds. But now, as an integral part of its history, jazz has the wisdom of free music at its disposal in the search for an answer. Such is the legacy of the deep experimentation of the '60s; such is the invitation for jazz to continue to experiment in the '90s and beyond. **DB**

JULY 13, 1955

## Paul Bley—Jazz Is Just About Ready For Another Revolution, Says Canada's Young Pianist

By Bob Fulford

**J**azz is just about ready to soar off into yet another new world in a 1950s revolution that may be as radical as that of the early '40s. That summarizes the opinion of Paul Bley, the 22-year-old Canadian whose piano playing is beginning to fascinate jazz fans.

Bley, in Toronto for a date at the Town Tavern, said he thinks jazz is now coming close to the end of its post-bop period of

assimilation. It's ready for a new revolution.

"Right now," he said, "everybody is trying to take in all the past schools of jazz. I think most of the young jazzmen today are listening hard to the schools of the past. They're trying to select the best features of each of them and assimilate them into their own playing. For instance, I have tapes of records by Louis [Armstrong], Roy [Eldridge], [Jimmy] Blanton, [Charlie] Christian, Lester [Young], and a lot of others. We carry them around with us and play them when-



ever we get the chance.

"I think a lot of other musicians are doing the same thing. It's a natural cycle, the cycle that's evident in the history of classical music over the last 500 years. First a period of radical change, when all the leaders and their followers reject everything that's gone before—just as in the bop days. Then a long period of assimilation, followed by another great change."

How will the change come? Bley doesn't know, but he does have some idea what roads he wants to travel.

"After listening to so much old jazz during the past year, I think I'm finally able to put to use some of what I learned about composition in the years at Juilliard. I think I understand my medium a lot better.

"Now I'm anxious to do some writing. I'd like to write in longer forms, of course—62-bar compositions, perhaps. I'd like to work with superimposed harmonies and try to write music without a chordal center. I'm also interested in using the pre-Bach forms—the type of thing that 20th-century composers are beginning to discover only now."

A listener had heard Bley last year and thought his playing stilted. Now it seemed to swing easily with a pleasant grace. Did Paul think he was swinging more than a year ago? "I think *everybody* is," he said.

When asked his main influence, he answered with two words and a smile. The words: "Louis Armstrong." **DB**

OCTOBER 26, 1961

## Cecil Taylor's Struggle For Existence

By Bill Coss

**C**ecil Taylor's thoughts are as much an explanation of his music as anything could be. In fact, they sound like the music itself. Following is a condensation of several conversations:

"The pride in playing has been lacking since 1955. Now jazz is recognized as a money maker. Now the young Negro musician *can* play it safe. Right now, in that place



we were talking about, there are two groups. They're playing exactly the same way; even the same tunes. All the people I've admired always play hard. When they don't, it's because they can't. So you wait; wait for Duke, Coltrane, Ornette's group and Ornette, Monk and Miles, those people and Billie Holiday. You wait, and when they do, it's worth waiting for.

"I think we frighten some people. I know that they work harder when we are playing opposite them. You know, music isn't only supposed to satisfy you. It's also work. If it intimidates you, that's good, too. That makes you work harder. But I haven't heard anything for a long time that intimidated me, frightened me. I should explain that. Music that does that is my fault. It means I've forgotten my ears. It makes me angry, not afraid—angry because *I* couldn't hear it.

"The first modern pianist who made any impression on me was Dodo Marmarosa, with Barnet. In 1951, I heard Tatum, Silver, Peterson, and Powell. Oh, I guess Bud was the first. He and Dodo were the first I heard. Then I heard lots of Tristano, Mary Lou Williams, and Brubeck. Brubeck made an impression because of the horizontal approach he made, the harmonic sounds, the rhythm—not so jazz-oriented, but academic. What I said before about music being your whole life is germane here. You can't expect Dave Brubeck, who grew up in a rural area, to play like a guy from 118th St.

"In any case, the greatness in jazz occurs

because it includes all the mores and folkways of Negroes during the last 50 years. No, don't tell me that living in the same kind of environment is enough. *You* don't have the same kind of cultural difficulties I do. I admire someone like Zoot Sims, because he accepts himself. He is unique. He tries to come to grips with *everything*, musically, not socially. But even Zoot, and Lennie Tristano, only simulate the feeling of the American Negro—the way American composers concern themselves with Stravinsky, Webern, and such.

"Jazz is a Negro feeling. It is African, but changed to a new environment. It begins in the Negro community, and it is the only place for Negro hero worship. Economic pressures did away with the Negro tap dancer. The Negro actor has no historical perspective—I'm very interested in historical perspective. Sidney Poitier is more related to Marlon Brando than he is to Bert Williams. But jazz has had the continuation.

"Still Lennie made a real contribution. His linear concept had space in it—the openness and its implications got to me. But it ended up being a swing concept. The rhythm section was à la Basie.

"I suppose counterpoint in rhythm sections must be the new reality. That's the reason why Ornette has been so important.

"That reminds me. Since 1957, a change

has begun—Ornette, Jaki Byard, and Eric Dolphy. Of course, there's one constant. Duke Ellington. Since for always. He's written through all those categories, including the ones you're making up now. If he would only rescore *Diminuendo And Crescendo*, all the young musicians would know. But the band always sounds fresh, so far as the jazz heart is concerned. Woody and Diz had great bands, but they were limited. They couldn't get to the ultimate the way Duke did.

"The reality is that what I play is jazz. Anything happening after is fine. Somehow my comping has become a matter of put-down. It's not nervous. I try to provide a full orchestral background. That causes a horn player to really play. He'll respond, if he can. You look at the reviews. See what happens when Coltrane and I play together. He and Dolphy can hear me.

"The sad thing is the fact of how much nonmusical forces have to do with the music. Not only in the business itself, but the musicians themselves reflect the greedy society. Contemporaries impose on you, impress you with the futility of doing things. Really, they are emphasizing death as such. Our whole society seems to be based on cutting down flight. Communication has become a lost art. Maybe that's why we have psychiatrists.

"It is important, wholly important, to

fulfill yourself. It is your life. If you do that then you are doing something for someone else, even if it's only one someone else. Even then, it's all right. That's my life. My particular battle is fighting for the cultural beauty spots of different peoples. In my case, of the Negroes. I have made my contribution the way others have done and I want it recognized as that."

He said more than that—much more. About his admiration for the musical language Miles Davis built ("He is an organizer of sound"); about his respect for some others; his understanding of jazz history, and the people important to it; his realization that the piano is not an instrument as easily identifiable with/for an audience as is a horn; his resignation that "we have a small percentage of an already small audience."

Nothing he said is lessened by his total lack of economic success, an unwelcome fact. Since 1957, he has probably worked a total of 30 weeks. He has made albums for Transition, two for United Artists, one-half of one for Verve, and has a contract for three with Candid—one of which has been released.

Candid he is, this wiry young man, who speaks softly, concisely, distinctly, sometimes sardonically, always honestly.

Artist he is, too, in thought, word, and action. **DB**

NOVEMBER 11, 1966

## Albert Ayler— The Truth Is Marching In

By Nat Hentoff



VALERIE WILMER

for the Ayler speaking style. He is concerned with inner peace and tries to avoid letting the economic frustrations of the jazz life corrode him emotionally. It's not easy to remain calm, but Ayler so far appears to be.

In manner, he is reminiscent of John Lewis of the Modern Jazz Quartet—a gentle exterior with a will of steel, a shy laugh, and a constant measuring of who you are and what you want. Ayler's younger brother, trumpeter Don, is taller, equally serious, and somewhat less given to smiling.

"I went for a long time without work," Albert said. "Then George Wein asked me to come to Europe with a group of other people for 11 days starting Nov. 3. I hope to be able to add five or six days on my own after I'm there. Henry Grimes and Sunny Murray will be with Don and me. But before I heard from Wein, I'd stopped practicing for three weeks. I was going through a *thing*. Here I am in *Time*, in *Vogue*, in other places. But no work. My spirits were very low."

"That's what they call the testing period," Don volunteered. "First you get exploited while the music is being examined to see if it has any value. Then when they find there's

In a restaurant-bar in Greenwich Village, tenor saxophonist Albert Ayler was ruminating on the disparity between renown and income. In his case, anyway. Covers of his albums are prominent in the windows of more and more jazz record stores; references to him are increasingly frequent in jazz magazines, here and abroad; a growing number of players are trying to sound like him.

"I'm a new star, according to a magazine in England," Ayler said, "and I don't even have fare to England. Record royalties? I never see any. Oh, maybe I'll get \$50 this year. One of my albums, *Ghosts*, won an award in Europe. And the company didn't even tell me about that. I had to find out another way."

All this is said in a soft voice and with a smile but not without controlled exasperation. Bitterness would be too strong a term

an ideology behind it, that there's substance to it, they'll accept it as a new form."

"What is its ideology?" I asked.

"To begin with," Albert answered, "we are the music we play. And our commitment is to peace, to understanding of life. And we keep trying to purify our music, to purify ourselves, so that we can move ourselves—and those who hear us—to higher levels of peace and understanding. You have to purify and crystallize your sound in order to hypnotize. I'm convinced, you see, that through music, life can be given more meaning. And every kind of music has an influence—either direct or indirect—on the world around it so that after a while the sounds of different types of music go around and bring about psychological changes. And we're trying to bring about peace. In his way, for example, that's what Coltrane, too, is trying to do.

"To accomplish this, I must have spiritual men playing with me. Since we are the music we play, our way of life has to be clean or else the music can't be kept pure."

This meant, he continued, that he couldn't work with someone addicted to narcotics or who otherwise is emotionally unstable.

"I couldn't use a man hung up with drugs, because he'd draw from the energy we need to concentrate on the music," Ayler said. "Fortunately, I've never had that problem. I need people who are clear in their minds as well as in their music, people whose thought waves are positive. You must know peace to give peace."

I asked the brothers about the primary influence on their music.

"Lester Young," Albert answered. "The way he connected his phrases. The freedom with which he flowed. And his warm tone. When he and Billie Holiday got together, there was so much beauty. These are the kind of people who produce a spiritual truth beyond this civilization. And Bird, of course. I met him in 1955 in Cleveland, where they were calling me 'Little Bird.' I saw the spiritual quality in the man. He looked at me, smiled, and shook my hand. It was a warm feeling. I was impressed by the way he—and later, Trane—played the changes.

"There was also Sidney Bechet. I was crazy about him. His tone was unbelievable. It helped me a lot to learn that a man could get that kind of tone. It was hypnotizing—the strength of it, the strength of the vibrato. For me, he represented the true spirit, the full force of life, that many of the older musicians had—like in New Orleans jazz—and which many musicians today don't have. I hope to bring that spirit back into the music we're playing."

"The thing about New Orleans jazz," Don broke in, "is the feeling it communicated that something was about to happen, and it was going to be good."

"Yes," Albert said, "and we're trying to do

for now what people like Louis Armstrong did at the beginning. Their music was a rejoicing. And it was *beauty* that was going to happen. As it was at the beginning, so will it be at the end."

I asked the brothers how they would advise people to listen to their music.

"One way not to," Don said, "is to focus on the notes and stuff like that. Instead, try to

move your imagination toward the sound. It's a matter of following the sound."

"You have to relate sound to sound inside the music," Albert said. "I mean you have to try to listen to everything together."

"Follow the sound," Don repeated, "the pitches, the colors. You have to watch them move."

"This music is good for the mind," Albert

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continued. "It frees the mind. If you just listen, you find out more about yourself.

"It's really free, spiritual music, not just free music. And as for playing it, other musicians worry about what *they're* playing. But we're listening to *each other*. Many of the others are not playing together, and so they produce noise. It's screaming, it's neo-avant-garde music. But we are trying to rejuvenate that old New Orleans feeling that music can be played *collectively* and with free form. Each person finds his own form."

"Why," I asked, "did bop seem too constricting to you?"

"For me," Albert said, "it was like humming along with Mitch Miller. It was *too* simple. I'm an artist. I've lived more than I

can express in bop terms. Why should I hold back the feeling of my life, of being raised in the ghetto of America? It's a new truth now. And there have to be new ways of expressing that truth. And, as I said, I believe music can change people. When bop came, people acted differently than they had before. Our music should be able to remove frustration, to enable people to act more freely, to think more freely.

"You see, everyone is screaming 'Freedom,' but mentally, everyone is under a great strain. But now the truth is marching in, as it once marched back in New Orleans. And that truth is that there must be peace and joy on earth. Music really *is* the universal language, and that's why it can be such a

force. Words, after all, are only music.

"I'm encouraged about the music to come," Albert said. "There are musicians all over the States who are ready to play free spiritual music. You've got to get ready for the truth, because it's going to happen. And listen to Coltrane and Pharaoh Sanders. They're playing free now. We need all the help we can get. That *Ascension* is beautiful! Consider Coltrane. There's one of the older guys who was playing bebop but who can feel the spirit of what's happening now. He's trying to reach another peace level. This is a beautiful person, a highly spiritual brother. Imagine being able in one lifetime to move from the kind of peace he found in bebop to a new peace." **DB**

OCTOBER 5, 1967

## Richard Abrams: A Man With An Idea

By John Litweiler

**N**ew York City, the early '40s: Minton's Playhouse; 52nd Street. Chicago, 1967: Abraham Lincoln Center; Hyde Park. What do these places have in common? Although today's new jazz movement in Chicago is isolated, its spirit of excitement and exploration have the aura of a legend in the making.

Quite possibly, the second crucial phase in the evolution of jazz' most vital and promising era is taking place—apparently alone for now—in Chicago. Ten years ago the revolution began with Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Eric Dolphy, and John Coltrane, and in recent years a second wave of innovators has appeared to reinterpret the terms of that revolution. (Most prominent, probably, are Albert Ayler and the recent work of Sun Ra.) The Chicago musicians associated with the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians have completed that reinterpretation to the point of revitalizing the whole concept of "free jazz," with the emphasis on variety and structure.

The AACM, a nonprofit organization dedicated to showcasing the original composi-



RON HOWARD

tions of its membership, training aspiring young musicians, and fostering a better public image of the musician, was founded by Richard Abrams and other local musicians concerned about the current conditions and future directions of contemporary music and its exponents. Abrams has been the AACM's president since its formation more than three years ago.

Notable names include Maurice McIntyre, a gifted tenorist; Joseph Jarman, a brilliant altoist; altoist Roscoe Mitchell's classic commedia dell'arte troupe; Lester Bowie, trumpeter; Malachi Favors, bassist—only the beginning of a long list of exceptional musicians who, unfortunately, are likely to remain unfamiliar to the non-Chicago public for some time to come.

Beginning around 1955, a group called the MJT + 3 became Abrams' principal area of interest. He was the talented group's pianist and principal composer/arranger. The group recorded for Vee-Jay Records.

The group was probably the best in Chicago at the time, and in the four years before the work ran out, Abrams had plenty

of freedom and opportunity to write and play. He took advantage of this freedom by studying, on his own this time, the techniques of composition. His texts were the Schillinger system first, and then Paul Hindemith's teachings (by this time, Abrams' career was already an example of Hindemith's pragmatism in action). For all the exhilaration of those days, Abrams felt, he said, that something was missing in his own music. Then he rediscovered Art Tatum.

"I always played changes quite successfully," he said. "But I always felt caged in. When all the musicians could copy Bud Powell note for note, I could hear it and play it, but when I got to the stand, my mind would always go off somewhere else—it would always get kind of wild. So I found out from Art Tatum that I needed to adhere to my rhythmic feelings more, and then I would have less trouble keeping up with what wanted to come out."

Then it was Tatum who opened the door for Abrams into the new music?

"That's right," he said. "The real genius of Tatum was his rhythmic concept. Expansion and contraction of rhythm; my system always seemed to need that, though I didn't know what it was, and it has resulted in whatever is happening now, because I never discarded it."

This was in the days when Ornette Coleman first upset New York. At about the same time, Abrams found a kindred spirit—Donald Garrett, professionally a bassist, but actually a skilled multi-instrumentalist and writer whose thinking paralleled Abrams' own. For a time the two studied and wrote together. From this association came the first scores for the Experimental Band. And thus began the Chicago movement of our time and Abrams' strongest musical work as well. **DB**

APRIL 1987

# Evan Parker—The Breath And Breadth Of The Saxophone

By Paul Keegan



ART ILLMAN

**E**van Parker's first hero was a decidedly non-avant garde saxophonist. "I was in love with Paul Desmond," Parker confesses. "I know, it makes everyone smile when I say that."

Parker was born in Bristol, England, 43 years ago this month. He took up the saxophone when he was 14 and began hanging around with a group of slightly older friends who were fond of West Coast jazz, especially the Dave Brubeck quartet Desmond played with. "Then I got interested in John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy," he says. "I started to depend less on ideas coming from

my peer group and to formulate my own ideas. Coltrane and Dolphy became the absolute dominating forces in my life." Parker's father, who worked for what is now British Airways, arranged for his 18-year-old son to visit New York City for two weeks. "I saw Dolphy play at Birdland," he says, "and I was astonished at how easy it was to see him. Just walk in and there he is. It was like being in the presence of God."

In 1966, drummer John Stevens invited the 22-year-old Parker to sit in at a little theatre club that Stevens ran. "That's where I met Derek Bailey, Kenny Wheeler, Barry

Guy, Dave Holland, Paul Rutherford, and Trevor Watts," muses Parker. "That was the nucleus of what has expanded now into a scene of more than 200 players in this country interested in this kind of music. But back then there was just that handful. Less than 20 players, and I knew all of them."

From there, Parker met musicians from Holland and Germany—the two other European centers of free jazz—including Han Bennink, Misha Mengelberg, and Willem Breuker. In 1968, Parker made his first recording, *Karyobin*, with the Spontaneous Music Ensemble that included Stevens, Holland, Bailey, and Wheeler.

By the mid-'70s, Parker was playing with top American free improvisers such as Steve Lacy, Anthony Braxton, and George Lewis.

Parker is looking forward to what lies ahead. "I've been doing this for about 20 years," he says. "With luck, I may have another 20 to go—after all, it's a fairly physical music." All of which is a long way from the young man who just wanted to be able to play like Paul Desmond. "It's still the same instrument with the same buttons on it," he says with a smile. "It's just a different imagination. Different music from a different time." **DB**

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# Jazz Plugs In

By Bill Milkowski



Darryl Jones and Miles Davis

PHOTO: VIELZ

Once upon a time, there was a golden era in fusion. It was that period from the late '60s through the mid-'70s when renegade musicians were experimenting, breaking new ground, searching for the links between Trane and Hendrix. Their muse led them to a brave new world of sound fueled by electricity and tempered with their knowledge and love of jazz.

The fuse for this explosive movement was lit as early as 1965, when jazz-trained hippies in New York's Greenwich Village began picking up on the energy of rock music and expressing themselves unabashedly at hip joints like the Cafe Au Go Go and the Gaslight. One of them was guitarist Larry Coryell, who had come to town from Seattle with a Gibson Super 400 in hand, intent on becoming the next Wes Montgomery. Little did he realize the surprises that awaited him.

As he recalls, "We were in the middle of a world cultural revolution. Everybody was dropping acid and the prevailing attitude was, 'Let's do something different.' We loved Wes but we also loved Bob Dylan. We loved Coltrane but we also dug the Beatles. We loved Miles but we also loved the Rolling Stones."

Coryell split his time between two gigs to satisfy both sides of his musical personality. His jazzier side was reserved for the Chico Hamilton Quartet with bassist Richard Davis and saxophonist Arnie Lawrence (they recorded *The Dealer* on Impulse! in September of '66). The other side of the coin was Free Spirits, a hard-hitting jazz-rock band he formed with bassist Chris Hills, drummer Bob Moses, rhythm guitarist Chip Baker, and tenor saxophonist Jim Pepper (they recorded *Out Of Sight And Sound* on ABC that same year).

Another adventurous jazz-rock band on the Village scene in 1966 was Jeremy & the Satyrs, led by flutist Jeremy Steig and featuring drummer Donald McDonald, pianist Warren Bernhardt, bassist Eddie Gomez, guitarist Adrian Guillery, and vibist Mike Mainieri. The group played regularly at the Cafe Au Go Go and on a few occasions featured Jimi Hendrix sitting in on some late-night jams.

1967 was a watershed year for the marriage of rock and jazz, or what later came to be known as the fusion movement. One significant step was the proclamation printed in *Down Beat* (July '67) that it would henceforth cover rock music—a bold step for a magazine that had been so closely identified with jazz since its inception. But there were other significant events that same year.

Eddie Harris introduced the electric tenor saxophone on *The Tender Storm*. Jimi Hendrix hinted at the coming fusion movement with "Third Stone From The Sun," arguably his "jazziest" tune ever from his audacious debut, *Are You Experienced?* Rahsaan Roland Kirk literally embraced electronics that same year. Earlier that year, Hendrix and Kirk jammed at Ronnie Scott's in London, while back in the States the Byrd's Roger McGuinn had John Coltrane's "sheets of sound" in mind when he recorded his droning guitar parts to "Eight Miles High." And Lou Reed was thinking of Ornette Coleman when he cut his solo to "I Heard Her Call My Name" from the Velvet Underground's *White Light/White Heat*. Clearly, the two worlds were drawing ever closer.

Things started to coalesce on a grander scale in 1968. On a May 17 session for *Miles In The Sky*, Miles Davis stuck one toe into the electronic pool by having Herbie Hancock play electric piano on a rocky vamp called "Stuff." A month later, Miles took the plunge on *Filles De Kilimanjaro*, in which both Herbie and Chick Corea played spikey electric piano.

After another watershed record, *In A Silent Way*, Miles embraced electronics more readily on 1969's *Bitches Brew*, an album that is often cited as the birth of the fuse. But the real landmark that year was Tony Williams Lifetime's *Emergency!*, an album that picked up where Cream's *Wheels Of Fire* left off. Though John McLaughlin was the guitarist on Miles' and Williams'

sessions, his playing on *Bitches Brew* and *In A Silent Way* barely hints at the electric maelstrom he would unleash on *Emergency!*, in which he provides the missing link between Hendrix' electronic tumult and Coltrane's sheets of sound.

The fusion floodgates opened wide in 1970 with the release of Miles' *Jack Johnson*. McLaughlin's raucous powerchord guitar work on "Right Off" (recorded just two months after Hendrix' death) carries all the angry proto-punk appeal of the Who's "I Can See For Miles," and serves as a clarion call for the movement. John's own album that year, *Devotion*, featured Hendrix' Band of Gypsies drummer Buddy Miles and Lifetime's Larry Young. It is a frighteningly intense cauldron of rock backbeats, grooving basslines, bubbling B-3, and tons of distortion-laced licks that foreshadowed the guitarist's volatile work in the Mahavishnu Orchestra.

McLaughlin had also acquitted himself with savage abandon that year on Miles' electrified *Live-Evil*. In his autobiography, Miles commented on this bombastic period: "By now I was using the wah-wah on my trumpet all the time so I could get closer to that voice Jimi had when he used a wah-wah on guitar."

Fusion was a vital form then, sparked by the live wire of electricity and guided by a sense of adventure. Its golden period lasted through 1975 and included such cutting-edge albums as Mahavishnu Orchestra's adrenaline-pumped debut *Inner Mounting Flame* and its followup *Birds Of Fire*; Weather Report's *I Sing The Body Electric* and *Mysterious Traveller*; Billy Cobham's thunderous *Spectrum* with rock-guitar hero Tommy Bolin; Return To Forever's electric debut, *Hymn Of The Seventh Galaxy*, and their forceful followup, *Where Have I Known You Before?*; Larry Coryell's *Introducing The Eleventh House*; Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters* and *Thrust*; John Abercrombie's *Timeless* with Jan Hammer and Jack DeJohn-

ette; and Lifetime's *Believe It* with guitar god Allan Holdsworth.

By the late '70s, that initial burst of raw energy had become codified as "the fusion movement." A market had been identified, and people began jumping on what they perceived as a lucrative bandwagon. In the process, the raw edges got smoothed over, and the music became diluted by technically proficient conservatory clones who began taking their cues more from Steely Dan than Hendrix and Coltrane, selling lots of records in the process. The resulting strain of listener-friendly fare came to be known alternately as "happy jazz," "hot tub jazz," and "fuzak" by skeptics. Suddenly, fusion had become stigmatized in critical circles as "the F-word."

But in the face of this swing toward the lite side, a few upstarts continued to push the fusion envelope. John Scofield released a series of hard-hitting funk-fusion albums for Gramavision, culminating with 1988's aptly named *Loud Jazz*. Ornette Coleman unveiled his electrified Prime Time band in 1980 with the provocative *Of Human Feelings*, an album that melds his harmolodics with pulsating James Brown-styled grooves. Guitarist David Torn drew heavily on

Hendrix psychedelia for his adventurous fretboard flights with the Everyman Band and on his own projects like 1987's *Cloud About Mercury*. The late bassist Jaco Pastorius continued to show the links between Trane and Hendrix in his furious feedback solos with both Weather Report and his own Word of Mouth band.

In the mid-'80s, MIDI ushered in a new era in fusion. Big name artists joined the MIDI revolution with hugely expensive digital music systems like the Fairlight and Synclavier, which offered orchestral possibilities at the flick of a switch.

A fusion pioneer in his own right, Pat Metheny prophetically told *DB* (Jan. '85): "It's a whole new ballgame. Now my guitar can be a harp, it can be vibes, it can be anything. It's unlimited in the sense that it's up to your imagination . . . and we haven't seen anything yet. It's going to get wild."

Today, several bands like the Yellowjackets have struck a nice balance between the electronic and acoustic and have managed to realize commercial success without compromising their artistic integrity.

But there are still a few subversives lurking about, unleashing torrents of raw fusionpower with little or no regard for

radioplay. Guitarist Sonny Sharrock, who was there from the beginning on Miles' landmark *Jack Johnson* session, continues to blend rock bombast and jazz improvisation with a take-no-prisoners attitude (check out his *Ask The Ages*). Other new-generation fusioners like guitarist Mike Stern and saxophonist Kenny Garrett cut their teeth in the electric Miles groups of the 1980s. Guitarist James Blood Ulmer unleashes harmolodic shockwaves with the Music Revelation Ensemble on the aptly named *Electric Jazz*. Drummer Ronald Shannon Jackson is still bashing away with his three-guitar juggernaut, Decoding Society, while John Zorn continues to stir up sonic mayhem with his Spy vs. Spy and Naked City bands, both of which blend the visceral intensity of hardcore punk with the rhythmic and harmonic complexities of jazz. And guitarist Dave Fiuczynski, a graduate of George Russell and Muhal Richard Abrams bands, rips with metalloid fury on his Gramavision debut with organist John Medeski, *Lunar Crush*, which just might be the *Jack Johnson* of the '90s.

This sudden resurgence of subversive attitudes amounts to one big iron fist upside the head of happy jazz . . . and I like it. **DB**

# Giants at play.

**La Voz.**  
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**Everette Harp**  
*La Voz soprano medium hard*  
*La Voz alto medium hard*  
*La Voz tenor medium hard*

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

**Ronnie Laws**  
*La Voz alto hard*  
*La Voz tenor hard*

**Sonny Rollins**  
*La Voz tenor medium soft*

**David Sanborn**  
*La Voz alto medium*

**Stanley Turrentine**  
*La Voz tenor medium hard*

**rico royal**  
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*Rico Royal tenor #2 1/2*  
*Rico Royal alto #2 1/2*

**Scott Page**  
*Rico Royal tenor #3 1/2*

**Sonny Rollins**  
*Rico Royal tenor #2*

**Stanley Turrentine**  
*Rico Royal tenor #3 1/2*

**Frederick L. Hemke**  
**Kenny G**  
*Hemke soprano #2 1/2*  
*Hemke tenor #3*  
*Hemke alto #3*

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

**Jeff Kashiwa**  
*Hemke tenor #2 1/2*

**Stanley Turrentine**  
*Hemke tenor #3 1/2*

**RICO**  
**Ronnie Cuber**  
*Rico baritone #3 1/2*

**John Klemmer**  
*Rico tenor #2 1/2 and #3*  
*Rico soprano #2 1/2*

**Plasticover**  
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**Dave Koz**  
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FEBRUARY 8, 1979

## Weather Report Answers Its Critics

By Larry Birnbaum



Josef Zawinul and Wayne Shorter

**T**his is an all-star band, man, and by its own virtue, not by putting it together. Usually they put all-star bands together—they say okay, get me this guy, that guy. But with us, three out of four regular members had first places in the Readers Poll, also in the Critics Poll, also in the European polls, also in the Japanese polls. And Peter is going to be up there, too.”

Josef Zawinul has never been accused of excessive modesty, but no one can gainsay the phenomenal success Weather Report has enjoyed among critics, musicians, and listeners alike since its inception in 1970. Their latest album, *Mr. Gone*, is currently near the top of the jazz charts after a mixed critical reception ranging from ecstatic raves to dismal pans, including a one-star drubbing in *Down Beat* that caused Zawinul no end of consternation (see p. 94).

“We really care, you know. Hey man, *Down Beat* is my favorite magazine. You know why? Because I grew up on it, it was my connection to America and it brought me into jazz music.”

The unlikely coupling of the brash, fast-talking Austrian keyboardist and the humble, soft-spoken American reedman Wayne Shorter has proved to be a most fruitful and long-lived partnership. The duo became a solid triumvirate in 1976 with the acquisition of electric bassist Jaco Pastorius, the “Florida flash,” whose extraordinary technique and flamboyant showmanship catapulted him swiftly into the ranks of stardom. The latest addition to the group is former Kenton drummer Peter Erskine, who, like Zawinul and Shorter, is also an alumnus of the Maynard Ferguson band.

As of this writing the group is just completing an extended world tour which has taken them to Europe, Japan, and South America before culminating in a sweep of the U.S. In a late-November performance at Chicago's Park West, all delicacy of nuance gave way to a strident, heavily percussive mix amplified to rock-concert intensity.

I spoke to the band between shows as they prepared to head west on the last leg of their tour. Blunt and outspoken as usual, Zawinul

did most of the talking, evincing not a little testiness as he fumed again at the thought of the offending review.

**LARRY BIRNBAUM:** *On the new album I hear big band voicings but on stage it sounds more like a rock band. Do you try to get a different feeling in live performance than in the studio?*

**JOE ZAWINUL:** We don't try nothing, man. We're just human beings and we're just doing what we do, and it's very good. We have the best composing on this record ever, the best composing of anybody, not just of ours. Some of the tunes are incredible.

**LB:** *Hearing the band live last night I was really struck by the heavy rock feel, especially in the bass and drums.*

**JACO PASTORIUS:** Well then you got a total misconception of the music. . . .

**JZ:** I think so.

**JP:** . . . because if there's a heavy feel, it's r&b, not rock. There's a difference between rhythm and blues and rock & roll. I grew up playing nothing but colored music all my life and that's it.

**JZ:** That's the difference, we don't play no white music, because rock 'n' roll is a white music.

**LB:** *What about Chuck Berry?*

**JZ:** That ain't no rock & roll, Chuck Berry, that's r&b.

**JP:** I don't play nothing but r&b. It ain't no rock & roll.

**JZ:** English music is rock & roll.

**JP:** Yeah, if we did an album with “Penny Lane” on it you could say we were playing rock & roll.

**JZ:** But even the themes we're playing are different. Maybe on one tune we play something that might sound like r&b, but all our rhythms are totally different. No r&b group plays rhythms the way we do. It has the power of r&b, but there's a difference, man.

**LB (to Shorter):** *You're playing more tenor now.*

**WAYNE SHORTER:** Yeah, because we're getting a much better mix for it now.

**LB:** *It's a different style than your soprano work. It reminds me more of the way you used to play with Art Blakey.*

**WS:** That's not surprising. It's like two different people—it's a schizoid kind of thing. One thing is that when you hold a soprano you feel more like a trumpet player. With the tenor it's down on your chest somewhere, so it's like changing roles.

**LB (to Zawinul):** *You get a very distinctive sound on the synthesizer. It's often said that everybody sounds alike on electronic keyboards but that's not true in your case.*

**JZ:** I know it ain't true.

**LB:** *But you do program the synthesizers in a particular way to get that sound. I mean even when you only play one note it still sounds like you.*

**JZ:** Well goddamn, it's me playing. What reason would there be to play if you didn't sound like yourself? But I could always hear different sounds than electric piano, so I do set it up in a certain way, but it sounds like me no matter how I set it up.

**LB:** *Weather Report was one of the first fusion bands. . . .*

**JZ:** What does that mean?

**LB:** *Well, you use electronics and. . . .*

**JZ:** So electronics means fusion, eh? I've never been sure what fusion means.

**LB:** *I thought the band had sort of a rock conception when it first came out. It had electronics and a strong beat. Even the name of the group—it was the first jazz group to have a name like a rock band. It appeals to many people who are primarily into rock music rather than jazz. But what I was getting at is that for the most part the fusion school has gone down the drain in the past few years and Weather Report keeps going strong.*

**JZ:** It's because we're saying what we're saying and it goes on strong because it's real and it's genuine and there's nothing false about it. It was always real, good or bad, but it's real, man. The compositions were always great and the playing was always great and that's it.

DB

OCTOBER 16, 1969

# Caught: Tony Williams Lifetime

By Alan Heineman



**K**halid: imploding church. John: banshee in love. Tony: purposeful, angry rattlesnake. Tranquility in the eye of an amorphous hurricane. The city, which forges hard minds; the country, which forges profound souls; the blues, and thus both, and neither, and all: I am you as you are me.

Chikchikchikchikchikchik

Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

AhahahAHahahoowa-ah-ooWA

I am sitting here, in Boston's Jazz Workshop. I am listening to three people play

musical instruments. I am a critic. They make this sound by doing this and that sound by doing that. Listen to hear if one misses a note or a beat. Listen to hear internal logic. Listen to hear influences. Tony [Williams] played with Miles. Khalid [Yasin] has made a number of very interesting, nay promising Blue Note albums. I've never heard of John [McLaughlin]: Well, then; he'd best be good, because I've heard a great many guitarists. I am a music critic. My head has come loose from my shoulders. The table is melting. The church is crystallizing, falling apart, restructuring itself. Stay in one avatar, damn you. I am a rat. I will hide in the church. Rattlesnakes eat rats and that rattlesnake is maddened.

ChikchikchikchikbaDAdadaDAadachik-chikbaWHAY

Organchordsorganchordsorrrrganorrrr-ganorrrrgagagaga

Eee. Chingachingachingachinga. Eee-doodlyoodlyoodlyeeyeeeee

How can music be light and dark simultaneously? Listen to hear. A woman is pouring medicine down my throat. I don't want the medicine. It tastes wonderful. Why don't I want it? I do. I will either have orgasm or suffocate. Breasts. I am naked in a meadow. Tall flowers. With thorns. Hurts so good. Breasts.

Chikchikchikchikchik

Let me put it rationally, if I can: this is the most exciting group, new or established, that I've heard in a long time. A long time. The music is a little of everything—rock, chordally based jazz, free jazz, and some other stuff.

Some small criticisms might be made: Yaseen (and Williams, too, but to a far lesser degree) relies for climaxes of intensity on a relatively few devices. And McLaughlin's guitar is an inferior instrument; the three lower strings get horribly muddy response. If these faults were remedied, the group would be perfect and the world would end. Go see them. Listen to hear. **DB**

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MARCH 1983

## David Sanborn: The Voice Of Emotion

By Robin Tolleson

**H**e goes for the heart—that's for sure. Close your eyes and imagine a tear dripping from the bell of the horn. Or envision the keys blasting off the alto, straining under the torrential sound. Judging from his acceleration in today's musical marketplace, David Sanborn seems to be hitting his mark. A Sanborn contribution to an album may only be three minutes long, but always conjures up a range of feelings, and always leaves a mark.

You've heard the sound. Maybe with James Taylor or David Bowie on your car radio. Maybe watching *Saturday Night Live*, where he belted the show's theme out for months, got into more than a few inspired jams, and was featured playing his own material. Or maybe you've been listening to Gil Evans, Stevie Wonder, or Steely Dan. Maybe the guitar freaks have heard him on record with Tommy Bolin and John McLaughlin. It is definitely a measure of the man to see who calls him up.

Sanborn balances a studio career and performing. His seventh solo album, *As We Speak*, hit and held at No. 1 on jazz charts, and Sanborn toured last summer, opening shows for Al Jarreau. Sanborn's band featured bassist Marcus Miller, guitarist Hiram Bullock, drummer Buddy Williams, and Sugar Bear (from the Sam & Dave group) on keyboards.

**ROBIN TOLLESON:** *Your albums have been charting very well.*

**DAVID SANBORN:** Yeah, the one that's out now was number 1 on the jazz charts, which is interesting. I think the categories in music are less restrictive; they're less clearly defined than they were before, primarily because people are listening to more different kinds of music—not only the listeners, but the musicians as well. And so you get a lot of cross-influences.

**RT:** *It might surprise some people who think of you as a jazz player to see your albums on the rhythm & blues charts as well. But a lot of your background is in r&b, isn't it?*

**DS:** Well, my early playing experience was in r&b. I played with r&b bands in St. Louis . . . Albert King, and Little Milton, and I



PAUL NATKIN

think in terms of my musical background, that's what idiomatic form it is . . . r&b. I tended to listen to jazz later on, I think as any saxophone player would do. I think the pull toward wanting to stretch the limits of your playing automatically leads you into jazz and other kinds of more challenging forms of improvisation; r&b tends to be more an emotional kind of music, perhaps less sophisticated in certain respects, although not any less valid, just that the harmonic and rhythmic sophistication is less than jazz allows.

**RT:** *The emotion is what sticks out in your solos.*

**DS:** I take that as a compliment. I think of myself as an emotional player, too. Especially in a lot of the contexts that I've been in. You know, the pop context. I've primarily been called in as a soloist, and I think as soloist you respond to whatever your musical surroundings are. I'm a fairly emotional player, so one thing leads to another.

**RT:** *You use dynamics a lot when you're soloing.*

**DS:** Yeah, well I think a lot of people remember me as playing a lot louder and harder-edged than I really play. I don't play that loud, necessarily. I try to use dynamics because that is another element of music and improvising, and melodic creativity. And I'm very conscious of dynamics because I think you shape a line using dynamics—in terms of attack and crescendo, decrescendo, and phrasing, legato, and staccato. I got a lot of my phrasing mannerisms, I think, from Stevie Wonder. When I was working with Stevie from '70 to '72, I picked up a lot of his little turns, and mordents, and appoggiaturas, and all that—things that he did on harmonica. And I think probably Stevie more than anybody else influenced some of the little grace notes—the mannerisms of my playing that I hear a lot of other people imitating when they're trying to sound like me.

**RT:** *I wanted to ask you if you feel much imitated.*

**DS:** I do feel imitated, and I'm flattered that people would imitate me. Honestly, outside of some of the more obvious mannerisms of my playing, I don't understand why anybody would want to imitate me. In certain ways I'm not a very innovative player. Maybe my sound and the way I phrase is different or unique—individual—but it's kind of funny in a way. I'm flattered, but it makes me laugh when I hear somebody doing something that's obviously me.

**RT:** *You've done quite a bit of playing with the Brecker Brothers.*

**DS:** I always enjoy playing with them. It's really fun to play in ensembles and stuff, because we respond to each other well. Just the kind of dexterity that they have, especially Michael Brecker, who's one of the most amazing saxophone players I know, on every level, musical or technical. Technically he's just overwhelming, and it was great for me to be around him. In a certain way he had things that I didn't have, and I had things that he didn't have, because the way we came up was different. He came from a musical family, obviously, and I think he was more schooled, in a sense—at home learning from the piano as a basic frame of reference—whereas I didn't really learn to read until I was in college.

**RT:** *You have built up a fine supporting cast of players for your albums over the years. Are you going to continue with the same sort of sound on your next album?*

**DS:** I think so. I'm going to try to distill it. Maybe make it a little more direct. I've tended to write a lot of Latin-oriented tunes. I think I have a tendency to gravitate towards that kind of music, I don't know why. But I'm going to try to stretch my limits a little bit. I'm going to broaden my horizons as it were, and try to write some different kinds of tunes. I've got about 15 or 20 tunes now that I'm kind of combing through, and seeing what I can get out of them, seeing where they'll lead me.

**RT:** *Has your career gone the way you designed or imagined it?*

**DS:** I certainly didn't have any idea that my career would take the form that it's taken. I don't know exactly what that is, how to describe it. I feel like I'm surviving, not only in the business, but in the general scheme of things. And I'm pretty pleased with the way things have been going recently. But I don't feel like I really chose to be a musician. I feel like it just happened, and that it almost chose me. It was part destiny, part free choice. Music became what I had to do. It was never something I thought about, nor did I have any goals or aspirations in that area. It was just my means of expression, my way of expressing how I felt about the world. It just became my voice. **DB**

MARCH 28, 1974

## Chick Corea: Return To Forever

By John Toner



HENRY J. KAHANER

**M**ost of you know Chick Corea. But in the midst of his winning three awards in our 1973 Readers Poll, things have changed in the last nine months, although the name hasn't, and Return To Forever has entered the realm of the high-energy bands melding today's idioms into one music. In the accompanying interview by John Toner, Chick starts out by discussing the sound of that music—a sound that has become immediately identifiable, through all the various cloaks it has assumed, as that of Chick Corea.

**CHICK COREA:** I don't have a really cute or workable term to communicate what my sound is. What I'll call it depends on who

I'm talking to, and what effect I want to create for the person. If I were to communicate a label to an audience in general, I'd call our music true contemporary music, using "contemporary" to mean "happening now."

**JOHN TONER:** *You're playing a lot to rock fans these days. Are you communicating to that audience?*

**CC:** Yes, we definitely are communicating to them. A project of ours is familiarizing people with what we do. If we play as the opening act to a well-known rock group, 80 percent of the audience doesn't know us from Adam and doesn't know anything about John Coltrane, Miles, and jazz. All they are

familiar with is the sound of our instruments, the electric instruments; and then, we have a beat.

So what people get first, I feel, is a little bit of familiarity with sound. And then, if they take enough time to notice us—I'm talking about the situation in a big rock concert—if they actually look up on stage and see us, and see that we're beings and that we're there, then they recognize that we're doing something. Then they start to like it.

**JT:** *What about music in the future? Do you think music will become more acoustic or electric?*

**CC:** It doesn't really matter whether it's acoustic or electric—it's what's done with it. One of the manifestations of the Western world is this incredible advance of technology. You've got physical sciences and technology very advanced, and you've got the humanities and religions advanced to minus two. So what you get is a hydrogen bomb, a very advanced technological product, with a really insane use. Music manifests that too. The thing to caution against would be losing the purpose of it, which is to keep us in touch as people, and to keep passing beauty around. **DB**

MAY 1991

## John McLaughlin: A Lifetime Of Devotion

By John Ephland



HYOU VIELZ

**J**imi Hendrix once said, "Music is like the waves of the ocean. You can just cut out the perfect wave and take it home with you. It's constantly moving all the time." Jimi serves as a source of iron for many, including British guitarist/composer/bandleader John McLaughlin. Perhaps it has something to do with Hendrix' approach to music.

For the 49-year-old McLaughlin, that's exactly how he's approached his professional

career. But, with two very important—and diverse—releases in 1990, "Johnny McLaughlin, electric guitarist" appears to be headed for extinction. We may be talking about the end of an era in guitar history. One of music's greatest guitarists appears to have arrived at a distillation point.

You see, the man looks and sounds *extremely* satisfied with his new acoustic arsenal. Advances in guitar technology appear to have given McLaughlin the best of both

worlds: Centered around MIDI converters and synthesizers, the electric guitar's power, dynamic range, and array of options are now wedded to his acoustic guitar, an instrument loved for its dexterity and feel, tonalities and warmth.

Given such a wedding, the solid-body electric takes on the appearance of a former lover, attractive only to a point. "I haven't played it in five years," McLaughlin explained. "I don't even know if I'll play it again. . . . But if I get the urge, I'll pick it up and play it."

"The urge." That's it in a nutshell. "If I had the appetite, I would have played it again."

In case anyone's wondering, the two key 1990 albums referred to earlier are *The Mediterranean*, with the London Symphony Orchestra and duets with longtime associate/keyboardist Katia Labeque; and *Live At The Royal Festival Hall*, with Indian percussionist Trilok Gurtu and electric bassist Kai Eckardt-Karpeh. Of the two, it's the Festival Hall recording with the John McLaughlin Trio that begs comparison with Shakti, a stunning, "world music" band from the mid-'70s that combined John and his acoustic, 13-string guitar with Indian musicians playing tabla, mridangam, ghatam (all percussion



instruments), and violin. Both bands are vivid examples of East-West syntheses, with the Trio suggesting elements of McLaughlin's electric, and ferocious, Mahavishnu days.

As with Shakti and its dazzling tablaist Zakir Hussain, the John McLaughlin Trio is surrounded and driven by rhythms. In this case, the "chair," since 1988, has been held by Gurtu, an all-purpose drummer who's carved out a solo career alongside gigs with McLaughlin and the pioneering, world-music band Oregon. To see and hear him perform is like taking in a one-man, world-of-percussion menagerie.

So, for McLaughlin's purposes, there is now the virtual meeting of East and West in a percussionist/drummer. There's also the meeting of the past with the present: Billy Cobham playing "hand in hand" with Zakir Hussain and a coterie of bangers, tinklers, and special-effects specialists—so to speak.

**T**he John McLaughlin Trio appears to revolve around a strong rhythmic foundation. Harmony and melody account for a great deal, but isn't Gurtu's presence determinative?

"With one extremely important exception. In fact, I can't agree with you, from my point of view, because the harmonic movement that goes on in this show is quite complex in some pieces. It may not be evident because there's no keyboard playing behind me. You don't hear it, but the construction is there nevertheless; and some of it is quite complex, which never existed in Shakti.

"This became a problem in Shakti, because I really wanted to contribute more Western music to Shakti. Shakti was a wonderful group, but as long as I kept going in the Indian tradition, Northern or Southern, you revolve around a tonality and you can change a raga or change a scale, but harmonic movement is definitely a no-no. I would do it, in a kind of spiral movement around the central tonality, and I would expand on it that way. And I would tell [violinist L.] Shankar, 'You can put this scale over this, even though it sounds funny.' Indians know a lot about melody; but harmonically, this is really the Western contribution to music. But, you know, with people who are already accomplished musicians, it's really tough to get them to change the way they think."

As with any great jazz musician, McLaughlin's rich musical past continues to shine through to the present. From that fertile late '60s/early '70s period of jazz-meets-rock, perhaps McLaughlin's most stirring work was with Tony Williams, and Miles, particularly on *Bitches Brew* and *A Tribute To Jack Johnson*. The music that came from these collaborations gets back to

that Hendrixian maxim about music "moving all the time." "It's true I recorded some records with Miles during this period. The work I did with Tony Williams and Larry Young, those two years we spent together ['69-'70] were very important. Tony is a kind of drummer, a kind of musician that forces you to adopt a different approach, which is necessarily good. I'm a great believer in that, and I even do that to my musicians.

"We are all creatures of habit, in a way; some habits are good and some not so good. So, we replace the not-so-good with the good. But then the good habits, they don't stay good; unless you rework them, they'll fail you. You have to constantly rework habits, ways of thinking, in approaches to music, in approaches to playing. And so, I'm a great believer in smashing those things and being obliged to look for new ways." **DB**



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— **GEORGE BENSON**

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# Hitting The Issues

By Ed Enright

**S**ome of the most memorable articles in **Down Beat's** archives focus on musical politics and industry trends. Through its news pages, guest editorials, even roundtable discussions, **DB** has dealt with hundreds of important issues facing musicians over the last six decades. By examining the issues, **DB** has provided its readers with insights they don't get from the average artist profile or record review.

Many of the topics addressed in **DB** remain as pertinent today as they were 30, 40, 50, or 60 years ago: the role of women in jazz, racism, and music education. Other topics, like the avant garde movement, are obviously more dated but provide an interesting perspective on the past.

**DB's** issue-related articles have made for some lively reading, as you might expect. The moods of the following pieces range from serious to cool to furious. We hope they get the wheels spinning in your brain. **DB**



MAURICE SEYMOUR



OCTOBER 1937

## Predicted Race Riot Fades As Dallas Applauds Quartet!

By John Hammond

**A** minor revolution took place in deepest and darkest Dixie early in September when Benny Goodman's band invaded the South for the first time. Benny's boys were engaged for the purpose of pulling the Dallas Exposition out of the red, but the world at large was scared that if Benny attempted to foist Lionel Hampton and Teddy Wilson upon a typically Southern crowd, he would not only be a flop but would possibly goad the population to acts of violence.

On all sides Benny was advised to leave the two colored boys behind. White folks told him Southerners detested Negroes even as entertainers, and that they positively would not stand for Negroes being presented before their eyes on terms of complete equality with white performers. Even the colored press was skeptical; Negro columnist Porter Roberts ventured to predict that Goodman would never dare bring them along, and it is a fact that Lionel and Teddy went to Texas with considerable misgivings.

All along I had the suspicion that if the trio and quartet made excellent music the crowd would swallow its prejudices and acclaim the artists. But just the same, I made it my business to be in Dallas on the day of the opening just to see what would happen.

I would like to explain that the Casino puts on two shows a night, one at 8:15 and the other at 10:30. The spectator must pay a separate admission and stiff minimum charge for each performance, with the result that the room is completely cleared between each show.

The opening night Benny was a harried individual and neglected to find enough time to set up Lionel's vibes on the stand. The show ran a little longer than usual, and as a result Benny was forced to omit the trio and the quartet in the early part of the evening. When the crowd, many of whom had come hundreds of miles for the occasion, heard that they would not be able to hear Teddy and Lionel, they were loud in their fury, and several of them even went so far as to demand a refund. After that, Benny knew that a Dallas audience was no different from any other in the country. Needless to say, when the quartet was presented at the later show it was an enormous success, and there was not even the slightest hint of a protest during the entire 11-day stay from anyone in the audiences.

There is one interesting feature about this whole affair. Most of the middle- and upper-class Southerners I spoke to about the use of Negroes with white musicians assured me there would be no objection to the mixture as long as the music they produced was superlative. **DB**

Above: clarinetist/bandleader Benny Goodman, pianist Teddy Wilson, and vibist Lionel Hampton

JANUARY 9, 1958

## Women In Jazz: Do They Belong?

By Barry Ulanov



Mary Lou Williams

Is there a place in jazz for women as instrumentalists? Not simply for pianists who lead trios two-thirds of which are male. And not simply for women regarded as oddities, who happen by some freak chance to play passable trumpet or trombone and still look like women with all the requisites of that kind of pulchritude we call by the name of sex appeal.

What I am asking is a much more simple and direct question.

Is there a place for women who play jazz—on the horns, on the rhythm instruments, on any kind of instrument—strictly on the basis of merit?

These musings on this particular question are occasioned by two pleasant occurrences of recent date. One is the spectacular comeback of Mary Lou Williams, long and earnestly anticipated by some of us and for which we are now devoutly thankful.

The other is a series of listening sessions, listening to a tape by a quartet presided over by the pianist Phyllis Pinkerton, a sometime associate of Lennie Tristano.

Mary Lou has for years been a champion of women's rights in jazz. She hasn't picketed clubs or record companies for being unfair to her sex. She hasn't carried banners in parades or sent indignant letters to the papers, jazz or any other kind, protesting the treatment accorded jazzwomen.

But she has, several times, recorded with girls of notable jazz skill, with the bass player June Rotenberg, with drummers Bridget O'Flynn and Rose Gottesman, with guitarist Mary Osborne and vibist Margie Hyams. She has played in clubs with all-girl outfits; not, it must be said, with the success her other groups have had, but with sufficient musical accomplishment to remove from the whole undertaking any suggestion of the freakish or capricious.

Phyllis has for some years now been trying to gain a fair hearing for herself and her associates, both male and female. She doesn't pretend to have this year's sensa-

tion in jazz groups or next year's. She doesn't. But hers is a thoroughly listenable, thoroughly modern outfit, pleasing over a variety of lines and tempos, moods and textures.

That women can be suffered to play any instrument in highly demanding, unmistakably discriminating male company has been proved many times now. In symphony orchestras and chamber groups of all kinds and classes all across the Western world, women now can be heard sawing away, wheezing, pumping, blowing, plucking, and scraping with the best of their male associates. However strange it may look to see a girl lift a bassoon to her lips or get squarely behind an outsize bass, however startling it may be to watch a woman lock herself firmly inside a french horn or tuba, these feats have been accomplished and accomplished with distinction by women many times now. They are not to be restricted to the keyboard instruments or the larynx.

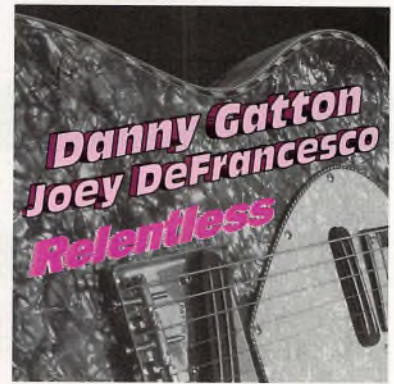
How strange it is, really, that jazz should be so long in accepting women as instrumentalists and equally curious that women should have taken so long to demand a sizeable place for themselves in jazz. It may be that jazz musicians are more conservative than they—or we—usually think.

It may be that having so many other obstacles to overcome they don't want to add to their lives the difficulties with the public and the inner disturbances that surely must follow their acceptance of women in quantity as instrumentalists to play beside them.

It may be that they don't want any more competition: jobs are still scarce enough.

It may even be that there just aren't that many talented jazzwomen, girls who can negotiate the horns in this tradition, in this idiom, as distinguished from the purely or impurely classical.

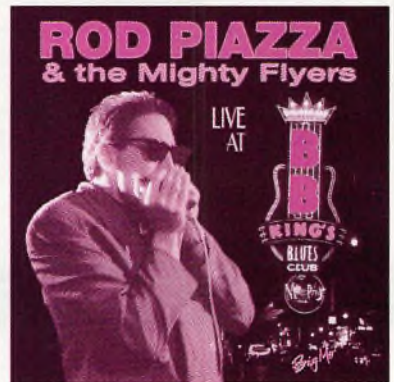
Whatever the reason or reasons, as long as any group of jazz quality remains unheard because of the sex of its members, it is a major loss to the jazz world and to the dignity of those who make it up. **DB**



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SEPTEMBER 28, 1961

## Jazz Goes To Grade School

By Marian McPartland



POPSIE

these bright, wonderful little minds. It made me realize that, even at this tender age, children can be led much further musically than many adults realize.

I am sure that all over the country, in the elementary schools and in the high schools, there is a great deal of latent talent waiting to be nurtured. Most of the music teachers I have met in various parts of the country are warm, interested, and receptive to jazz, and many of them, like William Fields in Fort Lauderdale, include jazz instruction as part of their pupils' musical education. To me, this is significant.

The children are receptive. The music is available for them. Now let the educators, music teachers, and parents of children start thinking of the possibility of presenting jazz groups and jazz history as a part of the regular school curriculum. Educating the children through radio and TV is a lost cause; it has done perhaps irreparable harm to their sense of taste and discrimination in music. To give them a jazz education might serve to inoculate them against the rock & roll germ.

It is evident that five-year-olds are not too young to be educated in jazz. Why should they wait until they are in college before they get to hear Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Duke Ellington, Oscar Peterson, and other jazz greats? Why not now? (I would love to see Dizzy Gillespie handle these kids.)

Why cannot their education in jazz start right along with the three R's, adding a fourth—rhythm? **DB**

It was Will Moyle who first gave me the idea. Moyle, a disc jockey on station WVET in Rochester, N.Y., came to see me when I was playing at a club there in 1956. He asked me if my bassist and drummer (Bill Britto and Joe Morello, at the time) and I would play an afternoon concert for a local high school.

"This is one of my special projects," he said. "The kids would love to hear the group—will you do it?" I had never played for an audience this young before, and I was a little dubious about the reaction we'd get.

"Are you sure they will sit still for jazz?" I asked.

"Certainly they will," he said. "You'll see." So I agreed to go, feeling that this might be a challenge and fun, though in my heart I was a little doubtful that the children, many of whom would probably already be slaves to rock & roll, would listen to and enjoy our music.

Moyle introduced us, and we played as we would at a regular jazz concert or night-club

date. Every tune was received with tumultuous applause, and, needless to say, a long drum solo brought the house down.

I think some of the teachers present doubted our ability to hold the attention of the youngsters—when we were ready to play, we noticed that some of the teachers ranged around the walls of the room, almost as if expecting to have to quell a riot. But they relaxed when they saw that the children were entranced.

The kids smiled, they laughed, they loved everything, especially the bass and drum solos. I had no difficulty getting them to clap hands on 2 and 4 (and maintain it) when we played "St. Louis Blues." Our program also included "Lullaby Of Birdland"; "Cherokee"; "Greensleeves"; an extended version of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"; a slow blues, which we later doubled in tempo; and, in answer to a request, "When The Saints Go Marching In."

They all seemed eager to participate, and it was a joy to see how easy it is to stimulate

MAY 1, 1942

## 'Most Bands Today Play Too Well' —Says Scott



**M**ost bands today play too well," said Raymond Scott, discussing his new band in an exclusive interview with **Down Beat**.

"By that, I mean that they are so concerned with precision phrasing and arranging tricks that their music sounds lifeless.

"My old band was certainly one of the

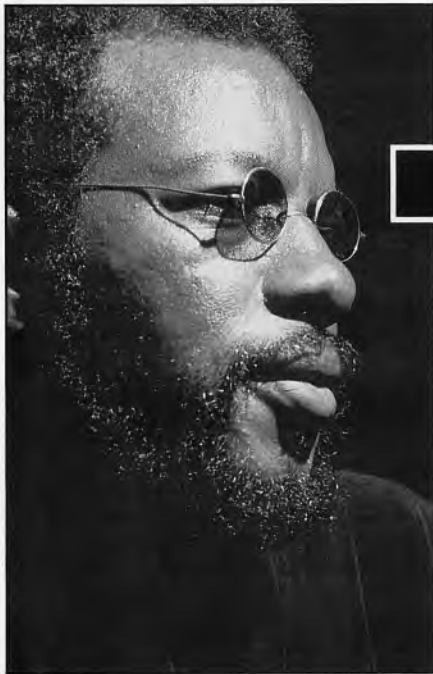
prime offenders. We had top men who were paid a lot of money to play some very tricky arrangements. Used to the precision of my quintet, I naturally tried to get the same thing out of the band. By the time we'd get the scores down cold, the band would sound the same way.

"I'm trying for more of a balance with this

new band. My tenor man, Stanley Webb, and Pete Pumiglio on clarinet are brilliant technicians—but on the other hand, when somebody in the band makes a mistake, we don't get excited the way we used to.

"Whether we're doing ballads, swing, or our program numbers, the band and I are far more interested in getting music that collectively sounds fresh and original than we are in perfect tone or execution.

"After a couple of years experience as a dance leader I know that a really successful band is built on getting men that fit personally and musically, rather than on any virtuoso-brilliance—and that a leader should spend most of his time trying to integrate men and music, since a group of good musicians who get along together can play much better music than a bunch of bad-acting solo boys." **DB**



JUNE 1, 1967

## To Whom It May Concern

By Ornette Coleman

and nonperformers who might not like music and whose only connection with it is to make money and gain social prestige from it?

Example: I was once told by a very social record producer that a musician shouldn't expect to make a living from records. Yet as he told me this, *he* was making a good living from records that musicians had made for him.

I don't want to bring hate into the reader's mind or make musicians hate the business. I do wish, though, to speak of my own experience, since critics, record companies, booking agents, magazines, and the press in general have caused me to investigate my own goals as a human, because my life is in a part of living that allows all to attack or praise that which has as its title the word "art" and as its heart, love.

Music is classless, but races, knowledge, and life-condition are not. I do not believe in any form of government under which a person cannot be, or have the right to be, an in-

dividual. We all are enjoying the life we have been given—but not without a fight to live a life with which we are constantly trying to improve the thing we find that gives us pleasure. Whatever it is that makes some of us smarter or more fortunate than our fellow human brothers, I don't believe God wants one human to destroy his brother because that brother is less fortunate.

This is why I am writing this to my musical brothers and audience, so we will learn the meaning of living with all without trying to get away from those who feel only socially connected to us because they can use us.

I have always searched in myself before accusing another for something that I suffered from, before I acted to cure the cause. One who is suffering from an imperfection of any music expression has only his own conviction to accuse. But when that expression has had an outsider decide its value, and the outsider uses that musical expression to condemn a social thought, the result is only hate, cheating, and loss of music value.

So why don't we Americans, who have a duty to our neighbor and our mother country, get off this war-jazz, race-jazz, poverty-jazz, and b.s. and let the country truly become what it is known as (GOD country)—unless we fear God has left and we must make everyone pay for His leaving? I am sure if we prayed, He'd at least give the place back to the Indians because it isn't going to mean anything to us anymore if we find that we are hating each other.

Maybe God will let us all go back home.

DB

Here are a few of today's questions and problems with which my brothers and I are faced.

What should be the goal of a musician who must suffer the results of the music-business attitude that musicians should be starving artists who must never feel that the music business is merely another market in which the goals are only social for those whom the business approves?

What about the value of that musician's work to the less social, who have no way of knowing what the musician's value is to other musicians or to an audience—on all levels of music outlets and intakes?

How does one play or write music today, since there is a vast number of nonwriters

APRIL 12, 1962

## John Coltrane And Eric Dolphy Answer The Jazz Critics

By Don DeMicheal

John Coltrane has been the center of critical controversy ever since he unfurled his sheets of sound in his days with Miles Davis.

Criticism of Coltrane is almost always tied



Eric Dolphy

in with Coltrane's cohort Eric Dolphy, a member of the group of musicians who play what has been dubbed the "new thing."

Last summer Dolphy joined Coltrane's group for a tour. It was on this tour that

Coltrane and Dolphy came under the withering fire of **Down Beat** associate editor John Tynan, the first critic to take a strong—and public—stand against what they were playing.

In the Nov. 23, 1961, issue, Tynan wrote, "At Hollywood's Renaissance club recently, I listened to a horrifying demonstration of what appears to be a growing anti-jazz trend exemplified by these foremost proponents of what is termed *avant garde* music."

"I heard a good rhythm section . . . go to waste behind the nihilistic exercises of the two horns. . . . Coltrane and Dolphy seem intent on deliberately destroying [swing]. . . . They seem bent on pursuing an anarchistic course in their music that can be termed anti-jazz."

The anti-jazz term was picked up by Leonard Feather and used as a basis for critical essays of Coltrane, Dolphy, Ornette Coleman, and the "new thing" in general.



John Coltrane

Recently, Coltrane and Dolphy agreed to sit down and discuss their music and the criticism leveled at it.

The question in many critics' minds, though they don't often verbalize it, is: What are John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy trying to do. Or: What *are* they doing?

Following the question, a 30-second silence was unbroken except by Dolphy's, "That's a good question." Dolphy was first to try to voice his aims in music:

"What I'm trying to do I find enjoyable. Inspiring—what it makes me do. It helps me play, this feel. It's like you have no idea what you're going to do next. You have an idea, but there's always that spontaneous thing that happens. This feeling, to me, leads the whole group. When John plays, it might lead into something you had no idea could be done. Or McCoy [Tyner, the group's pianist] does something. Or the way Elvin [Jones, the drummer] or Jimmy [Garrison, the bassist] play; they solo, they do something. Or when the rhythm section is sitting on something a different way. I feel that is what it does for me."

Coltrane, who had sat in frowned contemplation while Dolphy elaborated, dug into the past for his answer:

"Eric and I have been talking music for quite a few years, since about 1954. We've been close for quite a while. We watched music. We always talked about it, discussed what was being done down through the years, because we love music. What we're doing now was started a few years ago.

"A few months ago Eric was in New York, where the group was working, and he felt like playing, wanted to come down and sit in. So I told him to come on down and play, and he did—and turned us all around. I'd felt at ease with just a quartet till then, but he came in, and it was like having another member of the family. He'd found another way to express the same thing we had found one way

to do.

"I would like for him to feel at home in the group and find a place to develop what he wants to do as an individualist and as a soloist—just as I hope everybody in the band will. And while we are doing this, I would also like the listener to be able to receive some of these good things—some of this beauty."

Coltrane paused, deep in thought. No one said anything. Finally he went on:

"It's more than beauty that I feel in music—that I think musicians feel in music.

What we know we feel we'd like to convey to the listener. We hope that this can be shared by all. I think, basically, that's about what it is we're trying to do.

"But, overall, I think the main thing a musician would like to do is to give a picture to the listener of the many wonderful things he knows of and senses in the universe. That's what music is to me—it's just another way of saying this is a big, beautiful universe we live in, that's been given to us, and here's an example of just how magnificent and encompassing it is." **DB**

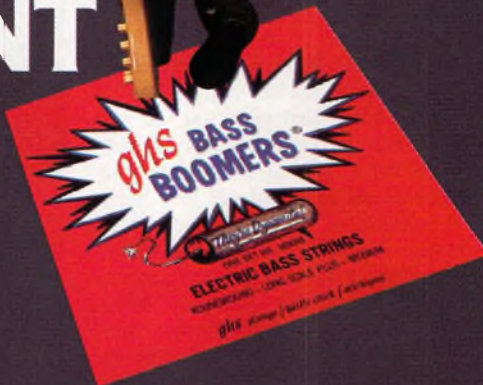
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# Old Wine In New Suits

By Larry Birnbaum



Wynton Marsalis

MITCHELL SEIDEL

the genre's surviving originators and the eventual acknowledgement of journeymen in their 30s and 40s who had embraced neo-bop before Wynton made it chic.

The Young Lions themselves did not escape criticism. For all their technical prowess, their playing was often emotionally flat, as if to validate the old saw, "If you don't live it, it won't come out of your horn." Their music tended to sound like a pastiche of older players' styles, carefully copied from records and books, rather than an expression of personal feeling. Though few were as outspokenly conservative as Wynton Marsalis, almost none dared to venture beyond the modalism of the early '60s.

To their defenders, however, the Young Lions were not reactionaries but radicals. Not only were they winning a new audience to jazz, they were reclaiming the music's legacy of blues and swing and purging it of commercialism and arty pretention.

Today's Young Lions are still in the process of finding their own voices; some are already pushing beyond bebop or dabbling in hip-hop fusion. Certainly, if jazz is to survive as something more than museum music, it must evolve, and those who evolve along with it will be ranked as creative artists. Those who don't will most likely wind up as footnotes to history. **DB**

In 1982, Wynton Marsalis recorded an album called *The Young Lions*, which resulted in his first **Down Beat** cover less than one year later. The brash New Orleans trumpeter had made a sensational debut at age 18 with Art Blakey's Messengers and went on to make history after Dr. George Butler signed him to Columbia Records. "My objective was to try and create a kind of neo-bebop," says Butler, "and I began to realize that young jazz musicians would probably be more appealing to a young market. So as a result of signing Wynton, I signed his brother Branford and Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison, and the list goes on and on. I felt that these young artists would at least provoke the curiosity of young people about a music that was supposedly exotic to them."

Marsalis felt that jazz had taken a wrong turn and needed to return to a purer, more authentic era. Dismissing free jazz and fusion, he championed the hard bop of the '50s and '60s, as eloquently in speech as on his horn. Charismatic and virtuosic, he took his message to the schools, presenting himself as a role model to younger musicians raised on funk and rock.

The students were listening, and so were the record companies. A whole new generation of accomplished boppers emerged as if from nowhere, many still in their teens and most inspired, encouraged, or sponsored by Marsalis. Sensing commercial potential, major labels began signing skillful but unseasoned youngsters who might otherwise have spent years polishing their craft as sidemen. Soon the hard-bop revival was in full swing, prompting the reemergence of

JUNE 1993

## Believe The Hype

By Zan Stewart



KEVIN ELLSWORTH

be in that position."

He achieved that goal. Valedictorian of his graduating class at Berkeley High School in 1986, he attended Harvard on a full scholarship, majoring in social studies and graduating *summa cum laude* in June '91, with a 3.87 g.p.a. He planned to attend law school at Yale. (He was also accepted at Harvard and Stanford.) But instead of beginning his studies immediately, he took a year's deferment and went to New York. At this point, he has no second thoughts about choosing the jazz life over the paper chase at Yale. "The whole thing about jazz and music that makes it great is it transcends language, it transcends the material world. It is something spiritual. It's a wonderful way to express yourself, to tell a story."

After Harvard, Redman lived in Brooklyn with saxophonist Mark Turner, a friend from Boston. Other musicians resided in the house, and Redman jammed continually, though he avoided practice routines, and developed a personal approach without any formal training. "I just play through tunes, improvise," says Redman, who now has his own home in that eastern-most borough of New York City.

You're going to hear a lot from tenor saxophonist Joshua Redman.

In his scant two years on the jazz front, the 24-year-old has already perked up some big ears. He won the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition in 1991. Appearances with father/saxophonist Dewey Redman, drummers Elvin Jones and Jack DeJohnette, bassist Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra, and his own ensembles have increased his visibility. Redman's impressive, self-titled debut album on Warner Bros. will no doubt result in more notice.

Joshua Redman, a native of Berkeley, California, almost didn't become a jazz musician. Though he heard the music early in life

from the recordings of John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, and Dewey Redman that his mother played, and eventually chose jazz as a career, academic excellence was his primary goal. "I wanted to make sure that even if I ended up in music, I would never be forced to do something that runs counter to my artistic instincts in order to put food on the table," Redman says. "Art is the extension of the soul, and the hardest thing for anybody to compromise is their soul. I never wanted to

The first solid payoff from Redman's personal approach came at the Monk competition. There, in the finals, he played Jerry Valentine's "Second Balcony Jump," Monk's "Evidence," and Mal Waldron's ballad, "Soul Eyes." The judges—Benny Carter, Branford Marsalis, Jimmy Heath, Frank Wess, and Jackie McLean—selected Redman over such young yet seasoned performers as Tim Warfield and Chris Potter.

Winning led to a barrage of interest in Redman, as well as a check for \$10,000 from the Ford Motor Co. He was seen on CNN and was written up in the *Los Angeles Times* and other publications.

After the first wave of excitement was over, Redman says things became more "realistic." "Just winning has nothing to do with music," he says. "I think now when I get calls to do stuff, it's because people have heard me play, and like it."

Matt Pierson, head of jazz A&R for Warner Bros., liked Redman *before* the Monk event. At the competition, he was *knocked out*. "When Joshua got up, I just couldn't believe it," says Pierson, who produced *Joshua Redman*. "Like, immediately I felt, 'This is the guy!'"

Pierson signed Redman to Warners, giving the saxophonist a deal that calls for budgets of "substantially less than \$100,000 per album." "The last thing a new artist needs is pressure to recoup a large budget, because, after all, the record company is just loaning the artist money against future royalties," explains Pierson, referring to the signing figure.

The Pierson/Redman teaming has proven fortuitous, for *Joshua Redman* is an auspicious album. Performing on most tracks with his bravura working band—pianist Kevin Hays, bassist Christian McBride, and drummer Greg Hutchinson—Redman offers a series of invigorating, post-bop, modern-mainstream pieces.

Listening to the album, you're grabbed by Redman's sound. It's rich, weighty, and deep. And this fellow makes the music move, creating heat and interest, be it on a sultry blues or a come-hither ballad.

Joshua Redman runs counter to so many stereotypes. He's self-taught, yet plays magnificently. He was reared by a single mother who fought poverty-level conditions, he saw his father infrequently—yet somehow none of this mattered. He's become an accomplished young man who's clearly happy and well-adjusted.

"People hear my situation and wonder," he says. "I didn't have a father, we didn't have money; but that's all relative. I didn't have a lot of material goods, but I slept, I ate, I played, I was a kid. My mother loved me a lot. There are no bad feelings between myself and my father. I feel lucky, blessed. Life is good." **DB**

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JUNE 1992

## Young Lions— Have They Delivered?

By Larry Birnbaum

**I**'m thankful to Lester Bowie," says Roy Hargrove. "He was listening to me play at the Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy, and after I finished he said, 'Damn, Roy, you sound good! But you've got to pick some different notes. Play some wrong notes. You don't have to play inside all the time.' So I took his advice, and it really opened me up to a whole new realm of things that were possible within the music."

Wrong notes? Not inside? Could this really be Roy Hargrove, the hard-bop *wunderkind* Wynton Marsalis discovered at Dallas' Booker T. Washington High School, the teenage trumpeter who sounded like Clifford and Freddie rolled into one, the neo-trad flame-keeper who attended Berklee on scholarships won through Musicfest U.S.A. (hosted by **DB**) and **DB**'s Student Music Awards and cut a critically acclaimed major-label album at 20? But wait, there's more. "I've been checking out a lot of Ornette Coleman lately, and I changed the rhythm section of my band. I've even done a few experiments with a couple of hip-hoppers, little home projects in my apartment. I mean, that's what I came up listening to."

Now 22, with three albums—including the newly released *The Vibe*—under his belt, Hargrove has emerged as the point man for a jazz movement dubbed the Young Lions. Clean-cut, nattily dressed, and studious, they are the generation Marsalis made, and they bow to Wynton the way their predecessors genuflected to Miles. "The thing I dig about Wynton is that he educates the audience," says Hargrove, "people who would not otherwise know anything about the music." Even though each of the musicians interviewed for this story—all under 30—stressed the importance of mastering the tradition, *none* subscribed to Wynton's hard line against fusion and free jazz.

Still, hearing is believing, and skepticism abounds. Steve Lacy, who made the stylistic leap from Sidney Bechet to Cecil Taylor, has likened the current hard-bop resurgence to the trad revival of the '40s and '50s—an



Roy Hargrove

evolutionary dead end (see **DB** May '92). Avant-garde stalwart Henry Threadgill has complained that, for the first time in jazz history, "There are no young rebels. We don't even have a charlatan." And Freddie Hubbard told *The New York Times*, "It makes me feel funny to hear them playing ideas that I was playing in the '60s. The way they're playing it and phrasing it now, it's very clean, but it doesn't have the same spirit."

The bottom-line question on the lions is, have they delivered? In their own uncertain roar, the consensus is virtually unanimous: Not yet, but just give us time.

"People say we're rehashing what's been done already, that it's a retrogression," says alto saxophonist Jesse Davis. "But I don't really see it that way." Davis, 26, discovered bebop in Ellis Marsalis' New Orleans classroom, jammed with Von Freeman in Chicago, copped an All-Star Award at Musicfest U.S.A. in Philadelphia, and spent three years in Illinois Jacquet's big band before cutting *Horn Of Passion*. "It can almost be looked upon as a renaissance," he says. "Everyone has a sense of tradition while trying to define themselves individually. But we're in a predicament, because so many guys have come before us, and there's so much information to contend with. I benefited from jazz programs, but school can't give you the intangible things. To a degree, you're discouraged from forging your own path."

"When I was small, I wanted to be just like

Wynton," says trumpeter Marlon Jordan. "I studied his music back when he was recording high-energy jazz, and that's the direction I wanted to go, because you could play free but still be locked into something." The son of New Orleans avant-gardist-turned-music-professor Edward "Kidd" Jordan, brother of flutist Kent Jordan, nephew of clarinetist Alvin Batiste, and former pupil of Ellis Marsalis, Jordan, 21, pursues a modal course on his third Columbia album (at press time, a late-summer release). "I would like to see young players stretch out and not be so traditional," he says, "because that's really not the music of our generation."

"I'm trying to be true to what's inside me," says also prodigy Christopher Hollyday. "To satisfy myself and let people know who I am through my music." Among the first celebrated teenage tyros after Wynton, Hollyday, now 22, flaunts impassioned modalism and ambitious arrangements on his fourth major-label album, *And I'll Sing Once More*. "The whole idea for me is to be able to get up and just sing to the people, to completely open myself up and let them see my true personality," he says. "And the freer the music gets, the more options I have to use. I'd like to get to the point where everything is just spontaneous, to really improvise rather than playing a bunch of licks."

"We all have a long way to go," says altoist Antonio Hart. "And there's been too much hype put on the young musicians." Hart, 23, sat in with Blakey and played a date with Diz but got most of his experience as Roy Hargrove's full-toned foil before waxing *For The First Time* as a leader. "It's unfortunate," he says, "that because of the record companies and media, we have a separation from the older musicians that was never there before. But the record contracts also allow us to get together with some of the musicians we want to learn from and to build a relationship where we can get together outside of the studio."

In a generation so timid that electric funk is considered controversial and '60s modalism daring, it's hard to imagine a genuine stylistic breakthrough anytime soon. If there's a young Sun Ra or Muhal Richard Abrams on the horizon, he or she has yet to be sighted, much less signed to a contract. Retrospection and consolidation are the order of the day, with brave talk of innovation still largely unrealized. Only time will tell, but if you believe the lions themselves, their ultimate goal is not merely to reinvent the wheel. "We're trying to explore every possible avenue of the music," says Hargrove. "From the swing era on up into free jazz. Basically, we're celebrating the knowledge of our history. It's important to be open-minded and keep a view of the whole spectrum of the music, so that we can move forward into something revolutionary." **DB**

MICHELL SEIDEL

JUNE 1991

# Organ Groovin' With Joey D And Brother Jack

By Tom Surowicz



**B**rother Jack McDuff has been headlining jazz clubs for roughly 40 years. A salty, dapper black man, age 64, self-taught, McDuff's one of the living legends of groove-organ music. He's a contemporary and competitor of Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff, and the rest of the first wave of Hammond B-3 heroes. McDuff's made 61 albums as a leader, and scads more as a sideman with at least one jukebox hit single—the memorable, oft-reissued "Rock Candy." Today, McDuff resides quietly in the heart of the Midwestern snow belt—Minneapolis.

Joey DeFrancesco, the new hero of the organ, is a fresh-faced wiz kid of 19. He's white, classically trained on piano, and signed to mega-powerful CBS Records/Sony Music. DeFrancesco's complete discography is just a half-dozen albums, including a trio of hit CDs—*All Of Me*, *Where Were You?*, and *Part III*. Still, he's well-known to modern jazz audiences and radio programmers, who've embraced this maverick member of the generation raised on synthesizers, programmed beats, and other artificial sounds.

DB arranged to have the two meet at the Spruce Lounge, a pleasant hole-in-the-wall on Minneapolis' southside, on a cold day in March, but they heated it up as Tom Surowicz rolled the tape.

**TOM SUROWICZ:** *Joey, groove-organ playing's always been a strictly inner-city, black-music phenomenon. And it's associated principally with the '50s and '60s. Yet, here you are, a young, white kid, doing quite well playing organ, reaching new audiences that probably find the whole thing a little exotic. How come you decided to take such a peculiar musical path?*

**JOEY DeFRANCESCO:** Probably because my dad played organ, and an organ was in the house. He had all the records around, too—like Jack's records, and Jimmy Smith's, and Groove Holmes'. Plus a lot of other stuff—Miles' records, and Coltrane, all the different influences. I just wanted to play the organ.

**JACK McDUFF:** I'm thinkin' you've come along and done a big favor for the organ, Joey, because I remember playin' Appleton, Wisconsin, when I first started out, and the guy was sittin' in the bar sayin', "Whatcha gonna do, have a funeral in here?" That was all he could think of when we brought in the organ. Organ was listed as an r&b instrument first, then it was listed in the miscellaneous category. Finally, it got its own category (in DB's polls).

**JD:** Which Jimmy Smith's been winning every year since. *(Both men laugh.)* My style's different from Jimmy's, though, and a lot of other cats. I listen to a lot of horns. The things I play are often inspired by horn lines. But I still have the *feel*. You have to have that blues feel.

**JM:** And that bass line has got to come natural to ya.

**JD:** When you play the organ, Jack, your bass line's more staccato—*poom, poom, poom, poom*. It sounds like an upright bass.

**JM:** Yeah, I like that thump.

*(Later, McDuff sits down at the organ to demonstrate. Soon, DeFrancesco joins in and a swingin' private concert's underway.)*

**JM:** Joey, ya know I was lookin' at you just now. And you moved your hand *less* when you were going along, running all them chord changes, than when I played three notes.

**JD:** I've always been able to run through the changes and play different stuff. *(sheepishly)*

**TS:** *Do you think if you're successful enough, especially on a big label like Columbia, that there'll be a crop of new organ players?*

**JD:** Yeah, it's already happenin'.

**JM:** And they'll start sellin' some organs.

**JD:** And the cats that used to play in years past will do better, too.

**JM:** They aren't gonna be talkin' about synthesizers. They gonna be talkin' about organs.

**TS:** *So, what's the next logical step in the organ's evolution?*

**JD:** Man, me and Jack have gotta record something together—that would be the greatest! DB

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# Final Frontiers

By John Ephland

**W**hile *Down Beat* prides itself on having a strong and long tradition for jazz and blues coverage, another tradition still surfaces now and then, covering everything from country (& western) to classical.

Since its early days, *DB's* attention to "Everything In The World About The World Of Music" meant a lot of territory apart from its source material, swing music, was game. Sure, there were the regular cheesecake photos for variety (it seemed like sexy—and sexist—women shots were part of the gag about being an entertainer and selling magazines), and a fair amount of out-and-out comedy (e.g., Jules Feiffer comics were a feature, as were others). But the musical personalities the magazine delved into more readily could (and can) mean such "non-jazz" properties as Perry Como, Judy Garland, Barry Manilow, Liberace, Lawrence Welk, the Beatles, Joni Mitchell, Philip Glass, and Lou Reed.

What follows in these pages is more recent material, from an amusing 1958 piece on Elvis Presley on through to great interviews with Godfather of Soul James Brown, rock & roll/r&b inspiration Louis Jordan, movie composer Henry Mancini, Mother of Invention Frank Zappa, Jim Morrison of the Doors, the one and only Merle Haggard, and, last but not least, that master of the Great Beyond, the great, late aliatory composer John Cage.

In most cases, these stories have been edited due to space; some more severely than others. Sure, we could have given you fewer stories in greater length. Instead, we felt that presenting a slice of, say, the 1969 interview with *DB* favorite Frank Zappa (which, incidentally, included keyboardist Don Preston) along with Elvis & Co., was more in the spirit of this ever-present Final Frontier of Music.

Some may scoff at a story on Elvis or Henry Mancini, suggesting we're simply playing games, offering up cartoons in a place where "serious music" alone has a place. We disagree. Fun, serious and otherwise, is part of our ongoing mosaic. Like Hank says, referring to those who condemn certain kinds of music outright: "I'd say their snobbery is getting in the way of their ears. It's the worst place to have snobbery."

Hear, here.

**DB**



JANUARY 9, 1958

## Elvis Presley—Farewell, Elvis?

By John Tynan

**I**f it is remembered at all, *Jailhouse Rock* may well go down in the annals of show business as the straw that snapped Presley's back.

In the past year many commentators on popular music have predicted the professional demise of the Tupelo Twitcher. Thus far it hasn't happened. Elvis continues to draw his teenage worshippers and RCA Victor preens in the green-hued glow of his record sales. What seems to be a New Elvis, however, is thrust upon us in this, his latest M-G-M movie.

The plot concerns a young construction worker who is jailed for manslaughter, learns in prison that he wants to sing for his living, and selfishly drives on to success in the music business when he's released.

Musically, the emphasis is placed on Presley's colorless, draggy ballads, rather than on the spastically gyrating creature to which we've become accustomed. For all the vulgarity and animal sexuality of the "old" Elvis, his exhibitionism had beat and was not without a unique excitement. In *Jailhouse Rock* this is kept to an absolute minimum. He even eschews the old gittern on the assumption, we presume, that his thespic ability is a more convincing prop.

One unexpected high point for any jazz fan liable to stray into a showing of this motion picture is provided by a brief, deadly serious discussion on modern jazz by a group of

upper-middle-class diletantes. Says the instigator of this "hip" discourse, referring to Elvis, "Jazz music . . . it's his profession." As one might surmise, what follows is unintentionally hilarious.

As the dollar-hungry recording star, Elvis' acting is unaccountably amateurish, considering the real-life coaching he's had for the role. He plays the surly churlish heartthrob of competent actress Judy Tyler (killed in an auto smash shortly after completion of the picture) with indifferent blandness; charges into a romantic clinch with her like Don Quixote tilting at a particularly formidable windmill. What naturalness there was in his "Loving You" performance is totally lacking here.

But for the grace of Mickey Shaughnessy, *Jailhouse Rock* would be an irrevocable loss from even the broadest standpoint. As Presley's cellmate and subsequent hanger-on, Shaughnessy turns in a consistently satisfying performance.

For all the publicity hoopla, it screens as a deadly dull effort built on the premise that the god of rock & roll can do no wrong. We doubt if even his most rabid cultists will go along with a deity who doesn't produce the called-for miracles. Who knows, the fans may even be prompted to take a close look at the godlike feet. And it will take a deal of high-powered persuasion to convince them that the tootsies are not made of clay. **DB**

OCTOBER 31, 1968

# James Brown's Bag

By Ira Gitler

CHARLES STEWART



Though he could easily retire, James Brown continues to work hard. "The only reason," he said recently, "I'm staying in it as long as I'm staying in it is 'cause I want to keep inspiring the kids. . . . I don't want them to be like me. Just get an education. Then they won't have to worry about how they're going to be."

I asked Brown to talk about his influences, his band, how he feels about jazz, and his role as an organist. He reacted modestly to the last question.

"Well, I'm not an organ player, that's for sure. I try to play soul, that's about all I can do. But that's the way I express *me*. That's all I can account for as far as the organ is concerned. Of course we do have an album out now—very, very big—it's a jazz album called *Nothing But Soul*.

"I like Jimmy Smith, McDuff, Jimmy McGriff; I like them because they're real soulful.

"I just made myself play the organ. Because when you put an organ in the outfit, right away the organ man becomes the most important man in there because he's got volume, drive, and if this cat's taken out of the band, you've got a big gap. So I said one way to make sure that you've got an organ is to learn how to play it yourself. So that's what I did.

"As far as my actual singing sound is concerned, no one influenced me on that. But for showmanship, I kind of liked Cab Calloway and Louis Jordan.

"Nobody inspired me to sing—that's me, period. I enjoyed listening to a lot of people, but to get my singing, my sound, I didn't get that from anybody. That's me all the way. 'Course I'll admit it developed into better chords, a little different in chord structure. But a man has to do himself. He can dig another cat, but when you get ready to live it, you can't live another cat. So I just never tried to take it seriously because I know I couldn't come through doing another cat's thing. I've always done my own thing. When I get ready to write a tune, I forget about everything I've ever heard and think of my own thing.

"I was very lucky. My first record was my own thing—'Please, Please, Please,' and

that was almost 13 years ago. And the kids act like it's just been released yesterday. I was the luckiest cat in the world. I started out with a million seller. And believe it or not, from the last of 1958 until now, every tune I've ever made made the national charts. And that's like four or five hundred tunes. Unbelievable.

"It's another thing. Every tune I come out with, I make a different approach every time. I think a man can be listened to and people can dig him the rest of his life if he makes a different approach. The element of surprise. That's show business all the way."

As for his interests in jazz, "Well, I like any kind of jazz. I like West Coast jazz, soft jazz. But when I'm tired and really want to relax, I like Ahmad Jamal, Brubeck; soft, just a light touch. But then, if I just feel up to it, I want to hear a cat drive. I like Jimmy Smith and Horace Silver, 'cause they're funky, man.

"My band can play jazz. You'd really be surprised. We were doing the *Steve Allen Show*, and Steve's band was on the outside and we were behind the curtain. We had to get a tempo to warm up with, so went into a jazz tune—started swinging. Steve called it the Battle of the Bands. 'Cause musicians are just that way. Like they hear a cat getting technical and the other cat just will naturally get technical with him and they'll start competing against themselves and before you know it they're really blowing.

"I don't really get a chance to keep up on my jazz 'cause you get into that bag and you start arranging that way. That's not very profitable. Cat sells 50,000 on a jazz record, he's got a 10 million seller in the jazz world. Man, I sold 76,000 records the day before yesterday—76,000 in one day! Yesterday we did 40,000. I have from 35 to 40, 50, 60,000 records a day. These cats don't sell 'em in eight months. I ain't going that way, baby. Can't do it.

"You've got the five-percent thing going there, and you've got 95 percent. So you have to stay with the 95 percent. That's the really *in* thing.

"Definitely do your own thing. But keep people patting their foot. When you do that, you got it going." **DB**

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MAY 29, 1969

## Louis Jordan: The Good Times Still Roll

By Leonard Feather



**T**he question "Whatever became of Louis Jordan" may seem relevant or ridiculous, depending on where you live.

"Some people haven't kept track," Jordan said, "because for the last several years I've stuck to the same places. I work about eight months out of the year. Oklahoma City twice a year, three weeks each time; Dallas for two four-week stands; Harvey's in Lake Tahoe nine or 12 weeks; and various spots along the strip in Las Vegas. So people in other cities haven't heard much about me."

He hasn't worked in New York in four years, though he is supposed to play Plaza 9 there soon. He has only played two places in Los Angeles: one stand at the Hong Kong Bar, and one at the Bill of Fare. "But I'm as busy as I want to be," he said, "and I'm back

on records, and I'm happy."

It has often been claimed—and there is substantial evidence for the assertion—that Jordan's musical direction, when his Tympany Five achieved national popularity in the early 1940s, began to trace a musical line that evolved into rhythm & blues and indirectly led to the entire pop explosion of the last decade.

"We emphasized the beat," he said, "mostly through a shuffle boogie rhythm. The only thing that really changed was the intensity of the beat, particularly in the drums. Later they brought the bass up, and then the guitar, which more or less came into its own with the rock & roll era.

"The music didn't change as much as the rhythm. More noise, more amplification—they just put more juice behind everything. On some of the records in the early stages of rock & roll you could hardly hear the melody, nor the singer. Noise can hide a gang of faults. That's just about the reason why amplification got bigger—because so many people made records who couldn't even sing."

As for Jordan's music and the future, "We'll go back to something more like the Tympany Five sound, only with a Fender bass and some of the contemporary combo feeling," the veteran producer Paul Gayten said.

And the material? "We're going to do a blues album," Jordan said. "I've never had a blues album—would you believe it? Here I've been associated with the blues all my life, but the whole time I was with Decca, they were so busy making money with my singles that they never thought about albums, so I missed out on that chance.

"A heavy proportion of my big things were based on the blues changes. I want to do some numbers in my regular blues style, but I don't think there's any reason not to adjust myself to what's happening right now. I might sing a couple of tunes the way the kids are doing them today. But essentially I think the music is going to make the difference—my updating some of the songs I did before."

DB

MARCH 5, 1970

## Mancini's Movie Manifesto

By Fred Binkley



one of the best 'jazz' singers because of his honesty and because of what he does. And when you get into jazz, it really is a matter of noncompliance, something that is very straightforward—it's a feeling. I think Johnny Cash has that—not that he's a jazz singer, but I think that jazz people dig him because he is so damn funky in his own way. He gets funky at times in the same way Louis gets funky in his own little kind of way.

"Jazz writing has always been kind of special anyhow," he said. "There are not too many good jazz arrangers who have made it real big and can make a living at it.

"The advantage with any mixed media is that you have something to relate to with your eye," he explained. "You're not watching anything happen when you watch a conductor in a concert hall. When you write something for a purpose—such as the stage or the screen—then you have that added element, and you become emotionally involved. That's why you can do the most outlandish things in films. You can go as far out as you want. If it fits with what's up on the screen, people will go out and try to find the record if it makes sense with what they saw."

DB

**T**en years ago, the jazz community was engaged in a fatuous little debate over the merits and purity of the jazz to be heard on film soundtracks and what these sounds were doing to the music's image.

Ask the man who started the wrangling with his scores for the Hollywood-produced *Peter Gunn* series, and he will smile softly.

"I know the controversy," Henry Mancini said. "It was very strange, because at no time during the *Peter Gunn* show was any claim

made, on the albums or by me in any interview, that it was jazz. It was jazz-oriented, it was dramatic, and jazz was a part of it; in that way it was picked up by the various critics. But there was no claim ever made—perhaps because it had such a big influence that some of the jazz critics and writers felt they were losing their audience to this thing that was coming up out of nowhere.

"See, jazz might have a different meaning to a lot of people, but to me Johnny Cash is



OCTOBER 30, 1969

## Frank Zappa: The Mother Of Us All

By Larry Kart

**F**rank Zappa, like most moralists, is pessimistic about people in the mass. Perhaps he even wants to punish them.

"All those mediocre groups reap a huge profit," Zappa proclaims, "because people really like what they do. The more mediocre your music is, the more accessible it is to a larger number of people in the United States. That's where the market is. You're not selling to a bunch of jazz esthetes in Europe. You're selling to Americans, who really hate music and love entertainment, so the closer your product is to mindless entertainment material, escapist material, the better off you're going to be. People will dump a lot of money into a bunch of young pretty boys who are ready to make music of limited artistic merit so long as they can sell a lot of it."

I asked Zappa about his run-in at the London School of Economics, and he said, "I was invited to speak at the London School of Economics. So I went over there and asked, 'What do you want me to say?' So here's a bunch of youthful British leftists who take the same youthful leftist view that is popular the world over. It's like belonging to a car club. The whole leftist mentality—'We want to burn the . . . world down and start all over and go back to nature.' Basing their principles on Marxist doctrine this and Mao Tse Tung that and all these clichés that they've read in their classes. And they think that's the basis for conducting a revolution that's

going to liberate the common man. Meanwhile, they don't even know any common men. With their mod clothes, either that or their Che Guevara khakis. It's a . . . game.

"I do not think they will acquire the power to do what they want to do, because I'm positive that most of them don't really believe what they're saying. I told them that what they were into was just the equivalent of this year's flower power. A couple of years

before those same shmucks were wandering around with incense and bells in the park . . . because they heard that that was what was happening in San Francisco. The first thing they asked me was what was going on at Berkeley. I was thinking to myself, 'What, you guys want to copy that, too?' . . . It's really depressing to sit in front of a large number of people and have them all be that stupid, all at once. And they're in college." **DB**

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MAY 28, 1970

## Behind The Doors

By Michael Cuscuna

**J**im Morrison rested on his motel bed. "I am not an avid or knowledgeable jazz fan, but I do read **Down Beat** regularly, because it deals with music. Most of the so-called music magazines cover everything but music. They are fan magazines and sensation-seekers. I have been written about in all of them—but so what," he said.

There is a live album that has been delayed in deference to the new *Morrison Hotel*, an intriguing and unusual collection of Morrison originals performed by the Doors with such guest artists as John Sebastian on harmonica and Lonnie Mack on bass. It is not the old Doors, nor is it the current commercial Doors; it is Jim Morrison singing some excellent songs, covering territory that the group has not heretofore explored.

As we conversed, Morrison's opinions of the Doors' music fluctuated, but he remained constant in his lamentation of the group's situation.

"When we were working clubs," he explained, "we had a lot of fun and could play a lot of songs. A lot of things were going on. Now we just play concert after concert, and



we have to play the things the audience wants to hear. Then we record and go out into the concert halls again. The people are very demanding, and we don't get to do a lot of new or different things.

"I really want to develop my singing. You know, I love the blues, like Joe Turner and Freddie King. I would like to get into that feeling and sing some old standards like 'St. James Infirmary.'"

Morrison has interests outside of music. He became most animated during our conversation when the subject of film was brought up. The Doors' 40-minute *Feast Of Friends* has already been shown, to mixed critical and audience reactions. Morrison is also producing and starring in *Hiway*, a color film now nearing completion. He is a former U.C.L.A. film student and has a real passion for the cinema.

Thus the remainder of the interview consisted of our exchanging accolades for Bunuel, Fellini, and other outstanding direc-

tors. After dinner, we parted so the group could prepare for the concert.

A few hours later, the Doors appeared on stage, greeted by a mass of screaming fans, and began an exciting set of jazz-rock. The band was burning as the stage Morrison (loud, mystical, dramatic) belted out some of the group's better-known songs. Shades of the exciting and innovative Doors of old!

In Jim Morrison, I found to my surprise a beautiful human being who, not unlike Charles Mingus, has been a victim of sensational publicity and harassment by silly journalists. This same Jim Morrison seems trapped in the routine of success, with a public image to live up to, while his best musical and cinematic talents and ambitions remain stifled and/or untapped.

Whatever part of their musical history appeals to you—if any—the Doors are one of the most important forces in rock. Without the demands that success and hit records make on a group, they might have continued their truly creative work.

The promise shown in their new album could indicate a return to the development of music for the Doors' sake, not for the hit-conscious public's sake.

Meanwhile, Morrison was eagerly awaiting publication of his book of poetry, *The Lords And The New Creatures*. And meanwhile, dedicated rock fans go back nostalgically to the startling, dynamic album that a then-unknown Los Angeles rock group quietly released some four years ago. **DB**

MAY 1980

## Merle Haggard— Country Jazz Messiah

By Tim Schneckloth

**T**he complexity of country great Merle Haggard becomes clear when he talks about his late '60s hit, "Okie From Muskogee." "Somebody was reviewing our last album," he says, "and he was trying to compliment me. He said the album was

good; he said it went a lot deeper than the beer-belly mentality of 'Okie From Muskogee.'

"I thought to myself: Of all the songs that I've written, that one had about 18 different messages, and I'm sorry that he only read one of them.



BILL FITZPATRICK

"Anything that becomes as big as that song did has got to have something more than a beer-belly mentality to it. I didn't even know what it had myself. I got to analyzing it later and realized that it could be taken any number of ways, one of which is from a pride standpoint. Of course, a lot of people think that you have to have a beer-gut mentality to be proud of a particular thing. In other words, you should be ashamed to be proud.

"You know," he says, relaxing between shows at Harrah's/Reno, "you go into a studio with a producer nowadays, and everybody's trying to do what everybody else is doing. They say, 'We don't want a guitar taking away from the vocal'—things like that. They want to ignore the musicians. That's the way I think some producers feel, even some wise producers who've had a lot of hits, people you should listen to when they say something.

DECEMBER 1984

# John Cage— The Age Of Cage

With Bill Shoemaker



REGINA WATER

"But that's still not what I'm trying to do. My music is coming from *me*, and for my taste, I require a lot of instrumentation. And I feel there must be at least a small cult of people out there who feel the same way. If I *can't* feature the instrumentalist, I just don't want to be in the business.

"It irritates me to see TV specials, especially in country music, where the musician is completely ignored, as if he were a machine or a computer, and the only one responsible for the sound you're hearing is the vocalist. I don't understand how people can ignore the whole foundation of the situation."

It came as something of a surprise to some fans, then, when his 1979 album *Serving 190 Proof* contained a brilliantly personal introspective song ("Footlights") that indicated a disenchantment with the performer's life.

"What I was trying to say in that song was that everybody has 'footlights,' whether he's a cement worker, a bricklayer, or an entertainer. You get to that point where you wonder, 'Is this what I want to do for the rest of my life?' And while you're wondering about it, you're usually bored at the same time, tired of it all." **DB**

I think that even when two pieces are diametrically different from one another—as are the *Freeman Etudes* for violin solo, which is written out in detail and in which there are no indeterminate aspects at all, and the silent piece "4'33"," where the performer has nothing to do and the audience has nothing to do but listen, no matter what the sounds are—that the common denominator between those two pieces is central to my work: namely, to find ways of writing music where the sounds are free of my intentions. The reason I decided to go in that direction followed from my experience of going into an anechoic chamber at Har-

vard University. When I went into the room, I expected to hear nothing. But, instead, I heard two sounds. So I left the room and contacted the engineer in charge. I said, "There's something wrong with your silent room." He said, "What do you mean?" And I said, "There are two sounds." He asked me to describe them, and I did. He said, "The high one was your nervous system in operation, and the low one was your blood circulating." I realized at that moment that, without intending to, I was moving around the world producing music. I decided then to let my music go in that direction, which is the direction of not intending sound. **DB**

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# CLASSIC REVIEWS

The history of **Down Beat's** record (and now CD) review column dates back to the first issue of 1935, when the magazine ran a review of some Duke Ellington music for Brunswick. As you can see by the following reprint of that review, no mention was made of this new column, only a fairly comical introduction to the "newest record lists." Since that inauspicious beginning, the department has emerged as one of our readers' favorites and garnered international acclaim.

At times, the music was broken up into such categories as Hot Jazz, Swing, Dance, Vocal, Classical, and Novelty. And with the May 20, 1946, issue, **DB** for the first time instituted a rating system; in this case, a series of musical notes: four (tops), three (tasty), two (pleasing), one (boring).

From 1935 to the present, a sampling of our best, most surprising, and downright entertaining record reviews follows. Happy reading!

—John Ephland

## Duke Ellington

Brunswick 6389: SOLITUDE; MOONGLOW.

The newest record lists fairly reek of commercial drivel which no self-respecting musician would ever think of buying. In some instances not even the musicians who made the records would consider buying their own tripe. Nevertheless there are a few releases this month which have about them an element of permanence, are herein commented upon.

First, there is Duke Ellington's latest composition, "Solitude," recorded for Brunswick by the Duke and his incomparable band. "Solitude" couldn't have been written by anyone but Ellington, and although it is being played by all the larger orchestras, sounds best as played by its composer. It is slightly reminiscent of his earlier "Rude Interlude," and is notable for its unique simplicity. Particularly effective is the muted trumpet and clarinet accompanying in the first chorus.

On the reverse we have Ellington re-recording his own "Lazy Rhapsody" under the title "Moonglow." The label does not give credit to Ellington for composing "Moonglow," but it should have. Even if you are thoroughly sick of this popular song by now, you should welcome the completely characteristic Ellington treatment of it.

—Warren W. Scholl (January 1935)

## Tommy Dorsey

Victor 25496: MAPLE LEAF RAG; JAMBOREE.

Tommy Dorsey is represented by "Maple Leaf Rag," and "Jamboree," from Universal's *Top Of The Town*. We didn't care much about the former, though the band is O.K. Don't know who arranged it. Though this is not supposed to be a radio column, we trust that you will pardon our mentioning the fact that, in our opinion, the script on Dorsey's current commercial is one of the most pathetic examples of humor that we have listened to.

In fact, while we are on the subject we'd like

to mention that the same thing goes as far as Benny Goodman's commercial is concerned.

—Edgar Greentree (Feb. 1937)

## Cab Calloway

Vocalion 6467: PARADIDDLE; PICKIN' THE CABBAGE.

One of the unfortunate trends conceived during the era of "swing music" was the advancement of percussion instruments into the solo field. Drums and bass violin were never intended, or properly used, as anything but rhythm producers. Yet the leaders who have allowed the shouts and pleas of juvenile followers sway them include many of the best-known names in the business.

Latest leader to feature the wild, unbridled beat of sticks against snares and tom-toms is Cab Calloway, whose record of "Paradiddle" and "Pickin' The Cabbage" is issued this week. Cozy Cole, admittedly one of the most consistently great drummers in jazz, runs rampant on the "A" side, pounding himself into a frenzy with the Calloway band backing him up in strict solo fashion. But to what end? The obvious result of the three-minute demonstration is a disappointed feeling on the part of the listener. Perhaps tyro percussionists will benefit by Cole's technical show-offs. But no judge of jazz will condone such a performance honestly whether it be Cozy, Krupa, or an African savage.

Reverse is better, with Dizzy Gillespie's trumpet taking the go parts. The theme is weird and at times smacks of the Duke. And to climax this coupling, it is without regret that we report Cab keeps his mouth shut on both sides.

—Barrelhouse Dan (June 1, 1940)

## Glenn Miller

Victor 27873: AMERICAN PATROL; SOLDIER, LET ME READ YOUR LETTER.

Listen to this one, and listen to most army post bands and then get mad. Listen to this again, listen to the army band, and get madder. There are a lot of things I don't like about Miller, but there is no question that here he has cut to shreds every recorded performance of a march yet out—and most of the live ones I've heard as well. A lot of post bands have ragged tempos, and poor intonation. Worse than that, due to the conservative musicianship of their leaders, the bands stick to the Sousa tradition of high clarinets, booping bass horns, and ill-voiced trumpets and reeds in the middle.

Miller here shows that marches can be played with a full and resonant bandtone, that parts can be voiced so that they "snap off" and yet still don't sound ricky. And that even such tricks as fake Bach voicings in the reeds can be used. Above all, that the pompous, 4/4 thumping of a lot of military bands needn't be duplicated to get a beat suitable for the 120-step marching men. Miller did this here with his old band. It's going to be plenty interesting to see if he can do it with his 30 TTC bands now forming. I have a hunch there are going to be a lot of red faces shortly.

—Mike Levin (March 15, 1943)



## Peggy Lee

**BLACK COFFEE**—Decca DL 5482: BLACK COFFEE; I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN; EASY LIVING; MY HEART BELONGS TO DADDY; A WOMAN ALONE WITH THE BLUES; I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TIME IT WAS; WHEN THE WORLD WAS YOUNG; LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME.

★★★★★

Here is the true Peggy. Warm, personal, Holidayish, sexy, and as un-"Lover"-like as you could wish. Or, when the occasion demands it, fiery, swinging, with a beat few can beat.

The accompaniment didn't hurt, either. It consists simply of Pete Candoli (wearing the disguise of the year—the notes refer to him as "Cootie Chesterfield"!), Jimmy Rowles, Max Wayne, and Ed Shaughnessy. Only on "Easy Living," where they become too busy and detract from Peggy, are they less than perfect.

Another cup right away, please,—with just the same amount of cream and sugar.

(Sept. 23, 1953)



## Billie Holiday

Clef LP MGC-169: BODY AND SOUL; STRANGE FRUIT; TRAVELIN' LIGHT; HE'S FUNNY THAT WAY; THE MAN I LOVE; GEE, BABY, AIN'T I GOOD TO YOU?; ALL OF ME; BILLIE'S BLUES.

★★★★★

As the saying goes, run, do not walk to your nearest store. . . .

These were recorded at a JATP concert in L.A. in 1946, and never again will Billie sound this wonderful. The years that have passed since then have taken their toll on the great stylist, but this all happened on a night when she had everything, and if you don't find this LP to be one of the most emotional half-hours you've ever spent, there's something wrong.

Most powerful of all is "Strange Fruit," on which Billie breaks into an unashamed sob, but throughout the entire set shines the glory that was Holiday. Certainly one of the outstanding records in years. —Jack Tracy (May 4, 1955)

## Dizzy Gillespie

**AFRO** —Norgran 12" LP MG N-1003: *FIRST SIDE: MANTECA, CONTRASTE, JUNGLA, RHUMBA-FINALE (A SUITE); SECOND SIDE: NIGHT IN TUNISIA; CON ALMA; CARAVAN.*

★★★★★

This most recent attempt to fuse Afro-Cuban music and jazz is titled *Afro*. First side is a four-part suite arranged by Chico O'Farrill. The opening "Manteca" was written by Dizzy and the late Chano Pozo, while the three succeeding sections were composed by Chico and Dizzy. There is a full band for the suite plus double rhythm sections (one for jazz and one for Afro) and the playing is expertly precise (full personnel on the envelope). But the suite suffers from O'Farrill's arranging, which is, as usual, heavy and lacking in imaginative distinction. But Dizzy blows so dazzlingly well and is backed by so stimulating a beat that the suite makes exciting listening anyway.

What really makes the rating, however, is the second side on which Dizzy is better served by his own unpretentious arrangements and a wailing background put down by a six-man Afro-Cuban rhythm section. There are solos on "Night And Day" and "Caravan" by the coolly proficient flutist, Gilberto Valdes. Dizzy soars alone on his own haunting "Con Alma." Dizzy's work on the second side especially represents some of the most impressive trumpet work he

or anyone else has ever recorded. Recording fidelity on both sides is first-rate. LP is factory sealed.

—Nat Hentoff (Jan. 26, 1955)

## Count Basie

Clef LP MG C-146: *BASIE BEAT; K.C. ORGAN BLUES; SHE'S FUNNY THAT WAY; ROYAL GARDEN BLUES; STAN SHORTHAIR; BLUE AND SENTIMENTAL; COUNT'S ORGAN BLUES; AS LONG AS I LIVE.*

★★★★★

If you put this on a hi-fi set at full room volume, it'll swing you through the window if you don't watch out. This is jazz at its most basic—direct, powerful, unpretentious. Paul Quinichette and Joe Newman are in the front line and ride on top of the rhythm section like it was a jet-engined carpet. With Count is the invaluable Freddie Green together with Gene Ramey and Buddy Rich.

Basie is on organ on four sides and no one since Fats Waller comes close to Count in jazz organ touch. There's little point in selecting favorite bands—it all moves from Paul's simply expressive "Blue And Sentimental" to the rockin' "Royal Garden." One thing only—and this will probably get me read out of the Critics' Circle. There are times when Buddy Rich is somewhat too heavy, as on "Count's Organ Blues." But why cavil in the face of a Basie tornado?

—Nat Hentoff (Feb. 24, 1954)



## Charlie Parker

**THE CHARLIE PARKER STORY**—Savoy 12" LP MG-12079: *BILLIE'S BOUNCE* (five takes); *WARMING UP A RIFF* (one take); *BILLIE'S BOUNCE* (two takes); *NOW'S THE TIME* (four takes); *THRIVING FROM A RIFF* (three takes); *MEANDERING* (one take); *KOKO* (two takes).

**Personnel:** Charlie Parker, alto; Miles Davis, trumpet; Bud Powell, piano; Curly Russell, bass; Max Roach, drums; Dizzy Gillespie on trumpet on *Koko* and maybe also *Thriving From A Riff*. Dizzy is on piano on *Koko*.

★★★★★

This is a documentary of a Nov. 26, 1945, session. It has been prepared so illuminatingly (and besides, it contains an amount of new material) that it belongs in this section rather than on the reissues page. John Mehegan has written the notes after a considerable amount of re-

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The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band

## CLASSIC REVIEWS

search. They are among the most candid—and valuable—notes ever to appear on a jazz album.

Despite, for example, the advertising slogan at the top, "The Greatest Recording Session Made in Modern Jazz History," Mehegan, not that impressed, uses terms for some of the takes like: "the solos of both are undisistinguished . . . several bad goofs by Miles on head . . . Dizzy not making the head too well . . . cut in the 14th bar. Someone (the a&r man) should have his head examined—chord block in 12th bar evidently upset him," etc.

Equally to the point, Mehegan indicates where the successes of the date were (the "incredible" "Koko"—"Cherokee," most notably); and even provides background material on some of the antic happenings between takes that took place that afternoon. It is an unusually mature essay, and is an excellent aid to a clearer understanding of Bird and bop during this period. There are cogent insights concerning Bird and the blues, Bird's time and his attack on the bar-line, the different approaches of Bird and Dizzy, etc.

Not all the music—obviously—is superior, but there is much of bursting substance; and the rating, in any case, is for the set's worth as a documentary, and as a complement to Savoy's previous four Parker reissue LPs: 12000, 12001, 12009, 12014. Very good remastering by Rudy Van Gelder. —*Nat Hentoff* (March 6, 1957)



### Dave Brubeck

**JAZZ GOES TO JUNIOR COLLEGE**—Columbia 12" LP CL 1034: *BRU'S BLUES*; *THESE FOOLISH THINGS*; *THE MASQUERADE IS OVER*; *ONE MOMENT WORTH YEARS*; *ST. LOUIS BLUES*.

**Personnel:** Dave Brubeck, piano; Paul Desmond, alto; Norman Bates, bass; Joe Morello, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

These five tracks were taken from concerts at Fullerton and Long Beach junior colleges, near Los Angeles.

There's the concert atmosphere here, the relaxed flow of creativity from Desmond, the often tense counterpoint of Bates, and some easy-swinging drumming by Morello. Dave's playing is, as usual, firm and assured.

It's been said that the test of a jazzman is how (or if) he plays the blues. The two blues

tracks here, particularly "St. Louis Blues," certainly qualify Brubeck. I find his construction on "St. Louis," almost wholly in blocks of percussive chords, very satisfying. As Dave builds to the climax, he varies his sound texture with keyboard dynamics, enhancing the culmination. The group individually shines on this number.

If, in the past, Brubeck was criticized for carrying his solos sheerly on their rhythmic structure way past the climactic point, that tendency is not present in this collection. On "Bru's Blues," Dave builds on cascades of melody leading into a climactic series of chords, after which he and Desmond wander fugally, one of their most refreshing devices.

While the pace of this album doesn't vary too much from the easy-tempo norm, it's a rewarding listening experience. Note, too, how Morello's drumming heightens the climax of Desmond's solo on "Foolish Things."

—*Dom Cerulli* (Nov. 14, 1957)



### Miles Davis

**MILES AHEAD**—Columbia 12" LP CL 1041: *SPRINGSVILLE*; *THE MAIDS OF CADIZ*; *THE DUKE*; *MY SHIP*; *MILES AHEAD*; *BLUES FOR PABLO*; *NEW RHUMBA*; *THE MEANING OF THE BLUES*; *LAMENT*; *I DON'T WANNA BE KISSED*.

**Personnel:** Davis, flugelhorn; Bernie Glow, Ernie Royal, Louis Mucci, Taft Jordan, and John Carisi, trumpets; Frank Rehak, Jimmy Cleveland, and Joe Bennett, trombones; Tom Mitchell, bass trombone; Willie Ruff, Tony Miranda, horns (Jimmy Buffington replaced Miranda on one session); Bill Barber, tuba; Lee Konitz, alto sax; Danny Bank, bass clarinet; Romeo Penque, Sid Cooper, flute and clarinet (Edwin Caine replaced Cooper on one session); Paul Chambers, bass; Art Taylor, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This is an extraordinarily well done album with absolutely no point at which you can wish for more if you, like John Lewis and so many others, have wished for a big band with delicacy. If so, here it is, playing 10 beautifully arranged (by Gil Evans) selections and sounding a good deal like the best of Claude Thornhill with Miles.

Miles' use of the flugelhorn on this album does not in the slightest detract from his communication. Rather, it lends a certain spice to it, as he extracts from this sometimes blatant instrument all its mellowness and fullness. There is no piano, but this is not noticeable at all, because what occurs here is a remarkably flexible set of scores, written with a suppleness, fluidity, and skill that should immediately bring Gil Evans to the front rank of contemporary jazz

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writers. And long due.

With the exception of Miles and an occasional bit of Paul Chambers, there is no one else on this album who can be said to solo. It is interesting to consider this effort—for which all thanks, not only to Miles and Evans and the band, but to Columbia and George Avakian for making it possible—in comparison to other big band experimental albums in recent years.

Some of them, notably the recent Johnny Richards and now and then a flash from Shorty Rogers, have had a quality of excitement that this album does not have, deliberately I am sure. But aside from that, the tonal effects, the coloration, the subtlety, the lack of tension and the pure, lyrical quality is comparable only to Duke and Ralph Burns' "Summer Sequence." This is not, by intention, an LP to raise you off your chair screaming. It is one to bring you close to almost unbearable delights in music in much the same way the Modern Jazz Quartet does, and which only Duke has consistently been able to do with a big band. The handling of the brass, with its muttering, spouting, rolling figures is a thing of liveliness that grows with each hearing.

Miles' solos throughout have an almost ascetic purity about them. They are deliberate, unhurried, and almost inevitable in their time. On "Miles Ahead" he comes bouncing and skipping in almost as though he were the legendary Piper, dancing his way along leading everyone. The brass figures that follow Miles on this side are so Thornhillish it's startling.

One of the most exquisite numbers on this album, and that is a good word to apply to all of them by the way, is Dave Brubeck's tribute to Ellington, "The Duke." It's a bit of pure description that immediately calls up Duke and remains in your mind after the LP is through.

Andre Hodeir, in his excellent notes, says, "I don't have room enough to point out all the beauties that I have discovered while listening over and over to the orchestration of these 10 little concertos assembled in a vast fresco." It cannot be expressed better than that as far as I am concerned.

The 10 selections are, by the way, arranged as a program of continuous music, each following without pause. This makes it doubly pleasurable to hear; but it is not alone the sort of jazz that demands full attention. This is some of the best mood music produced since Duke.

—Ralph J. Gleason (Dec. 12, 1957)

## Muddy Waters

Chess 1620: FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS; ALL ABOARD.

★ ★ ★ ★

Since we are all agreed, I hope, that the blues are a basic ingredient of jazz, it's unfortunate that one of the best of the contemporary blues singer/shouters, Muddy Waters, is virtually unknown to most jazz listeners.

Both these sides are strongly brewed laments for a lost love with the second also a train song, a familiar category of classic blues. Waters accompanies himself on guitar. There are also bass, drums, and a rawly exuberant

Sonny Terry-like harmonica. Thoroughly recommended. —Nat Hentoff (June 13, 1956)



## Chet Baker

**IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU: CHET BAKER SINGS**—Riverside RLP12-278: *Do It The Hard Way; I'm Old Fashioned; You're Driving Me Crazy; It Could Happen To You; My Heart Stood Still; The More I See You; Everything Happens To Me; Dancing On The Ceiling; How Long Has This Been Going On?; Old Devil Moon.* **Personnel:** Baker, vocal, trumpet (3,5,6); Kenny Drew, piano; George Morrow (1,2,5,7,8) or Sam Jones (all other tracks), bass; Philly Joe Jones (1,2,5,7,8) or Dannie Richmond (all other tracks), drums.

★

Can you carry a tune? Is your time all right?

Sing! If your voice has hardly any range, hardly any volume, shaky pitch, no body or bottom, no matter. If it quavers a bit and if you project a certain tarnished, boyish (not exactly adolescent, almost childish) pleading, you'll make it. A certain kind of girl with strong maternal instincts but no one to mother will love you. You'll make it. The way you make it may have little or nothing to do with music, but that happens all the time anyway.

And if the whole thing frustrates you a bit, there's the trumpet. If you have a talent for lyric variations, use it a bit. Just employ a knowledge of modern jazz harmonies. And you can borrow someone else's style. Of course, you may not develop your own talent or even discover what it's like, but that goes on all the time, too. Anyway, you've got a large following and you've won a lot of polls, so who needs to develop his talent?

And by all means, go out and get good rhythm sections.

There are improvisations, "scat" choruses, on "Hard Way" and "Ceiling" where that fragile, melodic talent that Baker has, but has hardly explored, comes through the piping voice. What happened to that talent, and why has he almost given it up for imitation? Was it over-praise? Was he worried about whether he was playing jazz the way it was fashionably acceptable to play it? Whatever it was, at least some of the talent (maybe all of it) is still there. And it's his own. —Martin Williams (Jan. 8, 1959)

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**Ella Fitzgerald-Duke Ellington**

**ELLA FITZGERALD SINGS THE DUKE ELLINGTON SONGBOOK**—Verve 4008-2, 4009-2: *Rockin' In Rhythm; Drop Me Off In Harlem; Day Dream; Caravan; Take The "A" Train; I Ain't Got Nothin' But The Blues; Clementine; I Didn't Know About You; I'm Beginning To See The Light; Lost In Meditation; Perdido; Cotton Tail; Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me; Just Asittin' And Arockin'; Solitude; Rocks In My Bed; Satin Doll; Sophisticated Lady; Just Squeeze Me, But Don't Tease Me; It Don't Mean A Thing; Azure; I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart; In A Sentimental Mood; Don't Get Around Much Anymore; Prelude To A Kiss; Mood Indigo; In A Mellow Tone; Love You Madly; Lush Life; Squatty Roo; I'm Just A Lucky So And So; All Too Soon; Everything But You; I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good; Bli-Blip; Chelsea Bridge; Portrait Of Ella Fitzgerald (Royal Ancestry; All Heart; Beyond Category; Total Jazz); The E&D Blues.*

**Personnel:** Miss Fitzgerald, vocals; Ellington, piano, orchestra; Billy Strayhorn, pianos; Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet; Ben Webster, tenor; Stuff Smith, violin; Paul Smith, piano; Barney Kessel, guitar; Joe Mondragon, bass; Alvin Stoller, drums; Oscar Peterson, piano; Herb Ellis, guitar; Ray Brown, bass.

★★★★★

To bestow an excellent rating on this package of four 12-inch LPs is really a most inadequate method of evaluation. Such is the scope and variety of this music that an overall rating, while necessarily dictated by considerations of space, is far from ideal in judging its worth to today's jazz record buyer. A monumental undertaking it assuredly is. Most important, though, is that it comes off an artistic success.

Ella is heard in different musical settings: with the Ellington band on four sides; with a small group on the other four. On "Solitude," "Azure," and "Sentimental Mood" she sings to the sole accompaniment of Kessel's guitar; while on the second side of the third record Peterson, Ellis, and Brown take over from Smith, Kessel, and Mondragon.

"Rockin'," which opens the album, finds Ella scatting with the full band. "Harlem" shows off to fine advantage the solo trumpets of Ray Nance and Clark Terry. Johnny Hodges' limpid, soaring alto is afforded several airings; notable, though, is his almost-startling attack on the first note of "I Didn't Know About You." And, on the same take, the usual blend achieved between Ella's voice and the saxes in the final phrase is quite arresting.

Gillespie is in for only one number, the onrushing "A Train," during which he trades fours with Terry, Harold Baker, Willie Cook, Cat

Anderson, and Nance. The trumpet section on this take is on fire. Ella, too, is magnificent here. She seems wholly free, soaring, and swooping with the band. Her upward glide into the second vocal chorus is sheer delight.

On her tracks with the combo, Ella is heard in admirable contrast to the big band sides. Webster and Smith solo in their highly singular manner with Ben's take-off on "Rocks" the climax of the song. Stuff is angular, probing, and strong on his solo on "I Let A Song." The slow-walking "Squeeze Me" is individualized by a unison blend among Ella, Stuff, and Ben.

The only weak point in the package is Ella's rendition of "Lush Life." Entirely too romantic, she overdramatizes words in the wrong places and fails completely to communicate the world-weariness of Strayhorn's lyric. Ella sings this sophisticated lament of a disillusioned, ennui-ridden woman with the complacent coyness of an affected college girl.

Purporting as it does to limn in jazz Ella's character, the four-part "Portrait" is an engagingly exuberant vehicle for soloists Paul Gonsalves, Shorty Baker, Jimmy Hamilton, Terry, and trombonist John Sanders. Duke and Strayhorn verbally introduce each piece.

To wind up, Ella and the full band again join forces for the "E&D Blues," uptempo and wailing. It's a good close to the package, for the spirit is there, the happy groove that must have pervaded these history-making sessions.

An absolute must in any library, even at the hefty price of \$19.92, not including tax. But it's a double-sawbuck well spent.

—John A. Tynan (May 15, 1958)



**Ornette Coleman**

**THIS IS OUR MUSIC**—Atlantic 1353: *Blues Connotation; Beauty Is A Rare Thing; Kaleidoscope; Embraceable You; Poise; Humpty Dumpty; Folk Tale.*

**Personnel:** Coleman, alto saxophone; Donald Cherry, trumpet; Charlie Haden, bass; Eddie Blackwell, drums.

★

I have listened long and hard to Coleman's music since my first exposure to it. I have tried desperately to find something in it, something that could be construed valuable. I have been unsuccessful.

The technical abominations of his playing aside—and his lack of technical control is abominable—Coleman's music, to me, has only two shades: a maudlin, pleading lyricism and a wild ferocity bordering on bedlam.

His is not musical freedom; disdain for principles and boundaries is synonymous not with freedom but with anarchy. As evident on this record, Coleman's, and, to a certain extent, his cohorts', ideas come in snatches, with yawning depressions between these snatches filled with meaningless notes, none having much relation to the main idea—if there is one—nor, for that matter, to each other.

Some of the things Coleman plays and writes are nice. But they are no more than that. Although it begins promisingly, "Beauty" descends into an orgy of squawks from Coleman, squeals from Cherry, and above-the-bridge plinks from Haden. The resulting chaos is an insult to the listener's intelligence. It sounds like some horrible joke, and the question here is not whether this is jazz, but whether it is music. Coleman's playing on "Kaleidoscope" strikes me as incoherent. It seems as if there is a given amount of space to fill with notes, but it makes no difference to the player what notes are hurled into it. His solo consists mostly of flurries of notes that have no relation to one another or to the time that he's supposedly playing in. It is not pan-rhythmic; it is anti-swing.

Upon reflection, Ornette Coleman begins to look like a victim. He has been acclaimed a genius when he is not a genius. He has been made a symbol of musical freedom when he is the antithesis of that freedom. He has applied "naturalness" as a description of his music when, in truth, his music is chaotic. He has been espoused as the logical extension of Charlie Parker, but he is the illogical extension of that genius.

He is a victim of men who would not let him develop what talent he might have, what gift he might have brought to jazz. Instead, he has been pushed into the limelight before his time.

Obscurity too often has been taken for profundity, though the two terms are not synonyms. I do not understand the babblings of my two-year-old daughter. Does this make those sounds profound? Hardly.

—Don DeMicheal (May 11, 1961)

**Various Artists**

**MORRIS GRANTS PRESENTS JUNK**—Argo 4006: *Jumping With Symphony Sid; Gone With The Wind; Le Tup; Lonesome Road; Mack The Knife; Drumarama; Making Whoopee; Creative Love; However; 'Round Lunchtime; Frenesi; C Jam Blues.*

**Personnel:** Morris Brewbeck, Thelonielist Plunk, or Morris Garner, piano; Sol Desman, alto saxophone; Miles Morris, trumpet; Can-E-Ball Naturally, alto saxophone; Gene Blooper, drums; Merry Julligan, baritone saxophone; Bet Taker, trumpet; Ornette Morris, alto saxophone (plastic); Mon Cherie, trumpet (pocket); Morris Ferguson, trumpet.

rating: see below

Almost 17 years have passed since Norman Granz made a revolution in the presentation of jazz with his earliest Jazz at the Philharmonic concerts.

This memorable, indeed historic, recording must be described as *the* counterrevolution. And there is little doubt that Morris Grants has picked up where Norman Granz left off.

No rating is possible, let alone desirable, for this album. In fact, it might be said that it defies rating or even evaluation. It is, in short, a most remarkable recorded document of jazz at the crossroads. For that is where jazz finds itself today. It is poised in the intersection, hesitating, glancing apprehensively at the traffic light while the Mack trucks and trailers of the idiom rumble by, secure in their horsepower and impetus. Then there are the Volkswagens and Toyopets of jazz. They, too, are beeping into the intersection, inching forward cautiously, probing for a true direction.

The artists in this album display no such doubts, though they be neither Mack nor Toyopet. The fact that they are all unknowns is of no moment; they have chosen their direction, and they march toward their goal with conviction and unwavering courage. That goal is CHAOS.

Without exploring in detail the philosophy of the CHAOS principle in jazz, let it be summed up thus: You, like, blow. Then, when all the engrams have been expelled from the cortex via the horn, you have realized the CHAOTIC principle. Further, you have achieved the pinnacle of your art.

The musicians assembled for this recorded concert at Boston's Grove Hall Philharmonic are past masters at evicting engrams. All have much to offer the discerning ear; let it suffice to cite a few of these pioneers.

There is Ornette Morris, lonely and proud, truly the Fuehrer of jazz' New Order, towering monolithically above the pygmies snapping at his ankles while the adoring followers bay, "Heil!" And there is the introverted Morris Brewbeck, an artist lost in his own web of creation. At the opposite extreme is the extroversion of Morris Ferguson, his trumpet and his solid-fueled rocket, which only serve to reiterate that there is a place in our music for good, clean, healthy, uninhibited CHAOS.

This, then, is Jazz University's New Kicks, already well established by initials. Is it truly JUNK? You're damn right it is.

—John A. Tynan (June 8, 1961)



### Stan Getz

**FOCUS**—Verve 8412: *I'M LATE, I'M LATE; HER; PAN; I REMEMBER WHEN; NIGHT RIDER; ONCE UPON A TIME; A SUMMER AFTERNOON.*

**Personnel:** Getz, tenor saxophone; Hershy Kay, conductor; Roy Haynes, drums; Gerald Tarack, first violin; Alan Martin, second violin; Jacob Glick, viola; Bruce Rogers, cello; others unidentified.

★★★★★

Getz, one of the relatively few jazzmen who

truly deserve to be called creative *artists*, and Eddie Sauter, an important arranger who should be heard from more often, have produced a magnificent work that is almost sure to be counted among the dozen or so best records of 1962.

*Focus* is a pithy, thoughtful, and extraordinarily attractive set of seven pieces for string orchestra and tenor saxophone, not quite like anything ever before attempted. It ranks with

the best of the Gil Evans-Miles Davis collaborations and, more fittingly, the Neal Hefti-Charlie Parker gem "Repetition." Yet it is better balanced and even more ambitiously planned than any of those works. Moreover, it does not lose the spontaneity, lift, and inventiveness of good jazz playing.

Sauter wrote each of the thematically interrelated sections of the album as a nearly complete composition-orchestration, leaving the

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## CLASSIC REVIEWS

task of finishing the design to the ingenuity of Getz. His plan worked beautifully, for Getz plays like an angel from one end to the other of the 33½-minute work. Improvising *with*, rather than over or against, the composer's moods, Getz creates elegant countermelodies and independent lines that simultaneously draw substance from and give life to Sauter's handsome score.

The saxophonist's proliferous imagination, impeccable taste, and purity of tone can be heard at their best on "Her," a delicate but unsentimental vignette of almost overwhelming beauty. Here, as in other parts of the larger composition, conventional tonality seems to hang suspended for minutes at a time while Getz' incredible ear finds just the right notes to fit the melodic images suggested by the strings.

"I Remember When" is similarly effective as Getz moves sensitively in and out of the piece with sureness and finesse.

In each of the other sections, a complete idea is stated, developed, and completed with none of the usual clichés that so often turn up in the cyclic form applied to jazz. The strings do not interfere with the rhythm, they *are* the rhythm. There is no use of superficial waltz or mambo effects to hide the composer's lack of imagination. Sauter does not borrow classical forms but creates his own to fit his needs.

This is, in short, no pompous "jazz suite,"

"concerto," or warmed-over program stuff. Neither is it "mood" jazz nor "Stan Getz with Strings" in the usual sense. It is pure art music, encompassing a wide range of human reactions and feelings, from wonder and surprise through enchantment and joy to impatience and agitation. Here is an outstanding example of two fine artists, composer and improviser, creating together a whole piece greater than the sum of its individual parts.

*Focus* is an important milestone for Getz and Sauter alike.

—Richard B. Hadlock (March 29, 1962)

### Stan Kenton

**ADVENTURES IN TIME**—Capitol 1844: *COMMENCEMENT*; *QUINTILE*; *ARTEMIS*; 3x3x2x2x2 = 72; *MARCH TO POLARIS*; *SEPTUOR FROM ANTARES*; *ARTEMIS AND APOLLO*; *APERCU*.

**Personnel:** Dalton Smith, Gary Slavo, Bob Behrendt, Marv Stamm, Keith LaMotte, trumpets; Bob Fitzpatrick, Newell Parker, Tom Ringo, Jim Amlote, trombones; Ray Starling, Dwight Carver, Joe Burnett, Lou Gasca, mellophoniums; Dave Wheeler, tuba; Gabe Baltazar, Don Menza, Ray Florian, Allan Beutler, Joe Kaye, saxophones; Kenton, piano; Bucky Calabrese, bass; Dee Barton, drums; Steve Dweck, percussion.

rating: no rating

Kenton and composer Johnny Richards ought

to receive credit for the year's most novel LP idea: a do-it-yourself movie-scenario kit. Just put this disc on the turntable, sit back, and work up your own movie plot. All during this "concerto," for example, I was envisioning this rocket ship forced off its course by a strong gravitational pull and made to land on an eerie, desolate, uncharted planet.

The crew members, exploring the chilling, alien landscape, are surprised and taken prisoners by a band of androids who are armed with rayguns and taken to the court of the statuesque Amazonian chick who rules the planet. She, of course, is dressed in this gold lame toga and wears a metallic headdress emblazoned with some sort of cabalistic design. She's got eyes for the rocket ship, captain, and . . . you take it.

The Kenton band executes with considerable expertise the faintly exotic material Richards has concocted, but in the main, it seems just so much misspent energy for all concerned. Other than as an exercise in different time signatures (5/4, 9/8, 7/4, etc.), there would appear to be neither rhyme nor reason for this extended "suite." The charts are pointless, flatulent, ponderous melanges of effects that serve no purpose and no apparent musical ends.

It's all bluff and bravado—Kenton at his most pretentiously trying.

—Pete Welding (May 23, 1963)

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## Robert Johnson

**KING OF THE DELTA BLUES SINGERS**—Columbia 1654: *CROSSROADS BLUES*; *TERRAPLANE BLUES*; *COME ON IN MY KITCHEN*; *WALKING BLUES*; *LAST FAIR DEAL GONE DOWN*; *32-20 BLUES*; *KIND-HEARTED WOMAN BLUES*; *IF I HAD POSSESSION OVER JUDGMENT DAY*; *PREACHING BLUES*; *WHEN YOU GOT A GOOD FRIEND*; *RAMBLING ON MY MIND*; *STONES IN MY PASSWAY*; *TRAVELING RIVERSIDE BLUES*; *MILK COW'S CALF BLUES*; *ME AND THE DEVIL BLUES*; *HELLHOUND ON MY TRAIL*.

**Personnel:** Johnson, vocals, guitar.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

These 16 titles—some of them previously unused and some of them alternate takes—were done at several sessions in 1936-'37, the only recording dates of self-accompanying Mississippi Delta blues singer Robert Johnson.

Johnson died not long after the last date and before he was 21. Since then, his reputation has been almost legendary. He was a haunting singer, and he was a poet. I might also say that his work is a stark lesson to anyone who thinks that jazz and its progenitors are "fun" music or a kind of people's vaudeville.

Johnson's work apparently is the direct and uncluttered product of the Mississippi Delta blues tradition, and it is also a revelation to those who believe that the authentic "country" blues is limited in emotion and tempo to the slow moodiness of, say, Bill Broonzy's later days. For there is a variety of tempo and rhythm and attitude here that is a credit to the tradition, and in the hoarse directness of Johnson's voice there is an immediacy that cuts directly through the 25 years since these tracks were made.

The best blues deal in their own way with basic human experience, with things that all men in all times and conditions try to come to terms with. If I did not believe that, I would not call them poetry.

"Me and the devil was walking side by side/I'm going to beat my woman until I get satisfied."

"I got stones in my pathway, and my road is dark as night."

"I got to keep moving, I got to keep moving./ Blues falling down like hail, blues falling down like hail./ I can't keep no money, hellhound on my trail/hellhound on my trail, hellhound on my trail."

Those words are strong on paper, but when one hears Johnson sing them they are stronger still, and beautiful. His kind of emotional honesty takes bravery. And if jazz did not have such bravery in its background, it would surely not have survived.

Honor Robert Johnson.

—Martin Williams (May 24, 1962)



## John Coltrane

**A LOVE SUPREME**—Impulse! 77: *PART I—ACKNOWLEDGEMENT*; *PART II—RESOLUTION*; *PART III—PURSUANCE*; *PART IV—PSALM*.

**Personnel:** Coltrane, tenor saxophone; McCoy Tyner, piano; Jimmy Garrison, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This record is thoroughly a work of art. It is, according to Coltrane, a statement of his rediscovery of God—the supreme love—and is meant as praise of the Almighty.

I do not know how Coltrane's rediscovery has changed him as a man, but there is a change in his music—not a radical change, but one that has produced a peace not often heard in his playing previously, and Coltrane's peace induces reflection in the listener. It takes the form of startlingly beautiful lyricism that sometimes hovers over his accompaniment, as on "Psalm," a most moving performance. It is evident in the de-emphasis of the fury and frustration that had become such a part of Coltrane's work during the last three years.

His use of thematically developed motifs is excellent, particularly on "Acknowledgement" (a four-note, chantlike theme, which Coltrane also sings—"a love supreme"—after his solo). The melodicism that is such a striking characteristic of his playing on this album is more often chromatic than diatonic and, consequently, sometimes creates a bitonality that sets up a wonderful tension with Tyner's chords and Garrison's bass lines. Coltrane's artistry is evident in his never permitting tension to overcome its counterpoise, release. His solo on "Pursuance" contrasts with his other solos because it is more in the rampaging devil-dance style he has used in recent years; but within that soaring complexity he inserts touchstones of simplicity, which, of course, is the same tension-release device he uses in a different way in the other solos.

Tyner and Jones are their usual excellent selves. Garrison deserves special commendation for his playing on this record. His solo that bridges "Pursuance" and "Psalm" is a masterly piece of work. In it he makes subtle use of the four-note "Acknowledgement" theme, uses tempo for effect rather than point of reference, and brings off beautifully a series of strummed chords and single-note lines that eventually leads into "Psalm."

This is a significant album, because Coltrane has brought together the promising but underdeveloped aspects of his previous work; has shorn, compressed, extended, and tamed them; and has emerged a greater artist for it.

—Don DeMicheal (April 8, 1965)

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**Miles Davis**

**MILES IN THE SKY**—Columbia CS 9628; *STUFF*; *PARAPHERNALIA*; *BLACK COMEDY*; *COUNTRY BOY* [sic]. **Personnel:** Davis, trumpet; Wayne Shorter, tenor saxophone; George Benson, guitar (2); Herbie Hancock, piano, electric piano; Ron Carter, bass; Tony Williams, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Miles Davis has participated in one revolution in jazz and witnessed another which, verbally at least, he refuses to accept. When that second revolution was taking effect, midway between Miles' 1956 quintet and his present group, it seemed that he might be trapped in a pattern of self-imitation, but, as this record and the recent *Miles Smiles* show, he has triumphantly renewed himself.

Miles has always been a lyrical player with an affection for the American popular song, and in many of his best solos (the second "When Lights Are Low," "All Blues") he created a wonderful tension by approaching and then withdrawing from the symmetry and sweetness of Gershwin and Richard Rodgers. In one sense this way of playing can be called ironic. The player refers to a mood of simplicity and romantic sentiment and places himself at an emotional distance from it. If this describes the Miles of '55-'60, it is clear why he has been unable to accept the essence of Coleman and Coltrane, since Ornette has never found the popular song tradition to be relevant to his music, while Coltrane, for all the beauty of his middle-period ballads, finally abandoned it.

This record, one of the best that Miles has made with his present group, shows the effect of the Coleman-Coltrane revolution even as Miles denies it, for their assault on the popular song has pushed Miles along the only path that seems open to him, an increasingly ironic detachment from sentiment and prettiness.

Throughout this album, Miles takes material from his earlier days and darkens its emotional tone. His opening phrase on "Country Boy" [ed. note: "Country Son"] recalls a fragment from his "Summertime" solo on the *Porgy And Bess* album, but here it is delivered with a vehemence that rejects the poignancy of the earlier performance. Even on "Black Comedy," his most straightforward solo here, the orderly pattern of the past is displaced and fragmented.

As Miles' playing becomes more oblique, he risks losing continuity altogether. That he doesn't is due, in large measure, to his wonderfully sympathetic group. Wayne Shorter's solos echo Miles' ironic temperament, and his tune, "Paraphernalia," is a perfect example of the group's dead-pan comedy. It begins with a rhythm-section vamp that, in the past, would

have led directly into the theme. Here it is presented as an object in itself, over which the horns play a gentle, seemingly unrelated melody. During the solos the rhythm section periodically rises in the kind of crescendo that McCoy Tyner and Elvin Jones employed to push Coltrane to new heights of ecstasy, but here it is followed abruptly by a return of the opening vamp. The effect is wry as the soloists ride over the crescendo, knowing that at its end the background will demand that their passion be chastened rather than released.

"Stuff" is the rhythm section's tour de force. It establishes a pattern that hints at rock, bossa nova, country & western, and even an occasional ballroom glide. Tony Williams plays a rock beat but spaces it out and diminishes its volume. Herbie Hancock does some beautiful work on electric piano, emphasizing its relationship to electric guitar and organ. Ron Carter either plays electric bass on this track or his technique on the conventional bass enables him to simulate the rumbles and slides of the electronic instrument. Over this pattern Miles and Shorter play a theme that hints at a number of the uptempo conventions of the late '50s; but these phrases, slowed down to a walk, take on the strange grace of a man running under water.

On "Paraphernalia," George Benson's guitar is added, and he successfully captures the mood of the composition, subduing his bright, blues-based conception so he sounds almost like Jimmy Raney. "Country Boy" [sic] sums up the album's effect—an attempt by Miles to retain his style while pushing it to its limits. The track begins with Miles in full flight, but his first phrase (the "Summertime" echo) sounds like the middle of something, not a beginning. He ends the track in similar fashion, letting a phrase that seems to demand a resolution stand by itself. It is as if Miles were saying, "I don't need new material. I only have to look at the old in a new way."

This album indicates that, for himself at this time, he is absolutely right.

—Larry Kart (Oct. 3, 1968)



**Chick Corea**

**NOW HE SINGS, NOW HE SOBS**—Solid State 18039; *STEPS*—*WHAT WAS*; *MATRIX*; *NOW HE SINGS, NOW HE SOBS*; *NOW HE BEATS THE DRUM*—*NOW HE STOPS*; *THE LAW OF FALLING AND CATCHING UP*.

**Personnel:** Corea, piano; Miroslav Vitous, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

rating: none

Well. Quite clearly, I'm going mad. This record

contains superb group and individual playing; the concepts are original and intriguing, and Corea appears to be an important new piano voice. And I admire the album greatly. But I don't like it, I'm not moved by it, and I have no desire to hear it soon again.

Some of my reservations are explainable. The compositions, all by Corea, don't seem particularly complex. There is little stress on melody or chords; the album is made up of generally free playing, based on predetermined moods or rather simple rhythmic or harmonic figures.

But the above scarcely accounts for my reaction—nonreaction, rather. To make matters more puzzling, the rhythm section (unidentified on the jacket) is great. Haynes is one of the beautiful drummers; Corea couldn't ask for a more sympathetic percussionist. And Vitous, big-toned and swift, gets off some lovely slurs, has a brilliant ear for dissonance, and takes two inventive solos on "Steps" and "Beats—Stops."

The leader is the main voice, though, and he plays richly, covering the whole piano with both hands, and displaying a first-rate rhythmic sense. Despite this, his playing coagulates in my head. It's motion without direction, a sumptuous chocolate icing with no cake. I think.

The one Corea solo that does communicate strongly to me is on "Sings—Sobs." He never dwells for long on one particular idea, but the solo has a logic I often miss in his others.

The final cut is impressive, too—a brief and oddly delicate conclusion to the session.

My response to the album is equivalent to maybe three stars, but it's possible—very possible—that it's a great session that I haven't the ears to hear. I'd advise listening to it. And if you figure out what's wrong with it, or me, let me know.

—Alan Heineman (May 29, 1969)



**The Beatles**

**ABBEY ROAD**—Apple SO-383; *COME TOGETHER*; *SOMETHING*; *MAXWELL'S SILVER HAMMER*; *OH! DARLING*; *OCTOPUS' GARDEN*; *I WANT YOU (SHE'S SO HEAVY)*; *HERE COMES THE SUN*; *BECAUSE*; *MEDLEY: YOU NEVER GIVE ME YOUR MONEY*; *SUN KING*; *MEAN MR. MUSTARD*; *POLYTHELENE PAM*; *SHE CAME IN THROUGH THE BATHROOM WINDOW*; *GOLDEN SLUMBERS*; *CARRY THAT WEIGHT*, *THE END*; *HER MAJESTY*.

**Personnel:** John Lennon, George Harrison, guitars, vocal; Paul McCartney, bass, vocal; Ringo Starr, drums, vocal; unidentified keyboards (piano, organ, Moog synthesizer), strings, percussion; George Martin, recording director.

★ ★ ★ ★

Is there anyone who doesn't like the Beatles? Their latest album provides no reasons for any

change in one's esteem for the four intrepid Liverpuddlians, who so far have pretty well weathered the various temptations of fame and fortune, John Lennon's dillet-antics with his betrothed to the contrary notwithstanding.

What is it that makes the Beatles so likeable? Maybe it is that they never seem to strain for effects yet are meticulous craftsmen; that their humor, even when rather gruesome (as on "Maxwell's Silver Hammer"), is never offensive; that their satire (as on "Oh! Darling," a masterful takeoff on '50s groups) is never malicious, their lyricism (as on "Something" or "Sun King") never maudlin, but that their work still has punch and conviction. Or maybe it can all be summed up in that old, unfashionable phrase "good taste"—plus genuine musicality and poetic imagination.

This is high caliber Beatles fare; the missing star is merely in deference to their very best works, among which I would include the generally underestimated *Magical Mystery Tour*.

—Dan Morgenstern (Jan. 22, 1970)



### Anthony Braxton

**FOR ALTO**—Delmark DS 420/421: *Dedicated To Multi-instrumentalist Jack Gell; To Composer John Cage; To Artist Murray De Pillars; To Pianist Cecil Taylor; Dedicated To Ann And Peter Allen; Dedicated To Susan Axelrod; To My Friend Kenny McKenny; Dedicated To Multi-instrumentalist Leroy [sic] Jenkins.*  
**Personnel:** Braxton, alto sax.

★★★★★

When the editor laid this album on me, he told me that it contains four sides of unaccompanied alto saxophone solos. How revolutionary? Not completely. Back in 1720, J.S. Bach wrote six sonatas for unaccompanied violin and six suites for unaccompanied cello. Still, this recording is revolutionary, for the saxophone is normally capable of producing only one note at a time, whereas strings are capable of multiple stops.

Anthony Braxton is a living, breathing player whose work, like that of so many of the avant garde, is of an extremely personal nature. By fully exposing his inner emotions, Braxton has left himself vulnerable to criticism. Yet it is unfair to express criticism of honesty. If there are faults (and I have not found any with the playing or writing on this album), the listener has little choice but to overlook them because they are expressions of personal experiences and feelings which only Braxton himself can judge properly.

For this reason, I debated whether or not to

put any rating on this album. I finally arrived at the conclusion that even as an expression of nothing more than my personal enjoyment of what I heard, the album deserves a five-star rating.

Bill Quinn's liner notes ask the musical question, "Who is Anthony Braxton?" The best way to answer it is to dig these four sides.

—Joe H. Klee (June 24, 1971)



### Various Artists

**WOODSTOCK**—Cotillion SD 3-500.  
 rating: one cosmic huzzah

"... here we are ... trapped in the amber of this moment. There is no why. ... ." (Kurt Vonnegut Jr.)

History is myth.

—Mike Bourne (Aug. 20, 1970)

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## CLASSIC REVIEWS



### Herbie Hancock

**HEADHUNTERS**—Columbia KC 32721: *CHAMELEON; WATERMELON MAN; SLY; VEIN MELTER.*

**Personnel:** Hancock, electric piano, clavinet, synthesizers, pipes; Bennie Maupin, soprano and alto saxophones, bass clarinet, saxello, alto flute; Paul Jackson, electric bass, marimbula; Harvey Mason, drums; Bill Summers, assorted percussion.

★★★★★

*Headhunters* is Hancock's second Columbia release in less than a year, and the first to be heard since he put together his new group a couple of months ago, forming it out of a desire to communicate more directly with the audience. It's evident from listening to the new ensemble, in live performance and on this LP,

that Herbie translates "communicate directly" pretty much into "get down." The warp-drive electronic spaceflights of *Crossings* and *Sextant* have given way to a more basic music, harmonically simple and rhythmically earthy.

*Headhunters'* music, like that of *Sextant*, features a strongly charged rhythm section, mixed at a high level in the recording. But the rhythmic approaches of Hancock's new and old music differ, especially when it comes to drum style. Billy Hart, Hancock's former drummer, kept an irregular pace, alternating short and long blasts while leaving the steady bottom to Buster Williams' bass. Harvey Mason, of the new band, flows more evenly, energetically dancing around the basic riffs he sets. Bassist Paul Jackson shares Mason's light touch, but keeps a solid line and a soulful pulse. Moreover, Hancock himself is playing a more percussive keyboard these days. He stays closer to the rhythm laid down by Mason and Jackson, and is less apt to take off on flights of harmonic color commentary, as he did on his previous albums.

Hancock has both the skills and the creative vision to escape the trap of repetition that the deceptively simpler approach will now present to him. Let's hope that *Headhunters* will expand the number of fellow travelers on his musical flights. It's an LP that speaks its message—loud and clear.

—Chuck Mitchell (Jan. 17, 1974)



### Weather Report

**MR. GONE**—Columbia JC 35358: *THE PURSUIT OF THE WOMAN WITH THE FEATHERED HAT; RIVER PEOPLE; YOUNG AND FINE; THE ELDERLY; MR. GONE; PUNK JAZZ; PINOCCHIO; AND THEN.*

**Personnel:** Josef Zawinul, keyboards, kalimbas, thumbeki drums, sleigh bells, melodica, high hat, voice, Oberheim bass; Wayne Shorter, soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone, alto saxophone; Jaco Pastorius, drums, bass, timpani, voice; Peter Erskine, drums, high hat (1,3,7); Steve Gadd (3,8), Tony Williams (5,6), drums; Manolo Badrena (1), Jon Lucien (1), Deniece Williams (8), Maurice White (8), vocals.

★

*Weather Report* has done to jazz in the '70s what Paul Whiteman did to it in the '20s. Like Whiteman, *Weather Report* took progressive jazz out of the clubs and into the concert halls, exposing millions of people to its brand of music. Zawinul, Shorter, et. al., have made the controversial music a commercial product; unfortunately, also like Whiteman, *Weather Report* has over-orchestrated its sound. Where Whiteman's band made hot jazz saccharine, *Weather Report* has made experimentation sound processed.

It seems the general *Weather Report* idea now is to fill each composition with a mechanical bass ostinato, dense synthesized chording, and funky, cluttered drumming. Alternating among three drummers—and dispensing with the usual percussionist—does little to help break the monotony of this format. Zawinul's insistent multi-tracking distorts the sound—it's impossible to distinguish the bass contributions of his co-producer, Pastorius, amid the overbearing mix. While Zawinul has lost none of his technical prowess with studio manipulations, by placing one track against another rather than musicians against each other he has lost an important sense of dialogue. By pre-setting the bass patterns, much freedom of improvisation is removed. There may be an attempt to combine jazz with West European electronic music trends, but Zawinul's use of his electronic keyboards is too rigid and confining, and it is as if in his attempt to free the band from the restrictions of conventional acoustic instrumentation, he has established a whole new set of equally restrictive guidelines.

The playful *Weather Report* melodic lines are all but gone from this LP. "Young And Fine" possesses a pleasantly lyrical melody, but it is never developed, merely repeated. Compared to classic *Weather Report* tunes like "Nubian Sundance" (on *Mysterious Traveller*) or "Unknown Soldier" (from *I Sing The Body Electric*), the song is a definite digression in terms of compositional sophistication, nor is it as catchy

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and bound to be covered as "Boogie Woogie Waltz" (from *Sweetnighter*) or "Birdland" (on *Heavy Weather*).

In the few instances on *Mr. Gone* when the sound is not pregnant with superfluous electronic gimmickry, flashes of brilliance surface. "Pinocchio," which Shorter first recorded during his days with Miles Davis, is given a nice but too short treatment; "The Elders" is an intriguing composition, the most spacious on the album, but becomes too predictable as solo follows solo, dubbed over synthesized ostinato. Tony Williams sounds good on the title track, but has played better elsewhere, as has everyone else involved.

Despite scattered moments and the too brief contributions of Shorter and Williams, *Mr. Gone* never gets off the ground. Even Maurice White's vocal abilities on "And Then" are lackluster, making the tune sound like Earth, Wind & Fire without the punch. The other vocalists are used for backgrounds only, and a male chorus on "Pursuit" is banal, though the band successfully incorporated this device many albums back.

Where earlier Weather Report records possessed a sense of adventure, *Mr. Gone* is coated with the sterility of a too-completely preconceived project. Weather Report's status has shifted over the years from a combo of premier jazz-rock innovators to a super-hip rock band with jazz overtones. This LP should prove disappointing to those Weather Report fans who still remember the genuine excitement of its earlier efforts.

—David Less (Jan. 11, 1979)



## John Scofield

**BLUE MATTER**—Gramavision 8702: *BLUE MATTER*; *TRIM*; *HEAVEN HILL*; *SO YOU SAY*; *NOW SHE'S BLONDE*; *MAKE ME*; *THE NAG*; *TIME MARCHES ON*.

**Personnel:** Scofield, guitar; Gary Grainger, electric bass; Dennis Chambers, drums; Mitchell Forman, keyboards; Don Alias, percussion; Hiram Bullock, rhythm guitar (1,5,6).

★★★★★

The groove. It's an almost mystical concept, hard to explain (especially to non-musicians). But when the rhythm section is clicking, when everything is in-the-pocket—then the soloist is really free to soar. That's what happens on *Blue Matter*, and that's why it's the best album that John Scofield has made. So far.

Funk and blues are dominant, but there are also touches of gospel ("Heaven Hill"), calypso ("So You Say"), New Orleans parade music ("Trim"), even heavy metal ("Make Me"). Of course, Scofield has been making clever use of

his influences for years.

The impressive range of the music owes a lot to the strong supporting roles played by Mitch Forman, Don Alias, and Hiram Bullock, and especially to Steve Swallow for his in-your-face production. Even so, some of these tunes might sound fairly ordinary if the grooves weren't so powerful. This album just cooks.

—Jim Roberts (June 1987)

PAT METHENY

ORNETTE COLEMAN

SONG X

CHARLIE HADEN

JACK DEJOHNETTE

DENARDO COLEMAN

## Pat Metheny/ Ornette Coleman

**SONG X**—Geffen 29046: *SONG X*; *MOB JOB*; *ENDANGERED SPECIES*; *VIDEO GAMES*; *KATHELIN GRAY*; *TRIGONOMETRY*; *SONG X DUO*; *LONG TIME NO SEE*.

**Personnel:** Metheny, guitar, guitar synthesizer; Coleman, alto saxophone, violin; Charlie Haden, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Denardo Coleman, drums, percussion.

★★★★★

*Song X* is great fun to listen to and, very possibly, important to hear. It's a remarkable union of the true and the new, a fusion of the bedrock human sound of Ornette's alto with the sometimes jarring, mostly bracing electronic capabilities of Pat's guitar-synth, a collaboration of a mature and still idealistic musical visionary with an honestly selfless, spirited, talented, optimistic, nearly liberated seeker outgrowing his youth. Not to discount the uplifting resilience of a great rhythm team—Charlie Haden anchors every track (except the duo) as surely as gravity holds us to earth; Jack DeJohnette propels a scrupulous, detailed swing; Denardo Coleman projects the freedom, variety, and ease of the body's natural rhythms with the unpredictable grace of a sports star mid-play.

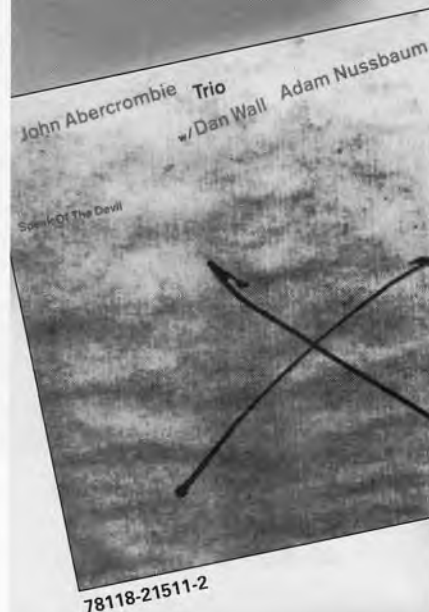
From the title track's opening unison (which shortly gives way to Coleman's characteristic hiccup riffs and Metheny's free-stream-of-notes para- or counter-phrasing) through the bluesy, idiosyncratic melody of "Mob Job," the collective holocaust of "Endangered Species," Pat's Pac-Man maze chase into "Video Games," the co-composed affectionate insight of the ballad "Kathelin Gray," the extensions of "Trigonometry," the comfortably mutual improvisation of "Song X" by altoist and guitarist alone, to the final glinting echo of Coleman's welcome back, pal "Long Time No See," music leaps off this record without impulse-denying self-consciousness.

Ornette is direct and discursive, his sound warm, wise, funny, and tender, prophetic, and descriptive, unmistakable in its restless stretch

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## CLASSIC REVIEWS

of the straitjacket of tempered intonation, as unique in its patterns as a poet's breath. Pat is neither placid nor ethereal, nor does he brood; he proudly brings princely technical skills and the passionate abandon of a garage-rocker to his gleefully self-imposed task of understanding a hero's thought, the better to expand his own. His aim is to surpass his past by discarding mannerisms, to realize an unmediated musical state. As Ornette encouraged the child Denardo (whose adult deployment of electronic drums rewards attention) to regard his uneducated effusions as legitimate expressions, so does he validate Pat's willingness to set aside what's in his head and let his fingers follow his released intuition.

—Howard Mandel (Aug. 1986)



### Charlie Haden/ Liberation Music Orchestra

**DREAM KEEPER**—Blue Note CDP 7 95474 2:  
*DREAM KEEPER (DREAM KEEPER PART 1, FELICIANO AMA, DREAM KEEPER PART 2, CANTO DEL PILON 1, DREAM KEEPER PART 3, CANTO DEL PILON 2, HYMN OF THE ANARCHIST WOMEN'S MOVEMENT, DREAM KEEPER PART 4); RABO DE NUBE; NKOSI SIKELI' AFRIKA; SANDINO; SPIRITUAL. (48:43)*

**Personnel:** Haden, bass; Tom Harrell, trumpet, flugelhorn; Earl Gardner, trumpet; Ray Anderson, trombone; Ken McIntyre, alto saxophone; Branford Marsalis (1,5), Dewey Redman (2-4), tenor saxophone; Joe Lovano, tenor saxophone, flute; Sharon Freeman, french horn; Joe Daley, tuba; Amina Claudine Myers, piano; Mick Goodrick, guitar; Paul Motian, drums; Don Alias, percussion; Juan Lazzaro Mendolas, pan pipes, wood flutes; Oakland Youth Chorus (1,5); Carla Bley, conductor.

★★★★★

It's been 21 years since the first recording of the Liberation Music Orchestra, and its message is no less meaningful or urgent today. How rare it is to hear music—beautiful, inspiring music—with a conscience and a soul. True, music is an abstract, non-rhetorical art form, but here the themes, from El Salvador, Cuba, Venezuela, the Spanish Civil War, and South Africa, create an extramusical backdrop which helps promote an awareness of war and other social and political injustices.

The LMO emphasizes involvement and cooperation in deed as well as thought. The main thrust of the music is in ensemble; the soloists blend into the fabric of the arrangements and are supported by the orchestra. (Credit Carla Bley's brush for the subtle touches—such as

pan pipes and trombone behind Ken McIntyre's alto on "Canto Del Pilon 1"—as well as the broad strokes.) Though the orchestra's personnel has changed somewhat, certain constants remain from the band's previous recordings on Impulse and ECM. Bley's rich arrangements make characteristic use of tuba, french horn, and massed brass, and she once more weaves a striking melody, threading her haunting setting of Langston Hughes' poem "As I Grew Older" in and out of the traditional material on the title composition. Mick Goodrick's acoustic guitar again lends a tranquil authenticity to the Spanish moods, echoing the late Sam Brown on the group's debut. But there are new details, too. The rip-snorting trombone role has passed from Roswell Rudd to Gary Valente to, here, Ray Anderson. Tom Harrell's bright, piercing trumpet replaces Don Cherry's pluck. Ken McIntyre brings a unique sizzle to his solos. And the Oakland Youth Chorus adds a special poignance to "Dream Keeper" and "Spiritual."

The music may lack the boiling undercurrent of rage and near-chaos that so energized their debut, but this is replaced by a sense of solidarity and resolve. At the center of it all is the warm, human sound of Haden's bass, soloing eloquently, and providing the foundation for the passion and intensity of the saxophonists in "Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika," the vibrancy of "Feliciano Ama," "Rabo De Nube"'s longing, and the affirmation of Haden's own "Spiritual." The dream is safe in his hands.

—Art Lange (May 1991)



### Branford Marsalis

**THE BEAUTIFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN**—Columbia CK 46990; *ROUSED ABOUT; THE BEAUTIFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN; XAVIER'S LAIR; GILLIGAN'S ISLE; CAIN & ABEL; CITIZEN TAIN; DEWEY BABY; BEAT'S REMARK.*

**Personnel:** Marsalis, soprano sax (1,2,8), tenor sax (3-7); Robert Hurst, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums; Wynton Marsalis, trumpet (5); Courtney Pine, tenor sax (7).

★★★★★

Although this album is dedicated to Stan Getz, it bears the unmistakable stamp of Ornette Coleman, specifically Coleman's *The Shape Of Jazz To Come*. The title cut, a dark, melancholy suite, makes allusions to Ornette's "Lonely Woman" as it twists and turns from soothing passages to turbulent peaks. And the head to the haunting "Gilligan's Isle" seems based on a riff from Ornette's "Peace." The Ornette connection is further apparent in the organic Haden-

Higgins-styled hookup of Hurst and Watts, rhythm-section mates in Branford's quartet since 1989. They are all truly of one accord on this adventurous, excellent album, Branford's seventh and easily his finest.

While he merely toyed with the idea on the good-natured (if sloppy) *Trio Jeepy*, Branford gets deep with the trio format of interplay and group improvisation along the way. He and his empathic mates seem to be breathing the music together on free, swinging vehicles like "Xavier's Lair" and "Roused About," inspired by Charlie Rouse's work with Thelonious Monk. But the height of oneness is achieved on "Cain & Abel," a jaunty quartet number featuring some telepathic exchanges between Branford's tenor and Wynton's trumpet as they engage in conversation and complete each other's thoughts while Hurst and Watts bubble away underneath.

Branford plays with a warm, burnished tone and astonishing fluidity on soprano and brings a new fierceness to his tenor playing, particularly on the frantic "Dewey Baby," a raucous two-tenor battle with Courtney Pine based on a riff by Dewey Redman.

Those who wrote off *Trio Jeepy* as some kind of gimmicky in-joke will have to reassess Branford's standing after *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*.

—Bill Milkowski (Nov. 1991)



## Joe Henderson

**SO NEAR, SO FAR (MUSINGS FOR MILES)**—Verve 314 517 674: *MILES AHEAD*; *JOSHUA*; *FRANCING (NO BLUES)*; *FLAMENCO SKETCHES*; *MILESTONES*; *TEO*; *SWING SPRING*; *CIRCLE*; *SIDE CAR*; *SO NEAR, SO FAR*. (72:56)

**Personnel:** Henderson, tenor saxophone; John Scofield, guitar; Dave Holland, bass; Al Foster, drums.

★★★★★

Too often, discussions of Miles Davis' greatness as a bandleader center on his choice of personnel and his catalytic gifts in the studio and in concert. Discs like *So Near, So Far* (*Musings For Miles*) will shift the focus onto his richly varied compositions. Spanning the years between his '47 debut as a leader for Savoy and the quintet-plus-George Benson sides in '68, these 10 tunes only scratch the surface of Miles' output. Still, just as Ellington, Monk, and Mingus' compositions were the cornerstones of their bandleading methodologies, *So Near, So Far* cogently argues this to be the case with Davis, too.

Joe Henderson, a Miles alum by virtue of four weekend gigs in '67, is masterful throughout

this well-sequenced program, toasting sublime lyricism on "Miles Ahead," invoking Iberian mysteries on "Flamenco Sketches," and summoning fire on "Side Car." Yet, he's not the dominant voice in this quartet. John Scofield, Dave Holland, and Al Foster make defining contributions on each track. Collectively, they strike the golden Milesian balance that the music is best served by each musician's most personal statements.

This is an excellent Miles album.

—Bill Shoemaker (March 1993)



## Cassandra Wilson

**BLUE LIGHT 'TIL DAWN**—Blue Note B4 0777 7 81357 4: *YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS*; *COME ON IN MY KITCHEN*; *TELL ME YOU'LL WAIT FOR ME*; *CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT*; *HELLHOUND ON MY TRAIL*; *BLACK CROW*; *SANKOFA*; *ESTRELLAS*; *REDBONE*; *TUPELO HONEY*; *BLUE LIGHT 'TIL DAWN*; *I CAN'T STAND THE RAIN*. (56:13)

**Personnel:** Wilson, vocals; Brandon Ross, Chris Whitley (12), various guitars; Kenny Davis, Lonnie Plaxico (10), bass; Olu Dara, cornet (5); Don Byron, clarinet (6); Charles Burnham, violin (1,10); Lance Carter, drums, percussion; Vinx, percussion, voice (4,6); Kevin Johnson, Bill McCellan, Jeff Haynes, Cyro Baptista, percussion; Gib Wharton, pedal steel guitar; Tony Cedras, accordion (2).

★★★★★

*Blue Light 'Til Dawn* immediately impresses as Cassandra Wilson's strongest, most consistent recording. With producer Craig Street, Wilson creates a new environment for her distinctive vocals: acoustic, open, and earthy. They've jettisoned keyboards and most horns, opting for bare-bones support from Brandon Ross' blues and classical guitars, African/Brazilian percussion, and a little bass. Street never crowds his singer with frills. Wilson's low, smoky voice predominates as she hovers and swoops, shaping melodies and carrying the songs.

Alongside torch songs, notably a stark "You Don't Know What Love Is," Wilson brings a jazz singer's phrasing and nuance to Robert Johnson tunes, South African harmonies, and folk/pop material from Van Morrison and Joni Mitchell. She sees beyond distinctions of style and genre, pulling these elements together, emphasizing themes of restlessness and unrequited love.

Brandon Ross doesn't get the attention he deserves playing with Henry Threadgill and Leroy Jenkins, but his versatility and feel for Delta blues are vital. Wilson's approach to Robert Johnson softens the menace of his

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## CLASSIC REVIEWS

songs, but preserves the gritty essence. (Cassandra's "Hellhound On My Trail," voiced by Olu Dara's cornet, sounds no more ominous than a schnauzer.) Part jazz, part blues, and with a lot of "beyond," *Blue Light* should win her many new admirers. —*Jon Andrews* (Dec. '93)



### Shirley Horn

**HERE'S TO LIFE**—Verve 314 511 879-2: *HERE'S TO LIFE; COME A LITTLE CLOSER/WILD IS THE WIND; HOW AM I TO KNOW?; A TIME FOR LOVE; WHERE DO YOU START?; YOU'RE NEARER; RETURN TO PARADISE; ISN'T IT A PITY?; QUIETLY THERE; IF YOU LOVE ME; SUMMER (ESTATE)*. (62:12)

**Personnel:** Horn, vocals, piano; Charles Ables, bass; Steve Williams, drums; Wynton Marsalis, trumpet (4,9); with full orchestra.

★★★★★

This album is all about emotion. It gushes softly, elegantly. Thanks, in part, to the masterful, heartfelt orchestral brushstrokes of veteran composer/arranger Johnny Mandel, Shirley Horn sings her life through a set of standards that threaten to unseat even the shrillest of temperaments. *Here's To Life* routinely avoids the commonplace, clichéd, and hackneyed indulgences of most ballad-singer-meets-strings programs. In fact, the very large orchestral backing (anywhere from 40 to 50 musicians?) performs discreetly, fully supportive of Horn's voice and piano, somehow sounding a third its size. (According to the liner notes, this is a project/collaboration Horn's been waiting for since 1963.)

Dedicated to Miles Davis, who died during the recording of the orchestral parts (added to the trio tracks), *Here's To Life* can be seen as a defiant and loving testimonial to the living image of someone who obviously meant so much to her. Horn's overall pacing and emphasis, her legato phrasings and wispy, delicate vocalizing come as close to approximating Davis' ballad trumpet style as any singer I've heard.

On board are Horn's regular sidemen, Charles Ables and Steve Williams. Like Mandel's accompaniments, the bassist and drummer add texture, warmth, nuance, never distracting or drawing undue attention to themselves. The tempos are most often impossibly, delightfully slow—with lots of space (another Miles thing) that *could* have resulted in orchestral clutter or forced colors. Listen to Mandel's "A Time For Love" for an example of a melody that moves along at a snail's pace, as if with no particular place to go. Mandel adds some flutes, strings are muted, Shirley's voice is right next to you.

Avoiding the cloyingly sweet and overdone, everything here is fresh, as if sung and played for the first time. Horn's age and experience go with the repertoire, her voice so convincing as she sings of love, longing, good times (when tried by any number of spring chickens out there seeking to recapture the standards rep, the results are often comic, if not absurd). Speaking of youth, Wynton Marsalis' scrub-brushed recital trumpet, at first offering a nice contrast to the overall sheen, is essentially chilly and distant, at odds with the emotional bent of this program. A poor replacement for the originally intended solo trumpet of Miles Davis, Marsalis' sound ironically tilts "A Time For Love" and "Quietly There" in the direction of so-called easy-listening music.

More than last year's uneven *You Won't Forget Me*, *Here's To Life's* elegant soul food affirms Shirley Horn as today's premier ballad stylist. —*John Ephland* (July 1992)



### Joe Lovano

**UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE**—Blue Note CDP 7 99830 2: *LUNA PARK; SCULPTURE; JOSIE & ROSIE; THIS IS ALWAYS; WORSHIP; CLEVELAND CIRCLE; THE DAWN OF TIME; LOST NATIONS; HYPNOSIS; CHELSEA RENDEVOUS*. (63:59)

**Personnel:** Lovano, tenor, soprano and alto saxes, alto clarinet, wood flute, gongs, percussion; Judi Silvano, soprano voice; Tim Hagans, trumpet; Kenny Werner, piano; Steve Swallow, electric bass; Scott Lee, bass (5,10); Charlie Haden, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

★★★★★

On *Universal Language*, his most intensely personal and adventurous undertaking to date, Joe Lovano showcases his impressive compositional/arranging chops as well as his authoritative horn. The uptempo swinger "Josie & Rosie," based on Dizzy Gillespie's "Woody 'n You," harkens back to Joe's days in the Woody Herman big band, while the meditative "Worship," written for two entwining sopranos, tuned gongs, and bowed bass, could have been composed while on retreat at a Zen monastery.

The droning interplay between Joe's searching tenor and Kenny Werner's powerful block chording on "Sculpture" carries a distinct McCoy-Trane vibe, while Joe's burly tone on the romantic ballad "This Is Always" bears the Ben Webster-Coleman Hawkins stamp. His more avant side is represented by the uptempo Ornette-ish vehicle "Hypnosis." Throughout, Jack DeJohnette's drumming brings out a more aggressive edge to Joe's playing.

Joe Lovano makes an evolutionary leap in his career with this remarkable album.

—*Bill Milkowski* (June 1993)

## 1 Jazz

### Messengers

"Sportin' Crowd" (from *AT THE CAFE BOHEMIA*, Blue Note) Kenny Dorham, trumpet; Hank Mobley, tenor saxophone, composer; Horace Silver, piano; Doug Watkins, bass; Art Blakey, drums.

That was the Jazz Messengers, of course, which consisted of Art Blakey—you could tell right away, by that intro—and Kenny Dorham, Horace, Doug, and Hank Mobley. I think the overall content of the record itself excused that rough beginning.

That was a very potent solo that KD played, and that was a nice backup figure that Horace and Art did behind him. . . . I think it was about his fourth or fifth chorus along in there. But in general, I felt Horace at that particular time seemed like he overcomped a little bit. . . . When you play with as much of a musician as Kenny Dorham and Hank Mobley are, it isn't necessary for a piano player to put all those chords on it . . . but it still swung.

This Blue Note series with the Messengers—I was kind of weaned on these records; this is when I really started getting ahold of the beat and really knowing what a beat is. Art gave me a real good concept of 1, 2, 3, and 4 as far as being able to swing and knowing where you are in each bar and in each eight measures, each chorus and so forth. I'd rate that 3 stars.

## 2 Charles Mingus

"Take The 'A' Train" (from *MINGUS REVISITED*, Limelight) Ted Curson, trumpet; Jimmy Knepper, trombone; Booker Ervin, Joe Farrell, Yusef Lateef, tenor saxophones; Roland Hanna, piano; Mingus, bass; Billy Strayhorn, composer.

It was "'A' Train," of course, Duke's tune . . . the first tenor player sounded like Booker Ervin. The second tenor player, I didn't know who that was. The third tenor player sounded like Yusef Lateef; in fact, I'm pretty sure that was Yusef. The bass player sounded very impressive on the first solo, behind Booker. Might possibly have been Charlie Mingus; maybe Jaki Byard on piano.

It was a nice, enjoyable thing, especially when the trumpet player came in on the end and kind of screamed it out there briefly . . . very humorous, like the humor in the trumpet styling of Clark Terry.

I don't think I could have listened to it much longer than that three minutes that the record lasted . . . sounded like the solos were cut kind of short. Yusef, I know, has a lot of endurance and can play good for a long time. Felt like the second tenor player and Yusef really didn't get to . . . seemed like they were waved off; time, cut—that style.

## JOE HENDERSON

From our July 14, 1966 issue . . .

by Leonard Feather

Joe Henderson is the type of artist best classified Musician Deserving Wider Recognition. Though he had his own combo in Detroit in 1960 and co-led a group with trumpeter Kenny Dorham in 1962-'63, it was not until a couple of years ago, when he joined Horace Silver's group, that he became the subject of optimistic estimates by jazzmen around New York.

Now 29, Henderson is a fast-maturing soloist whose obvious admiration for John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, and Sonny Rollins has not resulted in confused eclecticism. To quote pianist Andrew Hill, with whom he recorded in 1965, "Joe is going to be one of the greatest tenor players, because he has the imagination to make it in the avant-garde camp, but he has so much emotion, too."



This was Henderson's first Blindfold Test. The first record was used because it showed how two of his former close associates, Dorham and Silver, sounded some 10 years ago.

I'd give that 2 stars. And a half-star for the humorous trumpet that came in there on the end.

## 3 Ornette Coleman

"Enfant" (from *ORNETTE ON TENOR*, Atlantic) Coleman, tenor saxophone, composer; Don Cherry, trumpet; Jimmy Garrison, bass; Ed Blackwell, drums.

This was, in my estimation, a very important date, along with some of Ornette's earlier dates.

It was very important insofar as the direction of music, jazz, specifically the avant garde so-called; and I say this as a term that everybody is generally familiar with. When they say avant garde, you automatically think of a certain area of concept of sound.

I'm sure that Ornette is largely responsible for this direction today, even though people like Lennie Tristano, Warne Marsh, Lee Konitz—who also played a very important role in my younger and embryonic stages of music—they had kind of a far-out thing going also at that time. But this had a little more of a form to it—seemed like it was a little more consistent.

Ornette inspired me to move from the canal-like narrow-mindedness of the '40s through the latter '50s to the later Grand Canyon-like harmonic awareness of the '60s. I think he was very important in this. I

think he might have had some sort of a bearing on Sonny Rollins and the impeccable John Coltrane.

That was Don Cherry playing trumpet, who I admire very much, especially some of the work he did with Sonny Rollins and Ornette, too.

I'll lay 4½ stars on Ornette and give him a half a star for inspiration, because he kind of ducked off the scene there for a minute; I don't know why.

## 4 Stan Getz

"Blowin' In The Wind" (from *REFLECTIONS*, Verve) Getz, tenor saxophone; Bob Dylan, composer; Claus Ogerman, arranger.

Yeah, that, without a doubt, was the warm, arresting, and caressing sound of Stan Getz. One of my first influences, playing a bit more commercial than you generally hear him—nevertheless playing very good, and if you're in the mood for it, acceptable; I mean even considering his musical worth.

The arrangement was mostly a stock, commercial-type arrangement, not too involved . . . seemed like they were trying to reach a mass audience on this. But good, you know. I've heard this melody somewhere. Playing with Horace so long you only get a chance to hear Horace's tunes.

I'll give Stan 3½ stars on that. The half-star from what he offered me as conditioning and foundation in my earlier years, which was very necessary to me at the time. **DB**