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# DOWN BEAT

*Jazz, Blues & Beyond*

## Prove It

**Grover Washington Jr.  
Flexes Straightahead Chops**

**Horace Silver is Back!**

**Frank Zappa Enters  
DB Hall of Fame**

**Marian McPartland  
Receives Lifetime  
Achievement Award**

**DB DIALOG:  
Tim Hagans &  
Kevin Hays**

**Bluesman  
Lucky Peterson**

Sept. 1994, \$2.50 U.K. £2.00 Can. \$3.25







Lucky Peterson

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# PROVE

## Grover Washington Jr. Flexes Straightahead Chops

By K. Leander Williams

**T**here's one question that saxophonist Grover Washington Jr. says drives him absolutely nuts. "People come up to me all the time," he starts, half-glaring at me across a conference table in Sony's comfy mid-Manhattan headquarters, "and ask me how I feel now that *jazz is back*. I really don't know what they mean. It's as if the music went somewhere—when in fact, if anything, it was the audience that left and came back."

One can't help but pick up on the irony in Washington's declaration. Traditional jazz musicians were facing hard survival choices when Washington's star began to rise in the mid-1970s; jazz clubs were closing at a rate that sounded the death knell for many a jazz-music policy, to say nothing of record deals and bookings in big theaters. But though it may be difficult to pinpoint just where jazz's share of the mass audience went during its decade-long sabbatical, the safe money says that some small percentage was digging Grover Washington Jr. The response to his fourth record as a leader, *Mr. Magic* (1975), mirrored the change in popular tastes that eventually turned Washington's easy, diaphanous fusion of jazz and r&b into RIAA-certified gold and platinum records (sales of 500,000 and 1,000,000 units, respectively) and resulted in two Grammy awards for 1980's *Winelight*.

But when asked if he thought this change in direction had also detoured jazz fans, Washington responded candidly. "Well, you must remember," he begins, "that at the time there were many other directions for listeners to pursue, not just jazz, per se. There was a tremendous middle ground of audiences that weren't necessarily being stimulated by the music. They had all kinds of things to choose from, and simply made other choices."

"Personally, I feel I was lucky to come along in the middle of it all," Washington reflects. "Creed Taylor [head of CTI Records] was actually the catalyst behind the thing, the person who was starting something new with this great stable of jazz masters he'd produced. Freddie [Hubbard] and Stanley [Turrentine], and George [Benson]

—I was just happy even to be noticed in that company."

Of late, Washington has been keeping rather different company, at least in the studio. The music on his latest Columbia release, *All My Tomorrows*, gathers an all-star cast of straightahead jazzmen for a project some will find astonishing. With a core rhythm section of pianist Hank Jones, bassist George Mraz, and drummer Billy Hart; a frontline augmented by, among others, trumpeter Eddie Henderson, trombonist Robin Eubanks, and singer Freddy Cole; and none other than Rudy Van Gelder directing from the control room of his world-renowned studio, Washington tips lightly through a program filled with airy, swinging numbers. Larry Willis and Slide Hampton divvy up the arrangement chores. There are pop standards ("Please Send Me Someone To Love," "I'm Glad There Is You," "Nature Boy"), some Brazilian tunes ("Estate," "E Preciso Perdoar"), and even a retro-fitted Stevie Wonder tune ("Overjoyed").

Dr. George Butler, senior vice president/executive producer of jazz and progressive music at Sony/Columbia, thinks the timing is just right. "Grover can do so many things," Butler says, "that it just seemed appropriate for him to re-identify with acoustic jazz right now. It was an idea we'd discussed when he came to the label [in 1987]. We'd already made one move in this direction with his second record for us [*Then And Now*]; that one had Tommy Flanagan, Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams, and Ron Carter. His last record, *Next Exit*, was a more commercially oriented one, and when Grover and I talked later about what he wanted to do next, he said that with all the positive things happening around [straightahead] jazz, he was ready to try this again."

Yet some of the credit for Washington's renewed interest in straightahead jazz must also go to *All My Tomorrows'* producer, Todd Barkan. Some time ago Barkan, a transplanted New Yorker whose relationship with Washington goes back some 22 years (he owned the original Keystone Korner, a popular San Francisco jazzspot), had enlisted the saxophonist's services on a Japanese session he'd



# IT



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produced for pianist Mal Waldron. "I'd always felt that Grover was a real soulful melodist," says Barkan. "One of the finest I've ever heard. When I played the [Waldron] album back for him, I think he realized that there was a whole side of his playing that wasn't getting across enough."

Washington agreed. Talking to him, one also senses his frustration at being perceived as one-dimensional, a criticism that has dogged him for much of his career. "If you don't do things like this every now and then," Washington philosophizes, "people think you don't know how. I don't think there are too many people out there who don't have more than one side to them. Most of us are multi-faceted, just like diamonds. I turned 50 in December, and with this album—in addition to allowing me to do something I really wanted to do—I thought it was a way to show my audience that I had more than one side. You're supposed to do a lot of different kinds of music, anyway. The secret is to do them well, to give them thought, and to be sensitive to the subtleties of [each] musical language."

"That's why we had the common sense to go back to Rudy Van Gelder's for this record," says Washington. "It's the place I started out recording as both a sideman and a leader; but also, just being out there makes you realize why people like John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman recorded there, too. The studio puts you at ease right away. I consider Rudy a musician unto himself because he makes sure that the essence of that particular sound he knows *so well* gets through to the audience. With *All My Tomorrows*, I think the listener can actually feel that everything was done in, like, the second take, without any overdubs. All things being equal, you have to do the best for the music that you're playing, and, in addition, have some fun."

Like Washington said, his fondness for the Van Gelder Studio, located in Englewood Cliffs, N.J., goes all the way back to the very beginnings of his career. As an ex-Army man settled in Philadelphia with a new family, a string of low-paying gigs, and a day job to make ends meet, he was a baritone-sax-for-hire when Creed Taylor gave him his big break. "I'd already done some [recording] dates out there with Johnny Hammond, Lonnie Liston Smith, and Randy Weston," recounts Washington, "and this next one was for Hank Crawford, who, it just so happens, was my last saxophone teacher."

"Anyway, I'm running through the horn charts when Creed got word that Hank couldn't make the date. He asked me if I'd played alto—which I really hadn't since the service. I didn't even own one at the time, so he arranged for a rented one to be there the next day.



Classic 1970s Mr. Magic

**"... there are many different shades, many different directions to go in—and they're all good."**

Even though most of the arrangements were already written out and the solo spots were preconceived, the cats still had a little latitude. I practiced for a half-hour before we started recording, and that record turned out to be my first, *Inner City Blues* [1971]."

With so many subsequent accolades under his belt, it almost goes without saying that nowadays things are not quite so up in the air. A devoted family man, Washington attributes much of his continued emotional strength and commercial well-being to Christine Washington, his wife of 27 years. "If it wasn't for her, man, I just don't know," he sighs. "She's my wife *and* my partner [running their production company, G.W. Jr. Music Inc.], and most importantly, she tells me the truth. Christine remembers a lot of the things I said when I was starting out, the humbling things, and always reminds me of them. By taking a lot of the business weight off of me, she's allowed me to be creative and stay focused."

Artistry has also become something of a Washingtonian family affair. "Our son, Grover III—who just turned 26—is also a songwriter. He's living out in Los Angeles. He wrote and co-produced the song 'Summer Chill' from the last record, *Next Exit*. Interestingly enough, it was the only song from that album that got a Grammy nomination, and as proud as I was by the whole thing, I realized it was good for my son to be able to establish his own presence, his own sense of identity, so to speak. I know it's a little difficult having to carry around somebody else's name."

Washington, who cranked out records year after year until the late '80s, finds it hard to believe that three years have passed since his last solo project. "It doesn't usually take me that long, but I've toured quite a bit and done a number of sideman things in the meantime [he's appeared on recent releases by Charles Fambrough, Vanessa Rubin, Freddy Cole, and Tom Scott, among others]. Although I've already started working on the next [contemporary jazz] album, it's still in the investigative stages; just listening to new music and stuff, like acid-jazz."

Washington tries to get as much outside input as possible when putting together a project. "Sometimes when you're really working hard on an album by yourself," he explains, "you tend to lose your objectivity about the music. I've found that it works better if you leave yourself open to other people's ideas. Even if they don't work, by encouraging flexibility you wind up with some interesting possibilities. For the tunes on the new record, in addition to my wife, our production manager Paul Silverthorn, Todd Barkan, and

myself, we even asked many of our friends how they felt about specific compositions.

"However, with Todd being here in Manhattan, he served as our primary researcher. For each song we'd picked he'd go to the library and find out when it was written and last recorded, and by whom. So in many cases we could follow a piece's development right on down the line, which enabled us to come up with unique ways of approaching a tune. We figured as long as we didn't mess with the music so much, we could come up with a truly novel interpretation without turning it into something other than it was. That's how our version of 'Flamingo' ended up in  $\frac{3}{4}$ , waltz time. I don't think it's ever been done that way before."

How will Washington handle this repertoire on the road? "Well, because of everybody's different record labels and the schedules that were already in place, I'm probably not going to be able to go out with these guys. But we're going to try to reassemble them in August for one night [August 22] at the Blue Note in New York. It'd be nice if I could get the record company to capture the whole thing on film, or have some radio people do a live broadcast of some sort. I mean, hell, who knows when I'll get to play with Hank Jones, or Lewis Nash, or any of these guys again.

"But with the flexibility of the folks in my touring band," offers Washington, "I'm sure we can cover everything. I think it'll also be good to go back and forth between the electric and the acoustic thing in a concert situation. We can have a six- or seven-piece thing going in an electric vibe, and then break it down into an acoustic trio or a quartet. I think that will help people to understand that there are many different shades, many different directions to go in—and they're *all good*. Why on earth do we have to make choices, anyway?"

"The way I see it," Washington ends, "we're gonna take you on a little musical journey. Though we might take you around some corners and over some hills, we promise to bring you back safe and sound."  
DB

## EQUIPMENT

Grover Washington Jr. plays a Selmer Mark VI alto, on which he employs a Meyer hard-rubber mouthpiece with a Rico Royal #4 reed. His soprano is a black/gold Couf with a #8 Runyon mouthpiece and a Rico Royal #5. Washington's tenor is a gold-plated Couf Superba I, on which he uses a Berg Larsen 130/0 hard-rubber mouthpiece and a Rico Royal #4.

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

ALL MY TOMORROWS—Columbia 64319-2  
NEXT EXIT—Columbia 48530-2  
TIME OUT OF MIND—Columbia 45253-2  
THEN AND NOW—Columbia 44256-2  
STRAWBERRY MOON—Columbia 40510-2  
ANTHOLOGY—Elektra 60415-2  
INSIDE MOVES—Elektra 60318-2  
THE BEST IS YET TO COME—Elektra 60215-2  
COME MORNING—Elektra 562-2  
WINELIGHT—Elektra 305-2  
SKYLARKIN—Motown 374535232-2  
PARADISE—Elektra 60537-2  
REED SEED—Motown 374635236-2  
LIVE AT THE BIJOU—Motown 37463239-2  
A SECRET PLACE—Motown 374635165-2  
FEELS SO GOOD—Motown 374635177-2

MR MAGIC—Motown 374635175-2  
SOUL BOX—Motown 374635184-2  
INNER CITY BLUES—Motown 374635189-2  
with various others  
AMERICAN CLASSIC—Discovery 71009-2 (Dexter Gordon)  
A HOUSE FULL OF LOVE—Columbia 40270-2 (Stu Gardner)  
TOGETHERING—Blue Note B21Y-46093-2 (Kenny Burrell)  
PICTURE THIS—GRP 9551 (Billy Cobham)  
REED MY LIPS—GRP 9752 (Tom Scott)  
THE CHARMER—CTI R2-79484 (Charles Fambrough)  
I'M GLAD THERE IS YOU—Novus/RCA 63170-2 (Vanessa Rubin)

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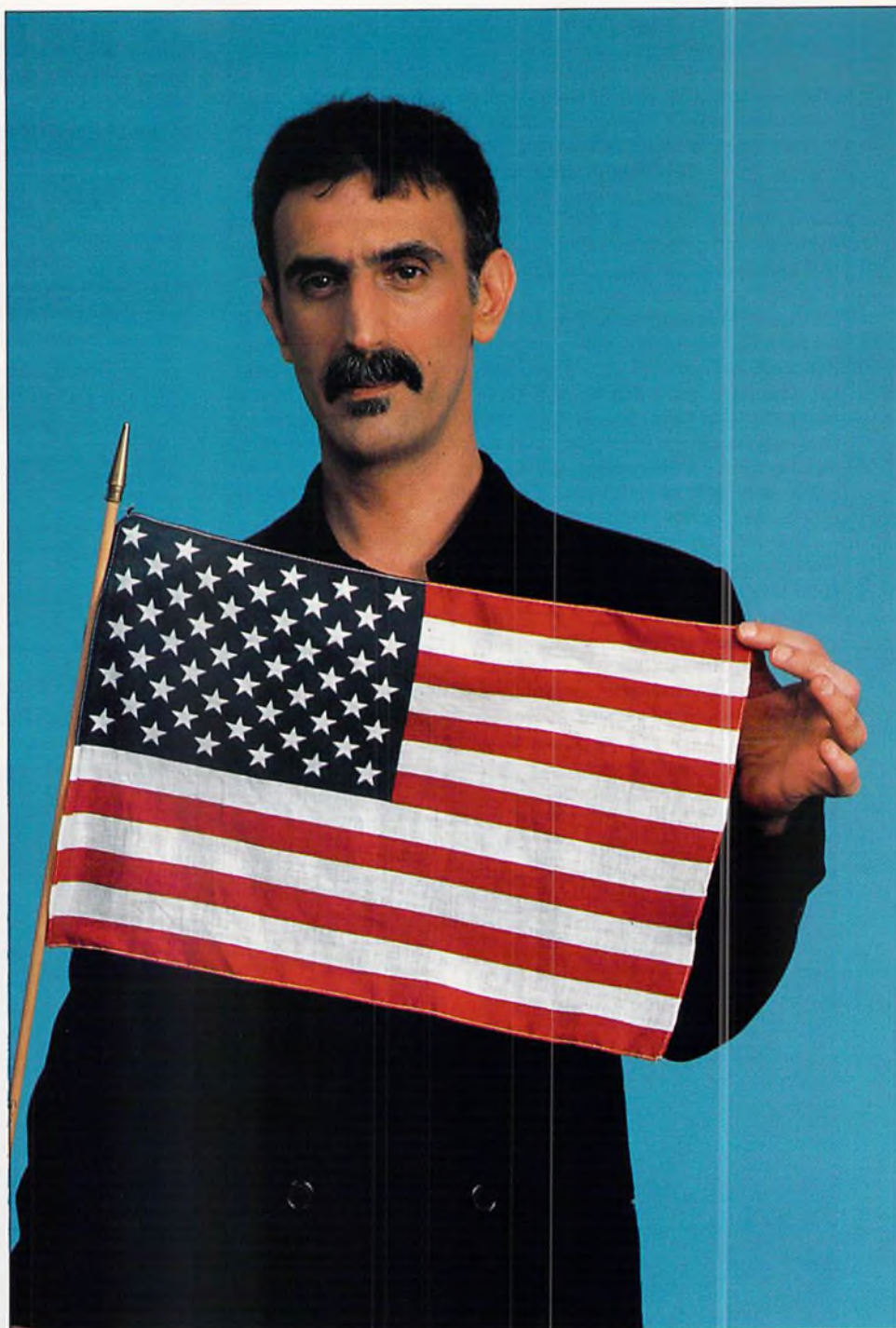
## Legacy Of A Cultural Guerilla

**FRANK ZAPPA**

By John Corbett

**P**olitical advocate and subversive, satirist, comedian, scatologist, classical composer of works from chamber music to musique concrete, part-time cynic, part-time optimist, pedagogue, bandleader, and bitchin' guitarist, the Grand Wazoo Frank Zappa enters the Down Beat Critics Hall of Fame in 1994. Joining fellow pick-smith Jimi Hendrix, Zappa is only the second rock musician ever to be voted into the hallowed Hall—perhaps partially a demonstration of the never-ending fascination and glorification of things-with-strings (guitar freaks are always hungry, daddy) and the added chances one has of being recognized for one's achievements when one kicks the bucket—but more likely a testament to the catholicism, enthusiasm, and ingeniousness of Zappa's truly awe-inspiring imagination.

"What's the ugliest part of your body?" he sang on *We're Only In It For The Money*. "I think it's your mind." Frank Zappa's mind was full of ugly beauty, and being inducted into an exclusive cadre like this is exactly the



### HALL OF FAME

<b>Frank Zappa</b>	<b>37</b>
Dave Brubeck	31
Artie Shaw	30
Elvin Jones	26
Betty Carter	21
Wilbur Ware	20
Tadd Dameron	19
Mario Bauza	18
Jo Jones	18
Milt Jackson	17
George Russell	16
McCoy Tyner	15
J.J. Johnson	14
John Lewis	14
Jimmy Blanton	13
Nat Cole	13
Milt Hinton	13
Clark Terry	13

kind of thing he would have loved to make fun of.

Born in 1940, raised in California, largely self-taught, Zappa began his recording career in 1966 with his band the Mothers of Invention, whose *Freak Out!* set the tenor for decades to come. Mixing parodical, satirical, sometimes idiotic and childish humor, an exclusively American brand of anti-Americanism, this album also showcased a love for the unexpected and undirected, a taste for musical experimentation,

and a clear respect for jazz. A (very long) list of influences on the inside gate of that debut record included everyone from Tiny Tim, Clarence Gatemouth Brown, and Mauricio Kagel to Cecil Taylor, Roland Kirk, and Bill Evans. Jazz was one of the few unreservedly respected things in Zappa's world of send-ups, inside and outside jokes, and sarcastic putdowns. Speaking with Larry Kart in his first DB feature, "The Mother Of Us All," in 1969, Zappa pessimistically assessed his post-hippy rock audience: "You're not selling

## DOWN BEAT HALL OF FAME

### Readers Poll

- 1952** Louis Armstrong
- 1953** Glenn Miller
- 1954** Stan Kenton
- 1955** Charlie Parker
- 1956** Duke Ellington
- 1957** Benny Goodman
- 1958** Count Basie
- 1959** Lester Young
- 1960** Dizzy Gillespie
- 1961** Billie Holiday
- 1962** Miles Davis
- 1963** Thelonious Monk
- 1964** Eric Dolphy
- 1965** John Coltrane
- 1966** Bud Powell
- 1967** Billy Strayhorn
- 1968** Wes Montgomery
- 1969** Ornette Coleman
- 1970** Jimi Hendrix
- 1971** Charles Mingus
- 1972** Gene Krupa
- 1973** Sonny Rollins
- 1974** Buddy Rich
- 1975** Cannonball Adderley
- 1976** Woody Herman
- 1977** Paul Desmond
- 1978** Joe Venuti
- 1979** Ella Fitzgerald
- 1980** Dexter Gordon
- 1981** Art Blakey
- 1982** Art Pepper
- 1983** Stephane Grappelli
- 1984** Oscar Peterson
- 1985** Sarah Vaughan
- 1986** Stan Getz
- 1987** Lionel Hampton
- 1988** Jaco Pastorius
- 1989** Woody Shaw
- 1990** Red Rodney
- 1991** Lee Morgan
- 1992** Maynard Ferguson
- 1993** Gerry Mulligan
- 1994** see ballot on page 49

### Critics Poll

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

to a bunch of jazz aesthetes 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."

Keep in mind, for the first few Mothers records Zappa was a Verve recording artist (move over Joe Henderson and J.J. Johnson). Over the 25 years of his career, in his many bands Zappa made use of a great number of jazz musicians. There were violinists Sugar Cane Harris and Jean-Luc Ponty, keyboardists Don Preston (who worked with Carla Bley and John Carter) and George Duke, drummers Paul Humphrey and Chad Wackerman. There were reedsman Ian Underwood, trumpeter Sal Marquez, trombonist Glenn Ferris. There were two sets of jazz brothers: the Gardner Brothers—Bunk and Buzz—and the Fowler Brothers—Bruce and Tom. And on *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*, the Mothers played a killing Zappa tune called "Eric Dolphy Memorial Barbecue." Zappa was a rock star, no arguing, but he was the new breed of post-'60s ecumenicalist Robin Hoodz who stole from the rich (jazz, vanguard classical, dadaism) and gave to the poor (pop-rock).

In many ways, the kind of eclecticism that was Zappa's modus operandi presaged the current wave of genre-surfing by John Zorn and others—listen to "The Return Of The Son Of Monster Magnet" on *Freak Out!*, the second side of *We're Only In It For The Money*, and "Toads Of The Short Forest" on *Weasels* (a brilliant free-blow stylistic pile-up, replete with a spoken explanation of the various simultaneous jazz time signatures from Frank) for fine examples. In addition to his own music, for many (myself included) one of Frank's major contributions to the world was his championing of Don Van Vliet, aka Captain Beefheart, whose seminal double-record *Trout Mask Replica* was on Zappa's own Straight record label.

Though he lost some of his more musically attentive listeners as his records turned increasingly into comedy routines and political harangues, as they got more obvious and less absurd (hey, when I first got into Zappa I was in junior high, so "Dancin' Fool" and "The Illinois Enema Bandit" were a gas), Zappa never lost interest in writing and playing challenging sounds, right up to his major orchestral work *The Yellow Shark*, the release of which preceded his demise by only a bit. What other musician has collaborated with Pierre Boulez and written a hit song about Valley girls? And throughout Frank's wild years he had a thorough sense of the contradictions of his perceived persona, as evidenced by the mere title of the multiple-album blowing sessions *Shut Up 'N Play Yer Guitar*.

The pages of DB have sported Zappa

consistently since his Mothers days. In '69, Kart accurately portrayed him as a "cultural guerilla": "He sees that the popular arts are propagandistic in the broad sense—even when they masquerade as rebellion they lull us into fantasy and homogenize our responses. So he infiltrates the machine and attempts to make the popular forms defeat their traditional ends—his music doesn't lull, it tries to make you think." Over the decades of the '70s and '80s Zappa appeared in the magazine regularly, getting feature space about once every few years, and his recorded output was put to the critical test on an ongoing basis, receiving its share of nasty remarks but also often earning Zappa the musical assessment he deserved. As Alan Heineman (who called Zappa "the Katzenjammer Kid of contemporary music") said in his 1970 review of *Hot Rats*: "The

constant temptation is to say that Zappa is a genius (which he is) and consequently to rank highly all his offerings." A full-length obit article by Dan Ouellette ran in March 1994, with material drawn from one of Zappa's last formal interviews.

Zappa succumbed to a long battle with prostate cancer in December 1993. His huge musical output (over 60 records, countless bootlegs, scores, unreleased tapes, movies, etc.) will doubtless keep him in the public ear for years to come, and his influence on musics of all sorts—from political rock to electric jazz—is indelible. On all but one of the Mothers of Invention albums, there was an inscription taken from composer Edgar Varese: "The present-day composer refuses to die!" In his music and in the DB Critics Hall of Fame, the spirit of Uncle Meat lives on. DB





## Our Dame Of Jazz

**MARIAN McPARTLAND**

By Michael Bourne

“I never intended to do what I’m doing,” said Marian McPartland during a friendly chat a while ago. “I didn’t plan or plot anything I’ve done. I didn’t have dreams of going to America. If somebody told me I was going to marry a musician, come here, work here, I’d have thought they were crazy. I just fell into it all—and I’m glad I did.”

We’re all glad she did—and for all she’s done and continues to do as a pianist, composer, broadcaster, and especially educator, *Down Beat* this year honors Marian McPartland with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

British to the bone, her accent as elegant as when she first came to America almost 50 years ago, she studied classical piano as a teenager at the Guildhall School of Music in London but was fascinated much more by jazz. Marian toured the U.K. in a four-piano vaudeville act and, during World War II, joined ENSA, the British counterpart to the USO. Marian ventured to France soon after the Normandy invasion and, while traveling with a USO camp show, jammed in Belgium with some American musicians of the U.S. Army Special Service. One of the musicians

was cornetist Jimmy McPartland, and they soon formed a band to play for the troops, often at the front lines. Jimmy returned to Chicago in 1946 with Marian as his pianist and wife.

(I was amazed once when Marian said she was never naturalized. Marian even bristled at the thought. “I didn’t marry Jimmy to become an American citizen. I married Jimmy for love.” They eventually divorced but were always the best of friends and, just before Jimmy’s death several years ago, Jimmy and Marian remarried. “Jimmy and I didn’t have kids, unfortunately. I just had bass players and drummers.”)

Marian formed a trio and in 1950 settled in New York to play the Embers. When the trio opened at the Hickory House on 52nd Street in 1952, a two-week gig became a year’s gig and, when not on the road, a decade’s gig. Marian’s trio recorded at the Hickory House for Savoy.

It was in 1956 that Marian happened into what’s become one of her greatest contributions to jazz. Will Moyle, a disc jockey in Rochester, encouraged Marian to perform at a local school. “I was a little dubious about the reaction we’d get,” she wrote in a 1961

piece for *DB* called “Jazz Goes To Grade School” (reprinted in *DB*’s recent 60th anniversary issue, July ’94). Marian’s qualms were forgotten almost at once. “Every tune was received with tumultuous applause, and, needless to say, a long drum solo [by Joe Morello] brought the house down.”

She’s performed at grade schools, high schools, and colleges ever since. “I was so afraid rock & roll was going to kill jazz that I went into the schools,” Marian remembered recently. “I couldn’t fight rock & roll but I wanted kids to know that there’s another music. And if they got curious about jazz, they might want to explore it. I still hear from some of the kids over the years, and some have become musicians. It’s amazing how they really took the music to heart.”

Marian established her own label, Halcyon, in 1970, and recorded herself and friends, including a superb collection of songs that Alec Wilder composed for Marian, an encounter with violinist Joe Venuti, an all-women quintet, and *Concert In Argentina*, from a tour featuring Marian and three piano masters who’ve been inspirations—Earl Hines, Teddy Wilson, and Ellis Larkins. Jazz Alliance recently rereleased the latter.

She’s written songs with Peggy Lee (“In The Days Of Our Love”), Johnny Mercer (“Twilight World”), and other tunes recorded by the likes of George Shearing and the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis band; also soundtracks for educational movies, *Mural* and *The Light Fantastic Picture Show*, prizewinners at the Chicago Film festival.

Marian’s style, like her accent, is elegant—although just because she’s an English lady, don’t presume that she’s only “genteel” at the piano. Marian McPartland swings. She’s performed on a variety of television shows—PBS tributes to Bix Beiderbecke and Alec Wilder, a children’s program called *The Key Of D Is Daffodil Yellow*—and was the moderator for the series *Women In Jazz* on A&E. In 1987, Oxford University Press published a collection of articles she’s written about musicians she’s appreciated, *All In Good Time*.

And for more than 10 years she’s recorded for Concord, most often alone or with her trio. One of the best is *Alone Together*, duets with fellow Brit and longtime friend George Shearing. She’s also recorded tributes to Billy Strayhorn and Benny Carter (the latter session with Benny Carter himself), and her newest release is all music of Mary Lou Williams. Marian celebrated Mary Lou on the first concert of the first Classical Jazz at Lincoln Center in 1987—and Mary Lou was the first guest on Marian’s popular NPR series *Piano Jazz*.

*Piano Jazz* earned a Peabody Award for excellence in broadcasting and now, after 15 years and almost 600 hours, Marian’s show is a mainstay of National Public Radio arts programming. Marian’s format is simple: she chats with her guest, usually a pianist but sometimes singers like Tony Bennett and Mel Tormé or other instrumentalists like the brothers Marsalis, and then they

play together. It's like eavesdropping on friends whose love of the music and affection for each other is always delightful. Jazz Alliance has released CDs of the shows with Dave Brubeck, Teddy Wilson, Rosemary Clooney, Bill Evans, Dizzy Gillespie, Eubie Blake, Dick Wellstood, Barbara Carroll, Clark Terry, with more to come.

And, nonetheless, she's gigging, often as the guest of an orchestra or with an all-star band or on the "100 Golden Fingers" piano blow-outs so popular in Japan.

DB's award adds to her collection of honors—not only the Peabody Award but also the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award for *Piano Jazz*, the Duke Ellington Freedom

Medal from Yale, and honorary doctorates from Bates College, Union College, and Ithaca College.

I suggested a while ago that inasmuch as

she's still a British citizen, she deserves to be a Dame. And though she scoffed at the notion, Marian McPartland is certainly our own very classy Dame of Jazz. **DB**

**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>1981</b> John Hammond       | <b>1989</b> Norman Granz      |
| <b>1982</b> George Wein        | <b>1990</b> Rudy Van Gelder   |
| <b>1983</b> Leonard Feather    | <b>1991</b> Bill Cosby        |
| <b>1984</b> Dr. Billy Taylor   | <b>1992</b> Rich Matteson     |
| <b>1985</b> Dr. Lawrence Berk  | <b>1993</b> Gunther Schuller  |
| <b>1986</b> Orrin Keepnews     | <b>1994</b> Marian McPartland |
| <b>1987</b> David Baker        | *Special Achievement Award    |
| <b>1988</b> John Conyers, Jr.* |                               |

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CLAYTON CALL

# Got That Healin' Feelin'

**HORACE SILVER**

By Bill Milkowski

**A** funny thing happened to Horace Silver on the way to recovering from his double-hernia operation last year. "Well, yeah . . . I almost died," says the composer of such jazz classics as "Sister Sadie," "Señor Blues," "Nica's Dream," and "Song For My Father."

After he entered the hospital for what appeared to be routine surgery, Horace was forced to cancel appearances of the Silver/Brass Ensemble at the Playboy Jazz Festival in Los Angeles, the JVC Festival in New York City, several dates in Europe, and a much-anticipated appearance at the Mt. Fuji Festival in Japan (see "News" Dec. '93). Fans were greatly disappointed, but no one really knew the full extent of Horace's illness or the complications that set in.

Listening to his animated delivery as he explains the whole ordeal, following a recent week-long engagement at the Blue Note in New York City, it's hard to imagine that this energetic, charismatic man was ever sick a day in his life. But there was a period of about a week in June '93 when things looked bleak for the pianist who, along with drummer/bandleader Art Blakey, helped pioneer the hard-bop movement in the '50s.

As he explains: "I went into the hospital for a simple hernia operation. I had a small hernia near my navel and one near my right

lower groin. Now, the insurance companies in this country, they don't pay for you to stay in the hospital after you've had a hernia operation. They do over in Europe, but here they want you in and out the same day. So I went in for this double-hernia on a Thursday, went home the same day, and I felt okay; a little bit sore, but no big thing."

On Friday he felt fine, but by mid-day Saturday, Silver began noticing that he was having trouble catching his breath. "And as the day progressed, it got worse. By early evening, maybe seven o'clock, I was really gasping for breath. Luckily a friend of mine was visiting me, and he said, 'We gotta get you to the hospital.'"

Horace was taken to the emergency ward, where he was examined for two hours. The doctors, bewildered by Silver's condition, admitted him to the hospital, where he remained for the next three weeks.

"The first week, I was in there with an oxygen mask on my face, and I got worse. The second week they had to put me in intensive care. I had a tube down my throat, two tubes up each nostril, and I had something stuck in my neck, and they still hadn't found what was causing this. I was hooked up to all these monitoring machines like a Frankenstein monster, and I couldn't talk, so I had to write notes on a pad to communicate

with people. Then that wasn't too cool, either, because I got so weak and shaky that I couldn't hardly write legibly. I didn't have the strength in my hands."

One night while in intensive care, Horace stopped breathing altogether during his sleep and was immediately put on a respirator. "I could've gone right then, but God saved my life. I was blessed," reasons the spiritually minded pianist.

The source of Silver's ailment was eventually determined as blood clots in his legs. "These clots were coming up into my lungs, and that's what was impairing my breathing," he explains. "So they put a screen in my chest. It's permanent now. This screen is so that any blood clots that might come up from the lower part of the body could not get into my lungs. They would hit against this screen and hopefully disperse. I'm also on this Cumadin medication, which is a blood thinner to help with the clots. And I have to go to the doctor every six weeks or so to get a blood test to find out how I'm doing. And I'm doing very well now. I'm feeling okay."

He adds with only the slightest trace of resentment, "Of course, I'm no doctor and I don't know a helluva lot about medicine, but in my opinion it really shouldn't have happened. I think if I had been kept in the hospital to be observed for a few days after the surgery, they probably would've found this out and I wouldn't have had to go through what I went through."

When asked if his bout with illness affected his stamina at all, Horace replies, "No, not really. The thing that has affected my stamina is the fact that I just turned 66 [last year]. My mind is as strong as if I were 21. But once in a while I notice that my body don't match, you know?"



CAROLINE GREY/SHOCK

**D**uring his slow period of convalescence at home, Horace went through a brief depression before getting back on the good foot. "At first I was very discouraged," he confesses. "I had a new contract with Columbia Records, my album [*It's Got To Be Funky*] was just getting ready to come out, and I was supposed to go out and promote it. And here I am sick and unable to go on tour. I said to myself, 'Damn, this record is going to die.' But luckily, as fate had it, the record did pretty well. It sold in the neighborhood of 35,000 copies."

Horace's lifelong friend Bob Marshall was instrumental in raising his spirits during those first couple of weeks at home. "We grew up together in Norwalk, Conn. We went to high school together. He's been like a brother to me," says Silver. "So he came down to cheer me up. Just talking to him was a great uplift for me."

Eventually Horace turned to music for healing purposes, a concept he espoused on his mid-'70s Blue Note album *The United States Of Mind Phase One: That Healin' Feelin'*. "I started listening to jazz tapes on a walkman I had. But I tell you, listening to music or not, just the mere *thought* of music is healing to me. The thought of getting well and getting back to my music . . . because I've got so many musical goals that I want to achieve before I leave this earth plane. I was just praying that the good Lord would spare me so I can stay here long enough to complete my musical dreams. Then I'll be ready to go."

It wasn't long before he got back to work with renewed vigor, cranking out tunes like "Red Beans and Rice," his tribute to Louis Armstrong, and "Blues For Brother Blue," in honor of the late trumpeter and Silver sideman Blue Mitchell. Both tunes appear on Silver's latest release, *Pencil Packin' Papa*.

"Louis Armstrong didn't make that much of an impression on me as a young kid," admits Silver. "I was more into the swing era musicians at first . . . cats like Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Don Byas, Ben Webster, Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson, Buck Clayton, Vic Dickenson, as well as the [Jimmie] Lunceford and [Duke] Ellington bands. And then I got into the bebop thing, so I kind of bypassed Satchmo. I realized how great he was, but I never paid that much attention to his music until I got much older, and then I went back and researched all his early stuff. Of course, red beans and rice was Pops' favorite dish. He mentioned that many times in interviews, and in fact he used to sign his letters and Christmas cards: 'Red Beans And Ricely Yours.' So that's what popped into my head when I was writing that tune."

Of the largely underappreciated Mitchell, Silver says, "Blue was in the second band that I put together, and that band lasted for about seven years [1957-'64]. We were like brothers and we made a lot of good music together. A lot of those records that we made have stood the test of time, and some of the tunes that we recorded with that group have become jazz standards. Aside from being a beautiful person, Blue was a great trumpeter and stylist on his horn. He had his own sound, and some of the guys who came into my band on trumpet in later years, like Tom Harrell and Randy Brecker, were clearly influenced by him. Not that they copied him note-for-note, but you can hear a little Blue in there."

The title for the gospel-flavored "Pencil Packin' Papa" was actually suggested to Silver by his former drummer Alvin Queen. "He called me one day from New York and said, 'Whatcha doin', man?' I told him I was busy writing a tune, and he said, 'Every time I call you, man, you're writing some music. Lay that pencil down, man, lay that pencil

down.' And that triggered something in my head about a hit tune from years ago called 'Pistol Packin' Mama, Lay That Pistol Down' [recorded by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters]. So I just rephrased it and called it 'Pencil Packin' Papa,' because I'm a composer and I've always got a pencil on me. I'm like Palladin. You know, 'Have gun, will travel.' My slogan is, 'Have pencil, will travel.'"

**D**r. John recently suggested that Silver might have picked up a trace of his trademark funk piano style from New Orleans pianists like Professor Longhair and Fats Domino (see *DB* May '94). But Horace dismisses this theory outright. "Of course I heard Fats Domino. Who didn't? You couldn't help but hear Fats in the '50s, he was so popular. But he didn't influence me at all. I have not been influenced by any New Orleans piano players. My main influences came from black gospel music, sanctified churches. And the other important influence was just the blues. I used to buy records by the old blues guys like Memphis Slim, Peetie Wheatstraw, Memphis Minnie. I just liked the feeling of cats like Muddy Waters and Lightnin' Hopkins."

"In fact, when I was a teenager still playing my tenor sax in a band, I remember playing one gig where there was a jukebox in the club. During intermission I put a nickel in there and played some Lightnin' Hopkins tune, and one of the guys in the band said to me, 'Man, whatchu playin' that shit for?' And I said, 'Man, you can tell that these guys are not schooled musicians, but just dig the feeling they got and the soul they put into what they're doing.' I always liked that type of music . . . those old down-South blues singers."

Some of that earthy, downhome quality comes across on "I Got The Dancin' Blues" and "Let It All Hang Out" from the new album. But a distillation of Silver's genius is perhaps best represented on a brass ensemble remake of "Señor Blues," his funky-comping mid-'60s classic given a new suit of clothes and sparked by expressive solos from guest tenor players Red Holloway and Eddie Harris.

"My first criterion throughout my career has been to hopefully write the type of music that the musicians are going to enjoy playing," says Silver. "And hopefully, also, it's the kind of piece of music that the public will enjoy. If the guys in the band dig the music and the public digs it, I'm happy. To hell with the critics, with all due respect to them. I don't mean to put them down. That's their job, and everybody's entitled to his opinion. So if they don't like what they hear, fine."

"Except I kind of get the impression that some of these critics cannot deal with Horace Silver making a change," he con-



*"I tell you, listening to music or not, just the mere thought of music is healing to me."*



tinues. "Some of them have zeroed in on the quintet sound. They want that and that alone. And when you go to change and do something else, they knock you."

This broadside seems to have been triggered by mixed reviews of his recent Blue Note performances in the New York press. "The Daily News said the rhythm wasn't together, which is bullshit. And they said my orchestrations sounded like television scoring, which is more bullshit. The New York Post gave us a rave review, and The New York Times was sort of a mixed review.

"Anyway, I don't put any stock in all of this. It's nice when they say something positive about you, but my criteria is this: I am my own worst critic. I'm always scrutinizing myself and the band to add to our performance level. So if I come off the bandstand and I know we sounded good, it doesn't make me depressed or sad to get bad reviews because I know better. In my heart, I know we played a good set and the people dug it.

"See, I don't write my music for the critics," he continues, building up steam. "Any musician worth his salt shouldn't be concerned with what they say. I'm not gonna let critics or anybody hold me back from progressing. Because I'm a musician who wants to progress and grow. I'm not gonna

stand in one little niche for the rest of my life and play the exact same thing with the same instrumentation all the time. I'm growing, I'm stretching out. Horace Silver is not just a little quintet player anymore.

"Now, there's nothing wrong with the quintet, and I might go back to using it from time to time, but I'm not gonna have my head stuck in the mud with the quintet for the rest of my life. So right now I'm focusing all my

energies on writing and arranging for the Silver/Brass Ensemble, which is like a mini-big band. In fact, I'm starting to think about the next album already. And I've got plenty of material because I became so excited about writing for this band that I wrote too much. I got all kinds of stuff that we haven't done yet, and I hope to get it all on record some day."

Expect Phase III of the Silver/Brass Ensemble to unfold sometime next year. **DB**

## EQUIPMENT

Horace Silver plays Steinway pianos, whenever possible.

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

PENCIL PACKIN' PAPA—Columbia CK 64210  
 IT'S GOT TO BE FUNKY—Columbia CK 53812  
 SILVER'S BLUE—Columbia/Portrait RK 45138  
 THE JODY GRIND—Blue Note B21Y-8425J  
 THE CAPE VERDEAN BLUES—Blue Note B21Y-84220  
 DOIN' THE THING—Blue Note B21Y-84076  
 SONG FOR MY FATHER—Blue Note B21Y-84185  
 BLOWIN' THE BLUES AWAY—Blue Note B21Y-46526  
 FINGER POPPIN'—Blue Note B21Y-84008  
 HORACE SILVER AND THE JAZZ MESSENGERS—Blue Note B21Y-46140  
 HORACE SILVER TRIO—Blue Note B21Y-81520  
 with various others  
 THE BEST OF STAN GETZ—Roulette B21Y-98144  
 AT THE CAFÉ BOHEMIA, VOLS. 1 & 2—Blue Note B21Y-46521/B21Y-46522 (Jazz Messengers)  
 QUARTET/QUINTET/SEXTET—Blue Note B21Y-81537 (Lou Donaldson)  
 SONNY ROLLINS, VOL. 2—Blue Note B21Y-81558  
 MILES DAVIS, VOL. 1—Blue Note B21Y-81501  
 A NIGHT AT BIRDLAND, VOLS. 1 & 2—Blue Note B21Y-46519/B21Y-46520 (Art Blakey)  
 THE JAZZ MESSENGER—Columbia CK 47118 (Art Blakey)

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 Tony Williams



# Prince Of The Blues

LUCKY PETERSON

By Frank-John Hadley

Lucky Peterson knows what it's like to be a star. As a child prodigy, he scored a 1971 hit record and played drums and organ before millions on the Johnny Carson and Ed Sullivan television shows. Today, the 30-year-old Dallas resident basks in the adulation of Parisians and ardent admirers from as far afield as Rome, Barcelona, Heidelberg, and Sydney. These days, too, Lucky is more than ready to accede to the blues throne. "We got the King of the Blues, that's B.B. King," he says. "I want to have my title be the Prince of the Blues. I'm the baby of the blues. Somebody has to keep the blues going alive."

No problem. Lucky's keyboards, guitar, and vocals surge with the velocity of a prairie fire in a strong wind. Last year's major-label debut, *I'm Ready*, found him igniting soul-blues originals and revamping songs from the Chicago blues canon. He succinctly describes his initial Verve outing as "raw, more bluesy, right on time." His new album, *Beyond Cool*, actually overpowers *I'm Ready*, providing the concussive blast of a mortar shell. "It's more rocky and high-energy," Lucky quips. "I think it's happening."

The "happening" Memphis session—much like his designer sunglasses, his jewelry and his leather garb—reflects an attitude. "A lot of people used to tell me that to make it in this world," Lucky says, "you have to be *beyond* cool. Like Miles Davis, he was cool. But don't be cool, let's be *beyond* cool." Catch the mysterious mood and tone of the title song, an instrumental slow blues. Lucky's dark guitar combines the weight of weariness with the immediacy of carnal pleasure while the surprising, thoughtful horn arrangement of Laurent Cugny—a Gil Evans disciple who leads France's Big Band Lumiere—heightens the listener's sense of unease. Lucky recalls, "When I was playing this song, I was listening to how dark it was, and it was really hip. Mellow, laid-back, a lot of whole notes going on."

"Count On Me," one of several songs co-



written by Peterson and New York funk drummer Jim Payne, also has a pitch-black urgency; the pained singing and guitar, the killer clavinet, the brooding Memphis Horns, the chanting femme fatales musically depict a film noir netherworld. The only thing missing is the terrible, kiss-of-death noise of the handgun wielded by the deranged Tom Udo (Richard Widmark) as he pumps bullets into Nick Bianco (Victor Mature).

Always mixing fervor and sensuality, Lucky thrusts his personality into cover songs. He transforms Les McCann's tired "Compared To What" into an exhilarating modern anthem, and he applies a sort of Heimlich maneuver to Jimi Hendrix's "Up From The Skies" (Lucky and Laurent know better than to ape Jimi and Gil), Roosevelt Sykes' "Drivin' Wheel" (the torrid bass line is swiped from Sly Stone), and, among others, Georgian bluesman Robert Ward's "Your Love Is Amazing."

On the album, Lucky's organ often points to Jimmy Smith's chicken shack. "Yeah, I like playing the B-3. I like to play jazzy because it gives you the chance to express yourself a little bit more." The cries, moans, and screams from his guitar draw exclusively from the blues and blues-rock vernacular. Does he ever dabble in jazz? "I'm not a jazz guitar player. I can play in the style of Eric Gale, real soulful with the jazz. [However], as far as the melodic stuff goes, I'm not able

to do that." He pauses, reconsiders, and continues. "I am able to do it, but it takes me some time and my heart is more into blues."

Indeed, Chicago blues has coursed through Lucky's veins since he was a baby. "My father had a club named the Governor's Inn in Buffalo. He'd bring in acts like Koko Taylor, Buddy Guy, Junior Wells, all the greats. Our home was up over the club, so the music hit me seven nights a week." It seems that little Lucky would exit his crib each night and crawl to the area of the floor directly over the pulsating bandstand. Later, when he could walk, he found his way downstairs and played among the musical equipment strewn about the stage.

Lucky learned the drums first, but when Bill Doggett came to town, well, his eyes popped out of their sockets. "Bill's organ was so big," he recalls, "it excited me." His father, blues singer/guitarist James Peterson, employed unorthodox means to teach his three-year-old son the basics. "He put cigarette butts on the keys. The brown butts would be like the C-major chord, and the white butts would be like the G-major chord. And he'd take a magic marker and mark different colors, like for the V [dominant 7th] chord. I picked up on that very well."

Willie Dixon, the Chess Records songwriting ace, was his Santa Claus. "Willie had a little band, and he came to town, and my father said I could play, so he wanted to produce me." The brisk sales of the resulting



single, "1-2-3-4," and lots of Jackson 5-like hype catapulted five-year-old Lucky into the big time. He paid visits to *Soul Train* and *Sesame Street*, the game shows *What's My Line* and *To Tell The Truth*, and the network programs of Ed Sullivan, David Frost, and Johnny Carson.

"When I was on *The Tonight Show*," Lucky says, "I was on there with Buddy Rich. I remember I wanted to play the drums, and I whispered into Johnny's ear, 'Can I play them?' Johnny said, 'Yeah, go on up there and play the drums.' I remember Buddy telling me, 'I'm going to put you in my bag and throw you in the river.'"

Those heady days didn't last (Dixon put the blame on James Peterson for souring a good thing), and Lucky stayed busy the next dozen years perfecting his keyboard technique and learning guitar, electric bass, and trumpet in his father's bands. Fortune again smiled on him when a snowstorm kept Little Milton's group—but not the bandleader himself—from making a gig in Florida, where the Peterson family was living in the early '80s. Milton asked Lucky and his father to back him up, and it went down well. The next night Milton invited the eager 17-year-old to sit in with his recently arrived band when the regular keyboardist turned out to be missing. "Once I played," says Lucky, "I got a standing ovation. When I came down at intermission, he asked me if I wanted to go on the road with him. I said, 'Yeah. Yeah. Definitely.'"

The Little Milton Band provided Lucky with valuable training, showing him how "to play from the heart, be a professional, and [how] to act on the stage." Milton even had his young charge do a feature segment and serve as musical director. But after three years, Lucky decided to move on. "It was like I left the family," he says ruefully. The confident sideman next found employment in singer Bobby "Blue" Bland's 11-piece revue, spending three more instructive years on the chitlin' circuit.

In the late '80s, Lucky was back in Florida, the Tampa Bay area, adding his piano and organ to a number of soul-blues sessions organized by King Snake Records' Bob Greenlee, including those of another young firebrand by the name of Kenny Neal. Before long, Greenlee asked Lucky to do a headlining record date, and the uneven but well-received *Lucky Strikes* album resulted. Lucky's stock soared even higher when Alligator released another spotty solo effort, *Triple Play*.

Lucky continues to be a first-call studio player, most recently backing James Cotton and Abbey Lincoln. But his obsession is his solo career, which got a big boost in 1992 when independent producer John Snyder signed him to a multi-album deal with Polygram France. Lucky's subsequent assaults on the shores of Europe have been wildly successful, and he mounted a strong challenge to James Brown, the ageless "Minister of Super-Heavy Funk," at several French concerts they played together last year.

"Paris is my second home," Lucky boasts. "When I walk out on the stage, I get a standing ovation. We're talking about 4500 to 5500 people coming to see one person overseas, when I might draw 600 people over here on a good night." Just this summer, he played at least 24 triumphant dates in France, with side trips to Switzerland, Greece, Holland, Germany, Italy, and Portugal. How popular is France's Blues Prince? Spend time walking the boulevards and exploring the record stores in the capital, and you'll find his face staring out at you on posters everywhere.

Lucky wants to keep his loyal fans and his new converts around the globe off-balance. "I don't ever want nobody to think I'm just blues. I want everybody to know I can do other things, too, and do them well." His upcoming albums will flame with blues and blues-rooted rock, of course, but they'll push into yet-unrevealed musical territory. Lucky insists we keep an eye on him. "Can you dig it?" he asks, secure in his knowledge that the sky's the limit. **DB**

## EQUIPMENT

Peterson plays a Hammond B-3 organ and a VK 1000 electric piano. As a guitarist, he's partial to the Gibson ES-335 and Les Paul, and the Fender Stratocaster and Telecaster, favoring a Cry Baby

wah-wah pedal. "In the States," he says, "I use the Mesa Boogie amp with the Marshall 4 x 10 speaker cabinet, and overseas I use the Boogie with the 8 x 10"

## SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

*BEYOND COOL*—Verve 314 521 147-2  
*I'M READY*—Verve 314 517 513-2  
*TRIPLE PLAY*—Alligator 4789  
*LUCKY STRIKES*—Alligator 4770  
*RIDIN'*—Evidence 26033-2

with various others

*BETTER OFF WITH THE BLUES*—Telarc 83354 (Junior Wells)  
*THE RIGHT TIME*—Elektra 61347-2 (Etra James)  
*I AM THE BLUES*—Verve 314 519 175 (Big Daddy Kinsey)

*LIVING THE BLUES*—Verve 314 521 238-2 (James Cotton)  
*I'M TROUBLE*—enja/Blues Beacon 1016 2 (Yvonne Jackson)  
*DEVIL CHILD*—Alligator 4774 (Kenny Neal)  
*HARP & SOUL*—Alligator 4768 (Lazy Lester)  
*THE BLUES IS ALRIGHT!*—Evidence 26026-2 (Little Milton)  
*TUNE IN TOMORROW*—Columbia CK-47044 (Wynton Marsalis soundtrack)

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ENID FARBBER

## Front & Center

### *Kevin Hays and Tim Hagans Discuss the Challenges of Their New Record Deals as Leaders*

By Jim Macnie

**T**wo different sounds, two different leaders—put the work of pianist Kevin Hays and trumpeter Tim Hagans side by side and you'll have no problem distinguishing them. The 26-year-old pianist burrows inside his elaborate compositions, pausing to investigate each turn. Even the most fervent moments sustain a pose. Hagans, on the other hand, likes to let it rip, reveling in the exclamatory nature of his chosen instrument. He'll explode a passage, and come back to pick up the pieces later. One's a head man, the other is big on body.

At the moment, however, both share similar career positions. Each has just made the move from respected sideman to newly recorded bandleader, a leap about which every young jazz musician dreams of and

frets over. The opportunity came in the form of Blue Note's New Artist series, which pairs talented adepts with established pros, blending the levels of expertise, and integrating the ideas of players from different generations. Joe Lovano produced Hagans' *No Words*, helping steer the trumpeter to a place where loopy, old-school funk and stormy freneticism is first-cousin to lyrical swing. It provides plenty of room for aggressive solos by guitarist John Abercrombie and pianist Marc Copeland; they're driven by a rhythm section of bassist Scott Lee and drummer Bill Stewart. Hays had John Scofield behind the glass for his exquisite *Seventh Sense*, and the guitarist's know-how in the realm of dynamics aided in shaping the session's earthy refinement. The band—Seamus Blake on tenor sax, vibist Steve

Nelson, Doug Weiss on bass, and drummer Brian Blade—sound as if they've been gigging together for years.

The pair are roughly a generation apart (Hagans just turned 40), but both bandleaders did their time in the trenches. The Dayton-raised Hagans has toured with the big bands of Stan Kenton and Woody Herman, and is possibly the only player alive to work with both Gary Peacock and the Yellowjackets (now there's some scope). Hays grew up outside of New York, haunting the city's after-hour jams, and working with the Harper Brothers. His rep as a bandstand instigator is strong.

We decided to get the two together, and find out how their experiences led them from the role of sideman to the responsibility of bandleader. Frustrations, commitments,



practice habits, business travails, musical elations—their responses reminded that there are a slew of choices for young bandleaders these days. They'd worked together before, as part of Bob Belden's various ensembles. On a sweltering New York afternoon, the corporate air-conditioning of the Blue Note offices was a haven, and the conversation spilled right along.

**JIM MACNIE:** *This is your initial outing on a major jazz label. Do either of you keep up with the kind of records that are currently being made?*

**KEVIN HAYS:** I don't, I'm too busy to spend much time in Tower Records.

**TIM HAGANS:** I listen to the radio a lot. I live near Philadelphia, so I listen to RQI, and they play all new stuff. But I have so much music at home, I don't buy much.

**KH:** For me, there's something to be said for having your head clear of the residue of someone else's music. That's a process that most of us go through. We've listened to so much in terms of learning different elements of musical language that certain ideas are indelible. At some point, you put things aside . . . and maybe a melody will crop up. When I'm writing I don't like to have too much going on.

**JM:** *At a certain point it's productive to get your heroes out of the way?*

**TH:** It's the main challenge. We're affected by history, but we've got to do our own things, get a sound happening.

**KH:** That often has to be a conscious effort. I remember Joe Henderson saying he was so influenced by Sonny Rollins that it got to the point where he actively avoided listening to him. You know the phrase "Take what you like and leave the rest," well sometimes you like everything!

**TH:** You rob little bits of people and mold them into your own, put a personal twist on it. If you start with a concept and rigidly bend everything toward that, it might be the wrong path to take. It's better to have no preconceived notion about the sound and then, after a lot of playing, see what crops up. Some players love a particular sound so much they wind up emulating it. It becomes a problem. Experimentation might lead them back to themselves.

**KH:** The other side of that is if they have a sound in their head and it seems to come from something deeper than a stylistic thing—a texture maybe—I sometimes approach things from an almost visual standpoint, closer to visual art.

**JM:** *Let's talk about the process of becoming a leader. Could you guys have gotten as far as you did without going to school? Did academics help you a little or a lot?*

**TH:** I never really thought about it. I only went to college for two years, then I was off with Stan Kenton. But those years were beneficial, basically playing with people that



ERIC FARBBER

*"The hallmark of a great leader, and Miles comes to mind, is to make the move to get things together. . . .*

*Sometimes you're in situations where you don't feel strong, but there's always something you can do. That's what jazz is all about."*

—Kevin Hays



had the same interests. High school musicians are scattered. In college there were cats really playing. A great amount of learning went on. But that wasn't necessarily the school, it was all after-hours. Most of the people I played with didn't graduate, but went on to road gigs. I've taught at a couple of universities, but I'm not teaching now.

**KH:** My experience is similar. I lived right outside of New York, and met players in town. There was adequate exposure to the New York scene. I went to Manhattan School of Music, but only stayed a semester.

**JM:** *Was it too formal?*

**KH:** It was a combination of things. I was 18, and I just wanted to play, to be around players who I felt were really doing it. And for me, the school environment didn't have it. Of course, I could have extracted important things from the experience. My parents wanted me to stay, but they knew what I had my eyes set on. I basically studied on my own.

**JM:** *What kind of process was it? Learning from records?*

**KH:** I was lucky to hook up with a great

classical pianist who became my teacher when I left high school. She had me working on my technique, getting a sound out of the instrument. I went through a whole retraining. She didn't know much about jazz, but tons about music in general. I would improvise and she'd say, "Well, you could have made more of this phrase or that line." That was a big help.

**TH:** My first teacher was Kermit Simmons, a band director in Dayton, and a private teacher as well—a real swing-style trumpet player. He gave me jazz etudes and little melodies so I could work on syncopated rhythms. Early bebop things. He didn't talk about improvisation, but he wanted me to get the swing-feel happening.

**JM:** *Have either of you thought of quitting? How many moments of self-doubt are there career-wise?*

**TH:** Quite a bit.

**JM:** *Which point of view generated it? "I haven't had a good idea in a month," or "I need five bucks"?*

**TH:** I always thought that I had something to say on the trumpet that was a bit different than others. So I'm usually confident in my style or approach. I latched onto the jazz premise that if you're a bit out of the ordinary you'll succeed. All my idols sounded different: Miles from Freddie [Hubbard] and so on. So I thought I should follow the abstract sound I was hearing. But wondering whether people would like it, or whether something like this record would ever happen, was far away. I've lived and played in some out-of-the-way places where there's no notice of anything that you do. That can also be discouraging.

**JM:** *How do you generate optimism, Kevin?*

**KH:** I'm a bit younger, and I've never really seriously thought about quitting. You have ups and downs, and as I begin to figure out my place in the world, it's a constant state of questioning. Things are evening out of late; I've got a balance. But it can be confusing. Like Tim said, if you don't key into what your intuition is telling you, it can be tumultuous. There are definitely frustrating moments.

**JM:** *Before the Blue Note contracts, did you have day jobs?*

**KH:** No, I've played pretty much all the time.

**TH:** If you want to be a doctor or lawyer, there's an obvious way to do that. Start here, move to the next thing. With music it's a bit different. Performing artists all do it a different way. Woody Shaw, Freddie Hubbard—how did they do it? It leads to insecurities—on which path should I follow? If you start on one path, you quickly move away from another.

**JM:** *Did that run through your head when you spent so much time in Europe during the early '80s?*

**TH:** Well, I knew there were a lot of

musicians in Sweden and Copenhagen. There was a scene of Americans. Dexter [Gordon], Horace Parlan, Ed Thigpen, Sahib Shihab. I played with them and they made me feel welcome, as did the Danish guys. So I felt like I was really playing with heroes and really developing. And I'd just spent three years with Kenton playing mostly modal, energetic tunes. I really needed to work on playing standards, playing soft, playing melodically. Thad Jones was there and he was an idol. It was all very supportive, so I felt a part of the family.

**JM:** *Kevin, maybe your Europe was the jam-session scene that you fell into around New York. How was that experience?*

**KH:** Scary, but exciting. I think I was 17. At the Blue Note club sessions [in New York], you showed up after the last set, signed the list, and eventually you'd be up there. [Trumpeter] Ted Curson would call the tune, you prayed that you knew it. If you didn't, you'd play it anyway, you'd just have to find it.

**TH:** That happened to me playing with [saxist] Sahib Shihab. He'd say, "Let's go," and just start improvising over a tune, not even state the melody. I'd look at [pianist] Kenny Drew and he'd know exactly what it was, and he'd start playing. When Sahib was done blowing, he'd look at me. Many times I heard where the changes were going and just tried to improvise over them; then on the way out, he'd play the head and I'd say, "Oh, yeah, that was 'Gone With The Wind.'"

**JM:** *Isn't that part of the improvising thrill?*

**KH:** Absolutely. That experience epitomizes what I go for. I've often found that when I'm learning a tune, I seem to often do much better in terms of preconceived notions. For a long time I thought that the first time you play a tune is the freest. I've kind of revised that of late; there's a hump that you've got to get over in learning, and there's another kind of freedom at the other side. But that first time, boy, everything's a surprise. So even if it's just the chords written down, there's something about that first time through. It's a discovery thing, and it keeps you alert. If you know a tune and you get settled into some kind of groove, it's really over.

**TH:** Right, right. I play in a band with Gary Peacock and [guitarist] Vic Juris, and though we use changes and harmonic patterns, it's pretty much a free band. We figure out how to react to each other, and every time we play it's different. And I think it's really benefited me to do that. Play what you hear. Spontaneous composition. That's also why it's important to keep playing new material all the time. Keep yourself sharp.

**KH:** If you can find a way to play the old stuff and forget what you know, you're halfway there.

**JM:** *Have either of you had other record offers?*



END FARRER

*"Jazz has this thing about being understood. It might be good not to understand things at first. You can listen to jazz with pop ears."*

—Tim Hagans



**TH:** I made a record about 10 years ago for a small label in Cincinnati, but since then I haven't really pursued being signed. Basically, I wanted to record for Blue Note. And I was doing sideman work with Joe and Bob Belden, so I knew I was getting closer. This place is the best—it's got the history. So I waited to see if it would happen.

**JM:** *I'm wondering about the series. The established producer/young artist match-up. Kevin, did you know Scofield previously?*

**KH:** We got together to play once, but not really.

**JM:** *Do first-timers get to call their own shots? You hear about people who are signed, but told what to play in the studio.*

**TH:** The only input I had was "Go do it." So I felt like I was completely in charge. For years I've thought about what kind of record I'd like to make, so the wheels were turning. I kind of had a concept of the sound, and I feel fortunate that no one said no. And I think it shows in the music. Going in and recording it in one day, live to two-track—I

knew I was going to need people I was comfortable with. We had to hit from the start, like a gig almost. And that's what it was, no stress.

**KH:** No? [laughter]

**JM:** *How much did Lovano and Scofield try to shape you?*

**KH:** Well, if you know those guys at all, you know that they're loose and open. Just knowing John's music is enough to tell me that he's open. Basically, it's a way to have another set of ears, great ears. There are suggestions along the way. But they're artists, and they realize that it's not always fun to have people stomping on your ideas. If they see your conviction, things will come off. Let the process happen.

**JM:** *Did you have to defend your ideas?*

**KH:** Yeah, but not in a confrontational way. If I felt strongly about something, then I'd say so. If I didn't, I'd be open to suggestions, and a couple things worked nice that way. On the title track outro, we were doing something that Sco liked, and he called in, "Leave that, let's work it in!" I didn't hear it myself. If you don't feel strongly about the material, nothing works. That's part of the challenge of being a sideman, too. You don't call the tunes, and you might not be crazy about the stuff. This is something I'm learning: that no matter what it is, unless I pour myself into it, the music won't really happen. Sometimes you've got to make a real effort.

**JM:** *What about live gigs? What new responsibilities has being the leader brought about in terms of control? How do you shape what takes place?*

**TH:** If you pick the right musicians, you don't have to worry about the music that much. I usually worry about whether or not people are going to show up. Nothing's worse than having a great band playing for five people. I worry about the door.

**JM:** *Does the band turn to you for cues?*

**TH:** Yeah, and it's definitely weird giving Lovano and [guitarist John] Abercrombie directions. They're the heroes. Then to have them respond really makes you feel like a leader.

**KH:** I love it. What a great feeling, to have your music realized. You feel like the players are with you. As a piano player, there are certain things I can do as a sideman to direct things—rhythmically or harmonically. But when it's my band it's really fun. Not necessarily that I'm out front, but just that there's a little extra sensitivity to what I'm doing.

**JM:** *How do you jump-start it when it's not happening?*

**TH:** Whew.

**KH:** That's hard. I've discovered that my perception of what's happening isn't always the most accurate, in terms of trying to figure out what's going wrong.

**TH:** The first thing you look at is your own playing.



**KH:** The hallmark of a great leader, and Miles comes to mind, is to make the move to get things together. Interject the idea that everyone will follow. Get the energy back. Sometimes you're in situations where you don't feel strong, but there's always something you can do. That's what jazz is about. You've been hired to do things. I like to be around musicians who know that's the case—try anything. No fingerpointing on the bandstand. Everybody's responsible for the action.

**JM:** Are there too many expectations put on young leaders these days?

**KH:** Being a leader isn't easy, and I don't think it should be taken lightly. You can't half-step. There's a huge responsibility that comes with it. Because of that I can see how the press or an audience is wondering whether or not this guy or that guy can lead a

band.

**TH:** As a developing player, you worry about your own sound. It takes playing with elder statesmen to help you see what you like and don't like. You need a few years to develop something bigger.

**JM:** What's the biggest misconception that Joe Citizen has about jazz?

**TH:** People who don't listen to a lot of jazz

want to intellectualize it. Unless they've listened to a lot of jazz, they're not going to understand it on that level. So it's better to listen to the sounds as they happen, and not try to fret over the intricacies. Decide whether they like it that way. Jazz has this thing about being understood. It might be good not to understand things at first. You can listen to jazz with pop ears. **DB**

#### EQUIPMENT

Tim Hagans plays a Bach trumpet, "a medium-large, New York Bach from the '40s, with a 7C mouthpiece." Most of the tunes from *No Words* were written on a piano, "and I don't really play piano," reminds Hagans. "I think that's good, because instead of turning out a bunch of technical tunes, they're simpler. Melody tunes. It's like arranger's piano. But I'm starting to write tunes that are based on the way I play the trumpet."

Kevin Hays just had his Steinway O rebuilt. "That's what I play at home, and it's great. They don't make them anymore—it's a turn-of-the-century model. It's about the closest thing to an M that I could get." He also played a Steinway in the studio on *Seventh Sense*.

On the road he also uses a Yamaha portable sequencer. "I'll program a tune that I want to practice, and with one or two fingers, I'll do some exploring—just to have fun. If you're traveling on a bus it comes in handy."

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

##### Kevin Hays

*SEVENTH SENSE*—Blue Note 89679  
*EL MATADOR*—Jazz City 660 53028  
*SWEET EAR*—Steepchase 31282  
*CROSSROADS*—Steepchase 31324  
*UGLY BEAUTY*—Steepchase 31297

with Bob Belden

*PRINCE JAZZ*—Toshiba (Japan only)  
*WHEN DOVES CRY*—Metro Blue 29515-2  
*PUCCINI'S TURNANDOT*—Blue Note (Japan only)  
*STRAIGHT TO MY HEART*—Blue Note 95137-2

with various others

*JOSHUA REDMAN*—Warner Bros 2-45242  
*ARTISTRY*—Verve 847 956 (Harper Brothers)  
*DAWNBIRD*—Landmark 1532-2 (Vincent Herring)  
*DOMINGO*—Dreyfuss 36557-2 (Benny Golson)

##### Tim Hagans

*NO WORDS*—Blue Note 89680  
*FROM THE NECK DOWN*—MoPro M-105

with Bob Belden

*PRINCE JAZZ*—Toshiba (Japan only)  
*WHEN DOVES CRY*—Metro Blue 29515-2  
*PUCCINI'S TURNANDOT*—Blue Note (Japan only)  
*STRAIGHT TO MY HEART*—Blue Note 95137-2

with various others

*UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE*—Blue Note 99830 (Joe Lovano)  
*LIKE A RIVER*—GRP 9689 (Yellowjackets)  
*BITE OF THE APPLE*—Verve 314 521 869-2 (Peter Delano)  
*PETER DELANO*—Verve 314 519 602-2  
*EVANESCENCE*—enja 8048 2 (Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra)

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## Ray Anderson

**BIG BAND RECORD**—Gramavision 79497: *LIPS APART; ANABEL AT ONE; MY WISH; RAVEN-A-NING; LEO'S PLACE; SEVEN MONSTERS; WALTZ FOR PHOEBE; THE LITERARY LIZARD; DON'T MOW YOUR LAWN.* (76:38)

**Personnel:** Anderson, trombone; George Gruntz, piano; Lew Soloff, Ryan Kisor, John D'Earth, Herb Robertson, trumpet; Dave Bergeron, Art Baron, trombone; Dave Taylor, bass trombone; Howard Johnson, tuba, baritone sax; Tim Berne, Sal Giorgianni, alto sax; Marty Ehrlich, alto sax, clarinet, soprano sax, bass clarinet; Ellery Eskelin, Larry Schneider, tenor sax; Mark Feldman, violin; Drew Gress, bass; Tom Rainey, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

With ringers like Feldman, Berne, Robertson, Eskelin, and Ehrlich, this lineup reads more like the Knitting Factory Concert Big Band. Remove those subversive elements and this might have been as competently bland as the Miles & Quincy *Live At Montreux* gig. But there is a blending of big-band discipline and wacky expression that makes this album a marvel, not to mention the crowning achievement in Ray Anderson's career thus far.

With his weird and wonderful extended techniques on trombone, Anderson is very much a subversive himself and a kindred spirit to those aforementioned soloists. He flaunts multiphonics and an uncommonly wide range on tunes like "Lips Apart," "The Literary Lizard," the playful "Anabel At One," and the Monk-ish "Raven-A-Ning," the latter two written for his daughters. On the jaunty, swinging "Leo's Place" and the ominous, two-part "Seven Monsters," Anderson resurrects the grunting & growling, talking & testifying tradition that Bubber Mile, "Tricky Sam" Nanton, and Cootie Williams established with the Duke Ellington Cotton Club Orchestra, an obvious role model for Anderson. But he can also play it sweet and

lyrical, as he does on the lovely ballad "Waltz For Phoebe."

Trumpeter Lew Soloff turns in show-stopping solos on "Seven Monsters" and the giddy rhumba "The Literary Lizard." And Anderson puts in one of his trademark jivester vocal appearances on a big-band remake of his funky, good humored novelty number "Don't Mow Your Lawn." —*Bill Milkowski*



## Wallace Roney

**MISTERIOS**—Warner Bros. 9 45641-2: *MEU MENINO; IN HER FAMILY; MICHELLE; CAFE; MISTERIOS; LAST TO KNOW; MEMORIA E FADO; 71 +; MUERTE; I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU.* (59:14)

**Personnel:** Roney, trumpet; Antoine Roney (4,6,8), Ravi Coltrane (9), tenor saxophone; Geri Allen, piano; Clarence Seay, bass; Eric Allen, drums; Steve Berrios, Steve Thornton, Valtinho Anastasio, percussion; Gil Goldstein, keyboards (4); Eric Wyrick, Liang-Ping How, Sandra Park, violin; Louise Schulman, Maureen Gallagher, viola; Richard Locker, Eugene J. Moye, Jr., cello; Harvey Estrin, Lawrence Feldman, Chris Hunter, Robert Steen, Andrew Serman, flutes, recorders.

★ ★ ★ ★

*Mistérios* is the name of this album and the concept behind its Gil Goldstein arrangements. But considering that Teo Macero was the producer (along with Matt Pierson and Gil Goldstein), it's no mystery that Wallace Roney continues to keep Miles Davis' spirit alive.

Roney plays with an uncommon flair for the combination of spare, weird melodies and fast, hard-edged lines that were Milesian trademarks. With Wallace's limber technique and muscular tone, notes seem to just fly out of his horn, but Roney is discriminating about when to hold back the showy stuff. Like Davis, he knows how to sit on a wrong note just long enough for it to start sounding like the right one.

Also the album's conductor, Goldstein's arrangements display a coloristic approach to orchestration reminiscent of Gil Evans. "Meu Menino" would have fit right into Evans' *Sketches Of Spain* score. Astor Piazzolla's "Muerte" begins with Roney sounding heroic, a matador alone in the sun, but then catch that snare-drum entrance by Eric Allen: his firm rolls turn the tune into a slow, chillingly tense march.

The rhythm section maintains the "mysterious" concept while still giving every tune a fresh, individual identity—even Dolly Parton's overexposed "I Will Always Love You," thanks to pianist Geri Allen's off-beat punches of chords, is packed full of seconds. She's secure, whether offering elegant restraint (as on the

title track) or laying out a lush carpet for Roney on Pat Metheny's "In Her Family." Percussionists Steve Berrios, Steve Thornton, and Valtinho Anastasio add color to the moody atmosphere.

Compared with Wallace's earlier straight-ahead dates for Muse, the strong theme organizing *Mistérios* reveals more the influence of producers. Nevertheless, Roney's musical personality reigns on his debut for Warners.

—*Elaine Guregian*



## Torn/Karn/Bozzio

**POLYTOWN**—CMP 1006: *HONEY SWEATING; PALMS FOR LESTER; OPEN LETTER TO THE HEART OF DIAPHORA; BANDAGED BY DREAMS; WARRIOR HORSEMEN OF THE SPIRIT THUNDERING OVER HILLS OF DOUBT TO A PLACE OF HOPE; SNAIL HAIR DUNE; THIS IS THE ABDUCTION SCENE; RED SLEEP; RES MAJUKO; CITY OF THE DEAD.* (53:23)

**Personnel:** David Torn, guitars, loops, percussion, Hammond B-3, koto, tiny piano, voice; Mick Karn, fretless bass, bass clarinet, dida, voice; Terry Bozzio, drums, percussion, bodhran, dumbek, voice.

★ ★ ★ ★

After trying his hand (with varying degrees of success) at Peter Gabriel-influenced pop vocal material on his last project, 1990's *Door X* (Windham Hill), guitarist Torn has returned to a more experimental instrumental setting with his latest power trio (see "Riffs" April '94). Mick Karn is back on electric bass playing sparse, snaky fretless lines that are entirely devoid of Jaco-esque clichés, an approach best demonstrated on "Res Majuko." Drummer Terry Bozzio (whose credits include Frank Zappa, the Brecker Brothers, Jeff Beck, and Steve Vai) replaces Bill Bruford behind the kit with a combination of precision chops and keen instincts.

They blend together in an organic way, making dramatic use of space and clearly reacting in the moment on a series of loosely structured jams. This kind of thing simply didn't happen on the more tightly orchestrated *Door X*. Torn's aggressive fuzz lines and wah-wah licks add a touch of menace to "Palms For Lester," while Karn's floating bass-clarinet work lends a sense of mystery to "Bandaged By Dreams." For Bozzio, *Polytown* presents a chance to play outside the strict realm of rock backbeats. His musicality comes to the fore on the slow-grooving "Red Sleep" and the African-flavored "Warrior Horsemen," a showcase for his melodic approach to the kit that seems one



He always intended to write a tribute to his father someday, but that day, he sat down to write a bossa nova. Afterwards, he wasn't even sure how the melodies of his father's birthplace, the Cape Verde Islands, had found their way into his song. But he did know what he'd written. And he did know what to call it.



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part Max Roach, one part Ginger Baker, one part Sandy Nelson. Torn, with his loops and sheer psychedelic abandon, is able to create dense textures, screaming intervallic leaps, and dark-hued washes of sound that are as ingenious as they are impossible to imitate.

These three kindred spirits have come up with a daring kind of fusion that harkens back to more creatively defiant fare like Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*, Weather Report's *I Sing The Body Electric*, or even Material's *Memory Serves*. And to do this kind of "twisted" stuff in these more conservative, radio-driven times makes it all the more daring. —Bill Milkowski



### Lou Donaldson

**CARACAS**—Milestone 9217-2: *HOT DOG; JUST A DREAM (ON MY MIND); ORNITHOLOGY; I DON'T KNOW WHY (I JUST DO); NIGHT TRAIN; I BE BLUE; CARACAS; LI'L DARLIN'*; (54:33)

**Personnel:** Donaldson, alto saxophone; Peter Bernstein, guitar; Dr. Lonnie Smith, organ; Kenny Washington, drums; Ralph Dorsey, conga drums (1,7).

★ ★ ★

**HOT DOG**—Blue Note 7243 8 28267 2 9: *WHO'S MAKING LOVE; TURTLE WALK; BONNIE; HOT DOG; IT'S YOUR THING*; (39:26)

**Personnel:** Donaldson, alto saxophone; Ed Williams, trumpet; Melvin Sparks, guitar; Charles Earland, organ; Leo Morris, drums.

★ ★

Sweet Lou, bebop survivor from the good ol' days, playing from the heart, playing for the people, trying to make a buck not a mint. When it was hip to be hep, he was hep. Thus *Hot Dog* sounds a bit dated. A product of 1969, it has your boogaloo, fatback, and jazz-rock beats. Williams and Sparks are a bit stiff against the greasier feel of Earland and Morris (aka Idris Muhammad). Lou's lean and seasoned blues and bop lines give the album personality and focus. But admittedly, it's a product of its time—not a sellout, but certainly one to pay the rent by.

*Caracas*, the new one, displays a broader swath of Lou's talent. This cat can take it slow and hold it right there: "Just A Dream" (where his singing and playing suggest Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson), Smith's "I Be Blue" (which brings to mind Jon Faddis' famous remark, "English be my language"), and Neal Hefti's ever-popular "Li'l Darlin'." For a lesson in why you don't want to get in the ring with Lou the bebopper, check out "Ornithology." For Latin, you've got Lou's title tune, and for da blues you've got "Night Train" and "Hot Dog," a smoother version than 1969's

In Michael Bourne's liner notes, Lou notes a Grant Green connection in Bernstein's style. And so it is: a take-your-time, meaningful, thoughtful approach with a clean tone, but still plenty blues-based. Look out, future cats. Smith recalls Jimmy Smith (as does Earland on the reissue), which has become a tradition in this style of jazz, and Washington lays down a tasty jazz foundation throughout. Dorsey, in his two appearances, lays it on just right.

—Owen Cordle



### John McLaughlin's Free Spirits

**TOKYO LIVE**—Verve 521 870-2: *1 NITE STAND; HUACKED; WHEN LOVE IS FAR AWAY; LITTLE MISS VALLEY; JUJU AT THE CROSSROADS; VUHVAR; NO BLUES; MATTINALE*; (74:56)

**Personnel:** McLaughlin, guitar; Joey DeFrancesco, Hammond XB-3 organ, trumpet (3,8); Dennis Chambers, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

With the Hammond organ regaining respectability, it's no surprise to see a revival of the once-popular organ trio. More surprising is John McLaughlin's return to this format with the Free Spirits, renovating the concept 25 years after exploding it with Tony Williams' Lifetime. *Tokyo Live* offers high-speed chases like "Mattinale" that capture McLaughlin's speed and invention, Dennis Chambers' inexhaustible percussion, and, at the center, Joey DeFrancesco's fleet runs and swirls of sound. *Tokyo Live* would be worth hearing for DeFrancesco alone. Despite McLaughlin's presence, the organist's playing still reflects Jimmy Smith's grooves more than Larry Young's innovations. DeFrancesco's trumpet work grows increasingly effective, especially his Milesian muted trumpet on "When Love Is Far Away."

McLaughlin's instrument revisits longstanding questions of how to present acoustic guitar in a heavily amplified environment. According to Verve, he uses pickups to give his acoustic guitar an electro-acoustic sound. This hybrid emphasizes attack, velocity, and articulation over tonal color or dynamism. McLaughlin's performance is often subtle and understated, using concise, well-crafted phrases with a strong blues feeling, most overtly on "Little Miss Valley."

Although his Hendrix-inspired playing once detonated Lifetime, he's the calm center of gravity in the loose, funky Free Spirits, with DeFrancesco and Chambers generating much of the fireworks.

—Jon Andrews



### Lena Horne

**WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN**—Blue Note 7243: *MAYBE; SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR; DAY FOLLOWS DAY; PRELUDE TO A KISS; LOVE LIKE THIS CAN'T LAST; WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN; A FLOWER IS A LOVESOME THING; OLD FRIEND; YOU'RE THE ONE; HAVIN' MYSELF A TIME; MY MOOD IS YOU; I'LL ALWAYS LEAVE THE DOOR A LITTLE OPEN; DO NOTHIN' TIL YOU HEAR FROM ME; FOREVER AND A DAY; I'VE GOT TO HAVE YOU; MY BUDDY*; (58:07)

**Personnel:** Horne, vocals; unidentified orchestra with Sanford Allen, violin (16); Jesse Levy, cello (7); Houston Person, Jerome Richardson, tenor sax (9); Toots Thielemans, harmonica (3,9,11); Rodney Jones, guitar; Ben Brown, Tracy Wormworth, bass (14); Frank Owens, Mike Renzi, piano; Akira Tana, Buddy Williams, drums (14); Eli Fountain, percussion; Johnny Mathis, guest vocal (3).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

### Cleo Laine

**BLUE AND SENTIMENTAL**—RCA Victor 09026: *THE LIES OF HANDSOME MEN; I'VE GOT A CRUSH ON YOU; BLUE AND SENTIMENTAL; AFTERGLOW; NOT YOU AGAIN; PRIMROSE COLOUR BLUE; WHAT'LL I DO; LOVE ME; CREOLE LOVE CALL; DREAMSVILLE; A CRYIN' SHAME; LOVE COMES AND GOES; SOFT PEDAL BLUES*; (59:40)

**Personnel:** Laine, vocals; Alan Smith, trumpet; Dean Hubbard, trombone; Ray Loackle, flute, soprano, tenor and baritone saxes, bass clarinet; John Dankworth, soprano and alto saxes, clarinet; Gerry Mulligan, baritone sax (4, 10); Larry Dunlap, Mike Rinzi, George Shearing (5, 12), piano; Mark Whitfield, guitar; Jay Leonhart, Rich Girard, bass; Jim Zimmerman, drums; Joe Williams, vocal (7); plus 13 strings.

★ ★ ★ ★

Most singers can be pegged according to their place on a spectrum that moves from musician to actor. Lena Horne and Cleo Laine are two still-gorgeous divas who have the equipment to navigate most of that spectrum. But in the end they are great singers because they are great actresses. This leaves them vulnerable, though, since their art demands songs with ideas, emotion, and viewpoint.

Lena Horne's newest CD is in part a bow to Billy Strayhorn, whom she honored last year in a brilliant cyclone of a performance at the JVC Jazz Festival. Five of the 16 tunes are his, plus another two by Ellington. She is in excellent voice throughout: slinky on "Havin' Myself A Time" and intimate on "Old Friend." So much so that one feels a bit cheated when the songs are not always her equal. Hearing a couple of obscure Strayhorn tunes like "Maybe" (1940) and "Love Like This Can't Last" (1941) may seem interesting at first, but we soon learn why they are obscure. The latter is especially trivial and so besotted with a funky backbeat, it serves neither the singer nor the tune. And why



do we get a trifle like "Day Follows Day" with Johnny Mathis when we might have a Lena Horne "Lush Life"? Now there's a match!

Horne revisits two songs from her 1976 RCA collection, *A New Album*, to magnificent effect, however. "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing" is gentle and restrained while Kris Kristofferson's "I've Got To Have You" is full of longing and sensuality in a beautifully charted performance. "My Buddy" is among several other gems in a very good album that might have been better still.

Cleo Laine, whose remarkable range is at home in opera, jazz, and pop, has created an album that is unremittingly soft, slow, often wise, and darkly romantic (save for the final cut that seems a fugitive from another CD). She enunciates it all in unforgiving detail, squeezes every syllable dry, and pushes lyrics with a projection than is probably over the top for most listeners cuddled in the intimacy of their headsets. It gets to be rather like the singing equivalent of silent-film acting.

But I forgive her excesses in part. One reason is the subtle spectacle of her "Creole Love Call," which somewhere along the way has acquired a lonely, magnificently Hopperesque lyric by Lorraine Feather (daughter of critic Leonard). Rarely have words fallen upon music in such perfect register. They surely will (or certainly should) rescue this famous Ellington masterwork from 70 years of instrumental limbo and raise it into the pantheon of American standards along with "Round Midnight" and "Lush Life." Another instant cabaret classic is "The Lies Of Handsome Men," with its sweetly sentimental veneer and its suddenly sour, acerbic center. The other songs are only slightly less compelling.

Joe Williams joins on a lovely "What'll I Do" and Gerry Mulligan and George Shearing each have two cameos. But the songs are the stars here, and Cleo is a loving patron.

—John McDonough



### Hal Galper

**JUST US**—enja 80582: *JUST US; UNFORGETTABLE; MOON GLAZE; STABLEMATES; BYE BYE BLACKBIRD; LOVER MAN; I'LL NEVER BE THE SAME*. (64:10)

**Personnel:** Galper, piano; Jerry Bergonzi, tenor saxophone; Pat O'Leary, bass; Steve Ellington, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

A cat works for years as a sideman, so you get used to saying things like, "Pianist Hal Galper brought a fine casual lyricism mixed with various angles of percussiveness to these performances." Or, "Hal Galper! Yeah, man! A

jumpin' rhapsodist!" But when he gets out on his own, you begin to notice things differently: the old characteristics remain true but in deeper, more interesting ways, and the new things are true surprises. Thus it is with this album, in which the quartet remakes these tunes with a loose, accented, sometimes skitish, free-within-form approach.

At the piano, Galper cooks in a laidback style. Chords reminiscent of Bill Evans devolve into frisky, circling runs and then fragmented, strutting lines. He locks in with bass and

drums—clipped left, trinkle-tinkle right—and the trio becomes something out of early Ahmad Jamal until Galper starts pulling against the grain. O'Leary walks the bass with a big, tubby sound. Ellington is a symphony of accents. (Bombs away!) Bergonzi's tough & tender, New York-style tenor is a companionable spirit, a predominantly blunt voice dented by romance.

The group's performance of "Unforgettable," taken faster than usual, makes room for the usual sentiments, but obliquely. "Blackbird," another familiar melody, is further abstracted: a



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lazy assemblage in which everyone keeps playing away from the customary signposts. "Lover Man" burns, another non-traditional approach. "I'll Never Be The Same," the title a philosophical statement for this group perhaps, is in a "down" groove, with the tenor in a Dexter Gordon bag.

Like a lot of mature jazz these days, these performances initially give a jaded impression: "We've been in some big towns and we've seen some big talk." But when the group and the soloists get rolling, they're all willing to open the door and convey a little romance (including new graces learned en route) one more time.

—Owen Cordle



## Henry Threadgill

**SONG OUT OF MY TREES**—Black Saint 120154-2: *GATEWAY; OVER THE RIVER CLUB; GRIEF; CREA; SONG OUT OF MY TREES.* (46:01)

**Personnel:** Threadgill, alto saxophone (1,3,5); Ted Daniel, trumpet (1), hunting horns (4); Amina Claudine Myers, harpsichord (3), organ (5); Myra Melford, piano (2); James Emery (2,4), Ed Cherry (2,4,5), Brandon Floss (1,2,4), guitars; Jerome Harris, bass guitar (1,2,4,5); Diedre Murray, Michelle Kinney, cello (3); Gene Lake (1), Reggie Nicholson (5), drums; Mossa Bildner, voice (3); Tony Cedrus, accordion (3).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Listening to *Song Out Of My Trees* is like paging through Henry Threadgill's sketchbook. Threadgill experiments with timbral colors and shadings and unusual instrumental combinations. Some pieces appear to be developmental works (his trees?), while others are powerfully straightforward. The collection is bookended by its most conventional tunes, "Gateway" and the title track, which wail and stomp in the best tradition of Threadgill's Sextet. Brandon Ross' yowling guitar and the composer's alto are prominent on "Gateway," while "Song Out Of My Trees" uses Amina Claudine Myers' organ work and Ed Cherry's guitar to achieve a soulful swing that's rarely explicit in Threadgill's work.

Threadgill's ambitious dirge, "Grief," improbably mixes keening alto sax with harpsichord, cellos, accordion, and Mossa Bildner's eerily mournful vocal, and the end result suffers from so many ideas competing for attention. *Song* often emphasizes composition and arrangement over Threadgill's playing, as he sits out two tracks. "Over The River Club" and "Crea" feature a guitar quartet anchored by Jerome Harris, with soloists Myra Melford and Ted Daniel, respectively. Melford makes the curious

combination of piano and guitars work with a ringing performance, evoking both Cecil Taylor and gospel, but Daniel, playing hunting horns, never sounds comfortable with the mercurial, bluesy guitar arrangement.

If *Song Out Of My Trees* isn't major Henry Threadgill, it still deserves to be heard.

—Jon Andrews



## Jazz Members Big Band

**DIGGIN' IN**—Sea Breeze 2049: *PRESIDENTIAL MANOR; HEY, JEALOUS LOVER; HAPPY REUNION; DEJA VU; ALMOST LIKE BEING IN LOVE; WATCH WHAT HAPPENS; MISS WU; YOUNG AND FOOLISH; 19 BEFORE SOC'S LAST CUP; FOR THE LAST TIME; FAUNCY MEETING YOU.* (51:41)

**Personnel:** Danny Barber, Steve Jensen, Dave Urban, Art Davis, Jeff Helgesen, Thomas Noor (10), trumpet, flugelhorn; Scott Bentall, Edwin Williams, Tom Kordus, Paul McKee (7,10), Michael Young (1-9,11), Art Linsner (10), trombone; Chris Lega, Steve Duke, Edward Petersen, Jerry DiMuzio, Eddie Johnson (2,3,11), Les Thimmig (1-4,7-11), Glenn Kostur (5,6), woodwinds; Tom Kordus, euphonium (9); Dan Anderson, tuba (9); Greg Flint (2,9), horn; Frank Mantoath, piano; Charles Harrison, electric guitar (1-6,11); Michael Barnett, bass; Bob Chmel, drums; Freda Lee, vocal (5,6,10).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

The Jazz Members Big Band is a crack, middle-of-the-road stage band in the swing tradition that's been playing a contemporary book at a high level for 15 years. *Diggin' In* has much material you'd swear you've heard the Basie band play before, although, for the most part, it hasn't. If it had, it's doubtful it would have played it significantly better. The Members are full of the Basie pepper. This is apparent from the opening two Billy Byers charts to which the Chicago-based band lends a staccato crackle and snap.

The one number Basie did play is Neal Hefti's "Fauncy Meeting You." The Members throttle the tempo, tighten the attack, and gear up the aggression, but the spirit remains intact. Interested parties might seek out the looser 1952 Basie version on Verve for some instructive crosschecking on how to make the same notes sound different.

On the down side, in going with the standard Basie style, the band offers no bold or distinctive signature elements, especially at meandering tempos like "Soc's Last Cup" offers, where the music achieves the smoothly crafted blandness of a good university lab band. But then, such things are rare in jazz. But what it

plays, it plays with precision and professionalism. Its ranks contain a good nucleus of journeymen soloists, especially among the reeds. Chris Lega and Jerry DiMuzio contribute hard-edged solos on alto and tenor. And Eddie Johnson, who has Ellington's 1958 Paul Gonsalves feature "Happy Reunion" all to himself, is that endangered specie of pre-Sony Rollins days, namely, the big-toned romantic tenor No one outswings him either. As a section, too, the reeds show sharp flashes of cohesion.

The band carries a fine singer named Freda Lee, who has three numbers here. But this is preeminently a big-band album, not a showcase for a singer of songs. Such split bills tend to take time from the band without building interest in the vocalist and ultimately come at the expense of both.

—John McDonough



## String Trio of New York

**OCTAGON**—Black Saint 120131-2: *THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS; ONE FOR ROBIN; STRINGS AND THINGS; CIRCULAR VIEWS; UPSIDE: THE DOWNSIDE; FOREVER FEBRUARY; BILLIE: THE QUEEN OF HOLIDAY; A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BALKANS.* (69:13 minutes)

**Personnel:** John Lindberg, bass; James Emery, guitar; Regina Carter, violin.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

**REBIRTH OF A FEELING**—Black Saint 120068-2: *OPEN UP; KAROTTENKOPF; EPHEMERA TRILOGY; PENGUINS AN' OTHER STRANGE BIRDS; UTILITY GREY.* (43:40)

**Personnel:** Billy Bang, violin; Emery, guitars; Lindberg, bass.

★ ★ ★

In its third, newest incarnation, the String Trio of New York introduces commissioned works from adventurous, underperformed composers like Muhai Richard Abrams and Bobby Previte, who straddle the fence between improvised "new music" and composed jazz. Chemistry has always been important to STNY's sound. The constants have been guitarist James Emery, unpredictable and immediately recognizable through an edgy tension in his playing, and bassist John Lindberg, a versatile player who changes roles to facilitate the Trio's interactions. Lindberg's composition "Circular Views" demonstrates the String Trio's highly complex interplay.

Regina Carter's arrival as violinist, along with new material, changes the formula significantly. Throughout *Octagon*, Carter plays with a clear, pure tone, particularly effective on her



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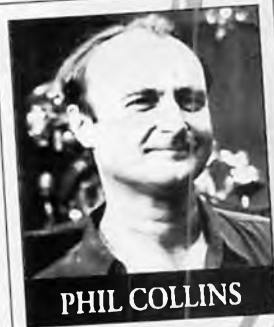
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lush ballad "February Forever," but has yet to achieve as strong and distinctive a voice as her STNY predecessors. "February Forever" and Emery's fast-paced "The Pursuit Of Happiness" are solid additions to the Trio's repertoire. Marty Ehrlich's darkly beautiful "One For Robin" and Previte's quirky musical travelog "A Short History Of The Balkans" are the stand-outs among *Octagon's* guest compositions. The String Trio's approach to scores by Abrams and Leo Smith may be too respectful—the results, while enjoyable, too often sound dry or incomplete.

*Rebirth Of A Feeling* is vintage String Trio from the Billy Bang era (circa 1983). Comprised of originals from the group, the album offers an unmistakable jazz feeling, much stronger than in the new work. Comparison of Carter to Bang is unfair, but inevitable. On *Rebirth Of A Feeling*, Bang is a very entertaining, eccentric player, full of ideas and personal touches. He brings a sad lyricism to his odd "Karottenkopf," and swings in the style of Stephane Grappelli on Bang's "Penguins An' Other Strange Birds." Emery's "Open Up" and "Ephemera Trilogy" are packed with unexpected twists and extended instrumental technique. Lindberg, as usual, holds everything together.

—Jon Andrews



## David Sanborn

**HEARSAY**—Elektra 61620-2: SAVANNAH; THE LONG GOODBYE; LITTLE FACE; GOT TO GIVE IT UP; JAWS; MIRAGE; BIG FOOT; BACK TO MEMPHIS; OJUI. (50:18)

**Personnel:** Sanborn, alto sax, vocals (4); Marcus Miller, bass, bass clarinet, guitar (7), keyboards, vocals (4,9); Steve Jordan, drums, vocals (4); Ricky Peterson, organ, piano, vocals (4); William "Spaceman" Patterson, guitar, vocals (4,9); Robben Ford (3); Dean Brown (1), guitar; Don Alias, percussion, vocals, (4,9); Lenny Pickett, tenor sax (1,4,8,9); Earl Gardner (1,4,8,9); Michael "Patches" Stewart (2,3,7,8), trumpet; John Purcell, english horn (6); tenor sax (2,3,7,8); Jason Miles, synthesizer programming; Howard Hewett (4); Katreese Barnes, Joan Bisacca, Adam Dorn, Steve Ferrone, Ivan Neville, vocals (4); Donald Blackman, Malika Kmarl Edwards, Siri Joli Edwards, Treminka Markell Edwards, Irene James, Kyle James, Ahmad Alijah Latty, Eric Ogelsby, Jeremy Rogers, David Thomas, N'Bushe Thomas, vocals (9)

★★ 1/2

Sanborn likes to take chances, but not on his own albums, where he generally sticks to the slick, funky formula he perfected in the '70s. *Hearsay* is no exception, save for the final track, an African-style jam that seems two decades

ahead of the rest of the album. Otherwise, the music sounds like it could have been recorded at the height of the disco era, with plenty of finger-popping bass, wah-wah guitar, grinding organ, synthesizer washes, and, of course, Sanborn's vibrant, muscular, slightly grainy alto sax, which cranks out canneec emotion like an actor shedding tears on cue.

"Savanna" and "Little Face" are standard-issue funk tunes in the played-out vein first mined by Ronnie Laws, while "The Long Goodbye" and "Mirage" are soulful ballads (the former taking off from James Brown's "King

Heroin") that bring out the shrill character of Sanborn's horn.

Other tunes are similarly generic, with only two standout cuts: an overproduced dance-floor take on Marvin Gaye's "Got To Give It Up" that could have made the soundtrack of *Saturday Night Fever*, and "Ojiji," a mock-Afro-Caribbean original that rocks out to the beat of Don Alias' congas. Here, instead of pounding, the groove floats; Sanborn's sax lills more than it whines; and the funky clichés are kept to a minimum. Too bad the whole album isn't more like it.

—Larry Birnbaum



**Chris Potter**

**CONCENTRIC CIRCLES**—Concord Jazz 4595: *EL MOROCCO; KLEE; BLUES IN CONCENTRIC CIRCLES; DUSK; LONELY MOON; YOU AND THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC; MORTAL COILS; IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD; AURORA.* (65:44)

**Personnel:** Potter, tenor, alto, and soprano saxophones, alto flute, bass clarinet; Kenny Werner, piano; Scott Colley, bass; Bill Stewart, drums; John Hart, guitar.

★★★ 1/2

With Nat Hentoff and Marian McPartland singing his praises, you best believe that Chris Potter is a talented young saxophonist worth hearing. His inaugural album as a bandleader will no doubt win him new admirers. Here Potter, just 23 and formerly a trainee of the late Red Rodney, brings discipline, linear imagination, and strong hints of lyric grace to his tenor, alto, or soprano on seven intriguing originals and two freshly roasted chestnuts, "In A Sentimental Mood" and "You And The Night And The Music." For the session, he's brought together a most resourceful group of sidemen, including pianist Kenny Werner and guitarist John Hart.

—Frank-John Hadley

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**Riverside Reunion Band**

**MOSTLY MONK**—Milestone 9216-2: *BEMSHA SWING; WEST COAST BLUES; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; WELL, YOU NEEDN'T; GEMINI; RUBY, MY DEAR; IN WALKED BUD; FOUR ON SIX; WORK SONG.* (61:40)

**Personnel:** Nat Adderley, cornet (1,2,4,5,8,9); Jimmy Heath, tenor (1-3,5,8,9), soprano saxophone (6); Buddy Montgomery, vibes (1-3,5,7-9); Barry Harris, piano (1-6,8,9); Ron Carter, bass (1-5,7-9); Albert "Tootie" Heath, drums (1-5,7-9).

★★★ 1/2

It would be nostalgia talking to say that this reunion, a tribute to Thelonious Monk—and Wes Montgomery and Cannonball Adderley, as well—is as good as the "dear departed past."



to use Dave Frishberg's line. The energy seems to have drained out of these Riverside affiliates. The label itself, founded by Orrin Keepnews and the late Bill Grauer in the mid-'50s, was vital to not only the careers of the three honorees but also those of Bill Evans and Johnny Griffin, among others.

It's not that this album is "bad" per se, it's just that these musicians have had better days in the studio, recently in addition to long ago and far away. Nat proves the most interesting, partly because of how he turns lip trouble into a poignant blues memory or a sputtering, still-perky take-off. His nuzzled tone and short phrases are the sound of a man talking, and on "Bemsha Swing" and "Well, You Needn't" he gets inside Monk's elliptical compositions in an unfettered way. Unfortunately, on Jimmy Heath's "Gemini" he contributes to a sour, out-of-tune ensemble.

The saxophonist himself runs well-constructed variations on a couple of Monk's classic ballads. "Round Midnight" and "Ruby, My Dear." Montgomery and Harris are an economical pair, the vibist tiptoeing through his late brother's "West Coast Blues" and the pianist sketching thoughtful sequences on "Four On Six," another one by Wes. Carter and "Tootie" Heath provide a typically yeomanlike foundation, the drummer echoing pioneer bebop drummer Kenny Clarke on "Well, You Needn't."

Maybe Keepnews should have recorded this group live, in keeping with several of the late, lamented Riverside's more memorable and spirited sessions.

—Owen Cordle



### Eric Person

**PROPHECY**—Soul Note 121287-2: *PROPHECY*; *PLUMMETT*; *UP AGAINST THE WALL*; *CARRY ON*; *DELORES*; *IMPROVISATION IN LINEAR B*; *NEXT LOVE*; *ANCIENT SUN*; *ORIAN'S JAM SANDWICH*; *INTERSTELLAR SPACE SUITE (JUPITER/VENUS/LEO)*; *RAPTURE*. (56:05)

**Personnel:** Person, alto and soprano saxophones, keyboards, slave bells; Cary De Nigris, guitar; Kenny Davis, bass.

★ ★ ★ ★

At 30, Eric Person's technical skills are abundant, his knowledge impressive, and his faculty for going lockstep with everyone from Chico Hamilton to Ronald Shannon Jackson to WSQ has made him one of the most dependable musicians in New York. As leader of his own projects, he creates superior jazz through his belief in purity of mind and soul.

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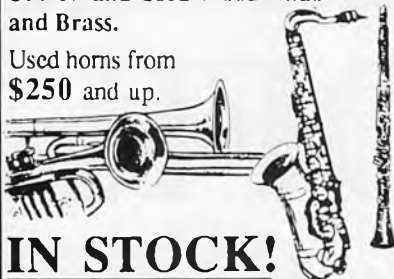
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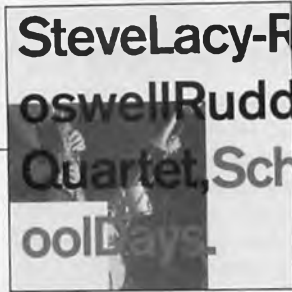
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shows his bold alto and soprano to be as in touch with complex gradations of joy as they are with precise shadings of melancholy. Person's self-probing compositions and his inquisitive examinations of time-honored music by Wayne Shorter ("Delores") and late-period Coltrane ("Jupiter/Venus/Leo")—most played solo—are utterly fascinating. Penalized a half-star for some false-sounding electronic keyboards.  
—Frank John Hadley



**Steve Lacy/  
Roswell Rudd**

**SCHOOL DAYS**—hat ART 6140: *BYE-YA; BRILLIANT CORNERS; MONK'S DREAM; MONK'S MOOD; BA-LUE BOLIVAR BA-LUES-ARE; SKIPPY; PANNONICA.* (54:40)  
**Personnel:** Lacy, soprano saxophone; Rudd, trombone; Henry Grimes, bass (2-6); Dennis Charles, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

In a New York City coffeehouse, circa March 1963, Steve Lacy and Roswell Rudd's quartet casually recorded their usual set of Thelonious Monk tunes with a borrowed microphone. Lacy

playing Monk, however well, is not a new concept. Nor was it then. Rudd's gruff presence helps justify the salvage of these tapes. Lacy's devotion to Monk's canon was established, but the trombonist's intuitive fit into the pace and eccentricity of the material might have surprised those who associated him with the "New Thing." Only *School Days* survives to document the quartet.

Rudd complements Lacy exceptionally well. Where Lacy's playing is sharp, clean, and almost fastidious, Rudd's contributions are rough-edged, occasionally harsh or startling. Often, as on "Bye-Ya," Rudd offers sardonic commentary on Lacy's buoyant leads. Both Lacy and Rudd impress with their ability to range far from the theme while perfectly maintaining the rhythm and feel of the composition. Lacy is right on top of the microphone, sounding fine, but luckless Rudd may sound distant and occasionally distorted. The cleaned-up mono sound is intermittently frustrating (accounting for a 1/2-star deduction), though the performances make up for it.

Previously issued on obscure labels, this release of *School Days* points to a historically significant but sorely under-documented musical partnership.  
—Jon Andrews

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## Steve Slagle

**THE STEVE SLAGLE QUARTET**—Steeple-Chase 31323: *LEADBELLY SEZ*; *MONDO*; *DREAM LIFE*; *SPHERE ITSELF*; *FOUR IN ONE*; *REMEMBRANCE*; *UP TIME*; *LONELY WOMAN*; *OUT OF BOUNDS*. (58:26)  
**Personnel:** Slagle, alto, soprano saxes; Tim Hagans, trumpet, flugelhorn; Scott Colley, bass; Jeff Hirshfield, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Lean, four-man sessions here from Slagle, whose work I'd previously only encountered with large ensembles (Carla Bley Band, Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra). He's a developed soloist, with smooth phrasing and an affinity for speed. With no harmonic instrument constraining things, the band swings into easygoing postbop and hardbop.

On the distinctly un-downhome blues "Lead-

belly Sez," Slagle nods Ornette's way; in general, the feel is relaxed, but not loose or wide-open. A couple of spots find the quartet changing pace—Slagle's cool "Dream Life" features Hagans on flugel, while "Lonely Woman" (Horace Silver's, not Ornette Coleman's) is given a tender treatment, with muted trumpet and a touch of sass in Slagle's breathy alto lines. "Four In One" puts the saxist alone with the rhythm section on Monk's impossibly fast tune. Jim Pepper's folksy "Remembrance" rides on mallets and shaker steadily shook by Hirshfield, and guitarist (and Slagle associate) Dave Stryker's "Out Of Bounds" is a tough, bluesy vehicle for solos, rounding out the fine record.

—John Corbett



## Double Image

**OPEN HAND**—DMP 503: *YOU STEPPED OUT OF A DREAM*; *OPEN HAND*; *A NIGHT IN TUNISIA*; *SKATING IN CENTRAL PARK*; *OASIS*; *NEW BEGINNING*; *O GRANDE AMOR*. (55:54)

**Personnel:** David Friedman, Dave Samuels, vibes, marimba.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

David Friedman and Dave Samuels certainly picked the right audience for this live (and lively) session, recorded last year at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Columbus, Ohio. The completion of each tune is met with wild applause from mallet freaks, but the duo's tasteful musicality on interpretations of "You Stepped Out Of A Dream" and "A Night In Tunisia" along with their sense of swing on Samuels' "New Beginning" and Jobim's "O Grande Amor" clearly transcend this percussive clique.

The two generate some sparks on the title track, an adventurous, open-ended piece full of call & response challenges and dramatic shifts in dynamics. And they hit a dreamy accord on John Lewis' gentle "Skating In Central Park."

Friedman and Samuels first worked together as Double Image some 20 years ago. *Open Hand* proves that their chemistry is still very much intact.

—Bill Milkowski

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clarke

larry  
carlton

billy  
cobham

deron  
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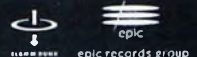
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**Bobby Previte's Empty Suits**

SLAY THE SUITORS—Avan 036: FANTASY AND NOCTURNE; WALTZ; CANON; PRELUDE AND ELEGY. (54:07)

Personnel: Previte, drums; Wayne Horvitz, keyboards; Steve Gaboury, keyboards; Jerome Harris, guitar, bass; Robin Eubanks, trombone; Roger Squitro, percussion.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

The expectation surrounding the musical category known as New York-downtown-art-rock-avant-jazz is that what you hear is going to be loud, noisy, difficult. Previte refutes that notion by using classical song forms as the basis for four original compositions that are anything but contrary.

Three of the songs reveal Previte's softer,

more introspective inclinations; the exception is "Waltz" (a piece that begins in 4/4), which opens with a drum improvisation over a percussion-and-organ backdrop. Nice. And though the funk groove that follows seems confining and the synths a little corny, the 3/4 section introduces a brilliant device: a reverberating Hammond B-3 chord that backs the soloists for the entire five-and-a-half minute segment. The tension created by that act alone is a study in seduction.

The rest of the album, too, examines suspense, in different ways. "Canon" leisurely introduces melodic imitation, then adds a tango rhythm and a passionate piano solo. On "Fantasy And Nocturne," the pull comes from a pleasingly skittish trombone solo, the low tones of the Zappa-like trombone-and-synth figures, and the subsequent slow exposition of a dramatic theme. For the finale, "Prelude And Elegy," Horvitz's piano gently constructs a dreamy, wistful ambience. —Suzanne McElfresh



**Darrell Katz Jazz Composers Alliance Orchestra**

DREAMLAND—Cadence Jazz 1053: TONK; CHIMERA; CAKE SMEARED ON CAR; DANCING ON A TABLE; ZEN AND THE ART OF CAB DRIVING; HOT WINDS OVER COOL BREEZE; LEFT OVERS; MONK. (74:47)

Personnel: Douglas Yates, alto sax, clarinet; Andrew D'Angelo, alto sax; Rob Scheps, tenor, soprano saxes; Kathy Halverson, baritone sax, flute, oboe; Mike Peipman, John Carlson, trumpets; W. Marshall Sealy, french horn; David Harris, Bob Pilkington, trombones; Jim O'Dell, tuba; Grisha Alexiev, drums; Howard Britz, bass; John Dirac, guitar; Diana Herold, vibraphone, marimba; Doug Johnson, keyboards; with many others, including Julius Hemphill, Allan Chase, alto saxes (8); John Medeski, piano (8); Joel Springer, tenor sax (6).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

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**Jeff Beal**

CONTEMPLATIONS—Worldly Triloka 7204-2: CONTEMPLATION; IMPROVISATION—EVERY MOMENT; BEING A TREE; IMPROVISATION—LOVE; IMPROVISATION—A DEUS MAINS; THE DANCE; IMPROVISATION—THE CALL; DISCOVERY; UNQUIET CITY; FIRST STEPS; ASCENSION. (53:31)

Personnel: Beal, piano, electronics; Steve Cardenas, acoustic guitar (3,6,9,10); John Patitucci, acoustic, electric basses (3,6); Joan Beal, soprano voice (1,6,8,11).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Trumpeter Jeff Beal shifts gears radically on *Contemplations*, a suite of piano improvisations inspired by the spiritual writings of Thomas Merton. There might be a tendency to dismiss Beal's sparse piano noodlings and delicate chamber works as new-age music. But as the composer delves into each free-flowing, meditative piece, he begins to reveal new layers of mystery and depth in his chordal voicings and choice of notes.

The saying goes that new-age music is played almost exclusively on the white keys. Beal utilizes the taboo black keys to color his music in darker hues, hinting at the influence of solo Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, and Chick Corea.

Bassist Patitucci supplies some spine on "The Dance" and the unfortunately named "Being A Tree," while Cardenas' guitar provides texture more than anything else. Beal's wife Joan adds ethereal, overdubbed vocals. Her classically trained soprano is particularly effective on the haunting "Discovery" and the brooding title track. —Bill Milkowski

*Dreamland* is a group of large-scale compositions arranged, conducted, and (mostly) composed by Jazz Composers Alliance Orchestra director Darrell Katz. Ranging from more orchestral arrangements such as the deep, dark "Chimera" to the propulsive big-band bounding on "Cake Smearred On Car," Katz favors bold statements, riffing backdrops, vibraphone and marimba colors, and bright, brassy, at times showy orchestrations. He also finds particularly inventive ways to integrate electric guitar into the group, slipping bits of rock and blues into the jazz experience. For example, listen to John Dirac's chopped comping under W. Marshall Sealy's french horn solo on "Zen And The Art Of Cab Driving."

JCA, a Boston-based collective, originally formed in 1986, brings the charts to life, pitting challenging solos against the involved charts. Trumpeter John Carlson and saxists Rob Scheps, Douglas Yates, and Andrew D'Angelo deserve special mention; Katz's only instrumental appearance (on synthesizer) unfortunately closes the disc's only bummer track, "Hot Winds Over Cool Breeze." There's a neat dab of Ellingtonia ("Tonk") and a slightly heavy-handed series of gutbucket solos on Albert Collins' "Left Overs," as well as a guest cadenza from alto master Julius Hemphill on "Monk," the disc's only live track.

One minor complaint: why do percussionists use chime racks? Like bell trees, they're instant cheeseball. Taki Masuko's cameo chimework on "Chimera" and "Dancing On A Table" lends the proceedings an inappropriately over-slick gloss. —John Corbett



## Call Of The Wild (Sort Of)

by Dan Ouellette

Ever since the bridge between pop and jazz was forged, fusion has received its share of bad press for allegedly being music with its heart cored out. At its worst, contemporary jazz fusion is sleepy and easily played, having deeded its soul to the new-age zone. At its best, it can chart new jazz territory where disparate musical elements combine in exciting ways.

There are several indications of this forward-looking sensibility on saxophonist **Bill Evans'** first solo studio album in eight years, *Push* (Lipstick 89022-2; 60:59: ★★★½). A veteran of electric-jazz ensembles headed by Miles Davis, John McLaughlin, and Herbie Hancock, Evans delivers his strongest work here when the funk is thick and the groove is fat. His three collaborations with rapper K.C. Flyte make for some of the most exhilarating hip-hop-meets-jazz (read: hip-bop) available on disc today. The rap-sax scats are particularly charged and the anti-racism poetry compelling. Evans squeals and squirms with his soprano sax, soaring above the earthy funk beats. In addition, he lays down hefty tenor sax lines throughout a collection that is marred by a few relaxed, mild-mannered pieces given a synth sheen. In a duet with pianist Bruce Hornsby, Evans gives us the sweetly melodic "A Simple Life."

Speaking of treading on familiar roads, the jazz-pop instrumental group **Elements**, led by bassist Mark Egan and drummer Danny Gottlieb, goes the safe, predictable route on its live *Far East Volume 1* (Wavetone 8631; 66:39:★★). The polite, polished, leisurely developed pieces recorded in Japan in 1992 lack passion and a sense of adventure with solos that are, for the most part, too long and uninspiring. There are pockets of hot playing, including a spirited soprano saxophone run by David Mann on the romantic "Eastern Window." It takes an exquisite piano solo by Gil Goldstein on his "Gil Prelude" to save the companion Elements disc, *Far East Volume 2* (Wavetone 8633; 69:59:★★★). The tune's not sweet or commercially palatable. In other words, the piece makes you sit up and listen. Next is a dazzling piano-sax interplay on "Three Way Mirror." Mann blows fire and fury into the funk-inflected "Go Ahead Stan," and the entire quartet lets loose for the romping finale, "Deprave," which is not only the strongest composition on both discs, but also features the band's best soloing.

The contemporary jazz quintet **Steps Ahead** rocks out with electronically generated energy on *Live In Tokyo 1986* (NYC 6006-2; 64:23:★★★), previously released only on laserdisc. Michael Brecker on tenor sax and EWI, guitarist Mike Stern, and vibes player Mike Mainieri star on this collection that's packed with catchy jazz-pop melodies and plenty of invigorating stretches of harmonized playing. Highlights include Brecker's charged solo on "Sumo," escorted by Stern's raw guitar work, the melodic twists and turns on "Safari," and the buoyant "Oops." On the down side, the surprises are too few, tender tunes like the



Strong when the funk is thick: Bill Evans

ballad "Self Portrait" are too precious, and the group's synth-blemished rendition of Elling-

ton's "In A Sentimental Mood" is ill-conceived.

Norwegian guitarist/pianist **Kenneth Sivertsen's** international debut *Remembering North* (NYC 6007-2; 69:55:★★★) is by and large an impressive collection. While he zips out swinging, bop-informed pieces such as the skipping "Cock One's Head" and the energetic "From Paris To Mosterhamn," tunes like the lulling "Rain" and dreamy "Division" are performed with a gentle touch, hushed tones, and soft pastel colors. Notable support comes from Randy and Michael Brecker, who together set a soulful mood on a couple melancholy ballads.

Electric guitarist **Tony Purrone**—sideman for the Heath Brothers and Ed Thigpen—leads his trio through a fine package of well-crafted, well-executed pieces with *Electric Poetry* (B&W 028; 62:43:★★★). The opening "Melrose Avenue" is given too much synth slickness thanks to guest Bob Mintzer's EWI work, but all is forgiven when Mintzer and Purrone combine for a superb bass-clarinet/guitar interchange on the funky "Cheeks." Except for a couple rocking flings, Purrone doesn't stray too far from straightforward jazz. He consistently launches into inventive soloing without overdoing it with trendy tonal manipulations or rock-arena clichés. Particularly remarkable is the band's imaginative take on the Beatles' "Norwegian Wood." **DB**

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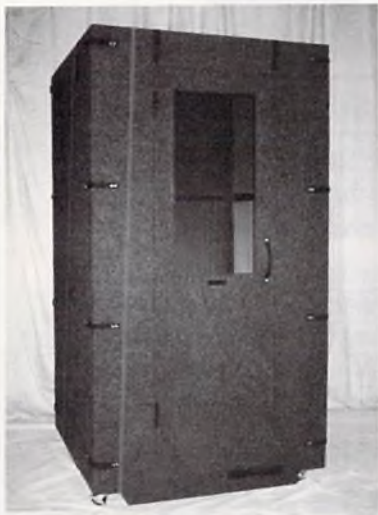
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## CD REVIEWS

### They're Alright

by Frank-John Hadley

In the 1990s, many blues practitioners get by on fake feeling, the same old licks, boogied-to-death rhythms, stale tales of big-leg mamas and alleged hard luck. Only a few singers and musicians speak the time-hallowed blues lingo with vitality, freshness, determination, and understanding. However, grousing aside, we can rejoice over seven recent albums from members of the elect who give a swat of the cane to the familiar 12-bar form.

Thirty-five years since cutting his seminal Cobra sides and almost two decades after his last studio session, **Otis Rush** returns to the fray behind the stunning *Ain't Enough Comin' In* (One Way Up/Mercury 314 518 769-2; 58:00; ★★★★★). This enduring patriarch of West Side blues uses his upside-down Strat to vanquish pain with cautious, gut-burning storytelling that points up his fondness for creative whim and Kenny Burrell/Jimmy Smith-style jazz. As a singer, Rush mirrors the rhythm and tone and individuality of his guitar to achieve the same glorious heights of nuanced expression. Admittedly a wary individual, the 59-year-old wizard seems totally at ease with Buddy Guy producer John Porter, the best soul-blues sessionmen in Los Angeles, and excellent material that includes loaners from, among other luminaries, Percy Mayfield, Ray Charles, and the Kings Albert and B.B.

Rush plays the blues with a strong flame that burns right to the heart of the matter, and the same can be said of **John Ellison**. Once a member of the Soul Brothers Six, an upstate New York soul group that hit big with 1967's "Some Kind Of Wonderful," this little-known singer/guitarist/songwriter has returned to the studio after a long absence and made *Welcome Back* (After Hours/Ichiban 6113-2; 49:44; ★★★★★) with a good little rhythm section called the Salamanders. Ellison's inviting tenor has a glass-like emotional clarity, encompassing unsentimental romantic longing ("Welcome Back"), life affirmation ("Love Don't Get Better Than This"), and the hurt of betrayal ("Lie To Me").

Still another middle-aged gent on the comeback trail is **Jimmie Lee Robinson**, a Chicago guitarist who used to run with the likes of Elmore James and Magic Sam in the '60s. Drawing from the well of understatement, with backing by the easy-does-it Ice Cream Men, he combines the weight of experience with a certain cool boldness throughout *Lonely Traveler* (Delmark 665; 59:47; ★★★★★½). Robinson's weather-beaten voice and clipped, raw guitar pull new truths out of tunes by Magic Sam, Lightnin' Hopkins, Big Bill Broonzy, and Honeydripper Sykes. Robinson's nine originals also reveal refreshing idiosyncratic changes on sensual delight and lonely hearts.

**Yvonne Jackson** airs out her tremendously impassioned pipes with the alert assistance of two J.B. Horn men and the King Snake Records stable of studio regulars on *I'm Trouble* (enja/Blues Beacon 1016 2; 36:18; ★★★★★). Starting you right in the face, this self-assured, gospel-trained woman from northern Florida brings a convincing moral urgency to her love



Otis Rush: a stunning return to form

complaints and boasts. She has a natural instinct for phrasing and spacing, and ace King Snake producer/musicians Bob Greenlee and Jim Payne have given her marvelous songs, all in an updated Stax bag. One helluva first album that shouldn't be missed.

After 20 years of service to the Air Force's Airmen of Note band, singer **Juanita Williams** breaks out and gives full expression to her gospelly blues spirit on *Introducing Juanita Williams* (Big Mo 10242; 44:28; ★★★★★). She takes flight with Aretha-like ease, her intonation is clear, and she re-energizes Mable John's "Another Man's Place," T-Bone Walker's "I'm Still In Love With You," and tunes linked to Ray Charles, Freddie King, and Chuck Willis. On the down side, she's handcuffed with at least four sorry songs (e.g., the Nighthawks' "If You Go"), and her decent D.C. sidemen go trolling for soul-blues magic only to get facile gesture.

Once a superb swinging band guitarist with the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Texan **Jimmie Vaughan** heals himself from the loss of brother Stevie through the shuffles and gospel-streaked originals on his return to recording with his first solo album, *Strange Pleasure* (Epic 57202; 46:00; ★★★★★). Vaughan's Fender stings only with politeness, its lack of overt excitement probably a disappointment to his longtime fans, and his singing is desert-dry and limited in range. Yet there's a sense of personal loss and acceptance at the core of the music that is gripping. Producer Nile Rodgers, he of David Bowie notoriety, and savvy Austin sidemen know how to help him convey poignancy.

Bringing the blues tradition into the blast furnace of funky rock, Chicago harmonica player **Sugar Blue** huffs and puffs hot bent notes as though the music were boiling inside him. Make no doubt of it, *Blue Blazes* (Alligator 4819; 59:04; ★★★★★) is packed with histrionics: Sugar's earnest singing and brazen harmonicas, his in-your-face production, his band's irrepressible aggressiveness. All the excitement seems honestly felt, and old songs from the likes of James Cotton and Sonny Boy Williamson are forced into taking on mutated new life. Crank it!

DB



**1 Al Grey**

"Miss Missouri" (from *KANSAS CITY SUITE, Roulette, 1960*) Grey, trombone; Count Basie, piano, leader.

That sounded like one of Duke's trombone players. Exactly who, I don't know. Lawrence Brown maybe. 3½ stars. It had a groove to it.

DH: *It's Al Grey.*

Al is a really phenomenal cat. 5 stars for him. If you'd had some plunger work I definitely would have recognized it. He is without question one of the top two or three plunger specialists ever—Tricky Sam [Nanton], Tyree Glenn, and him. I didn't recognize Basie, but this definitely had that Basie groove to it.

**2 Ray Anderson**

"A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing" (from *BLUES BRED IN THE BONE, enja, 1988*) Anderson, trombone; Duke Ellington, composer.

That was Ray Anderson playing "A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing." Ray definitely has a unique sound. I prefer this tune more than anything else of his I've heard. I wouldn't say it is in keeping with the original, but the thing about Duke, he would always cater to the individual, to the personality. On this particular recording, more than anything else I've heard so far, I could see his personality coming out. For somebody to come forth with his conception like that, I'll go hit on ya. 3 stars.

**3 Jack Teagarden**

"Impromptu Ensemble #1" (from *Eddie Condon's DIXIELAND ALL-STARS, Decca, 1939*) Teagarden, trombone.

I didn't think that was one of Jack T's best performances, but I have to give him 4½ stars just for being Jack T. He is one of the few great trombone soloists. Listen to his first recording done in like '23, "She's A Great Great Gal." There were a few other soloists, like J.T. Higginbotham, but as for dexterity and melodic conception, Jack Teagarden was one of the finest.

**4 Curtis Fuller**

"Three Blind Mice" (from *THE HISTORY OF ART BLAKEY AND THE JAZZ MESSENGERS, Blue Note, 1962*) Fuller, trombone; others as identified.

That was Art Blakey with Freddie [Hubbard], Wayne [Shorter], and Curtis on "Three Blind Mice." I hate giving ratings, but 4 stars for that particular performance. The thing about Curtis, he played so much of other people's music. That's really more

**DELFEAYO MARSALIS**

by Dave Helland

Even as a student at Berklee, Delfeayo Marsalis balanced a career playing and producing. Now, after stints with Fats Domino, Ray Charles, and Abdullah Ibrahim, he's been touring with Elvin Jones' Jazz Machine. As a producer, his recent credits include trumpeter Derrick Shezbie's *Spodie's Back* (Qwest) and pianist Eric Reed's second release for Mo'Jazz as well as recent releases by family members.

Marsalis has also continued his trombone studies with David Baker and currently Curtis Fuller. "What I got from them was their individual approaches to playing, but I had to figure out for myself how to incorporate that into what I do," explains Marsalis.

"If you're playing Tommy Dorsey-style,



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E and D are great keys—that's a real sweet sound up there. As to what sounds good, almost any standard will work in G. I love that key for playing the melody but I don't like to solo there."

This was Marsalis' first Blindfold Test.

challenging than playing your own music most of the time because you can play your own music according to what you do best. He recorded with Trane, Wayne, different people. He had to adapt what he did to other people's conceptions, and that's just really a hard thing to do.

**5 Joseph Bowie**

"Dogan A.D." (from *Defunkt's Cum Funky, Enemy, 1993*) Bowie, trombone; Rishard Lampese, guitar.

Three stars for proficiency on the instruments. Is that Joe Bowie? I've never heard Joe before. His solo was really meaningless; it didn't have any melodic content. I would have preferred to have heard someone like George Lewis solo on this. He could have played that very high-energy, fast-paced style with more of a melodic statement. I think the guitar solo was very inspired.

**6 Papo Vazquez**

"Breakout" (from *BREAKOUT, Timeless, 1991*) Vazquez, trombone.

This reminded me of Robin Eubanks and Conrad Herwig, but then it just didn't sound like them. I give that 3 stars just for the proficiency, but the solo didn't go anywhere. DH: *It's Papo Vazquez.*

That's Papo; goddamn, I should have known that. He's my man, I love Papo. I have this record—I got to check it out some more. I first heard him with Slide Hampton and the World of Trombones. I saw him in New York. This tune didn't really do justice to what he is

capable of doing. He has a real lyrical sound and excellent control over the instrument.

**7 Fred Wesley**

"Smile Stacey" (from *COMME CI COMME CA, Antilles, 1991*) Wesley, trombone.

That was Fred Wesley. I think that the great thing about Fred is that he's always been able to play jazz and play on changes when he's primarily known as being a funk trombonist. The rhythm section wasn't really groovin' that hard so I'd give it 3 stars, but Fred Wesley is just a bad cat. I love Fred. If you want to deal with the plunger you have to deal with Tricky Sam Nanton. If you want to deal with funk trombone you have to deal with Fred Wesley, period.

**8 Vic Dickenson**

"I'm Through With Love" (from *Coleman Hawkins' HOLLYWOOD STAMPEDE, Capitol, 1945*) Dickenson, trombone.

That was Vic Dickenson and Coleman Hawkins. 4½ close to a 5. Vic is one of the first truly great stylists on the instrument. He had his own sound, and he used a lot more of the effects of the instrument, sliding and growling. Those things, for the most part, have been lost in trombone players today. Not because you should try to play like old people—I don't agree with that philosophy at all—but you never know where a musical situation will take you. If you don't know about the growl or the slide or the buzz, all these other techniques, then you are limiting yourself. I think that's a great loss that guys don't deal with the older styles. DB