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Philly Joe Jones**

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Son Of Monk

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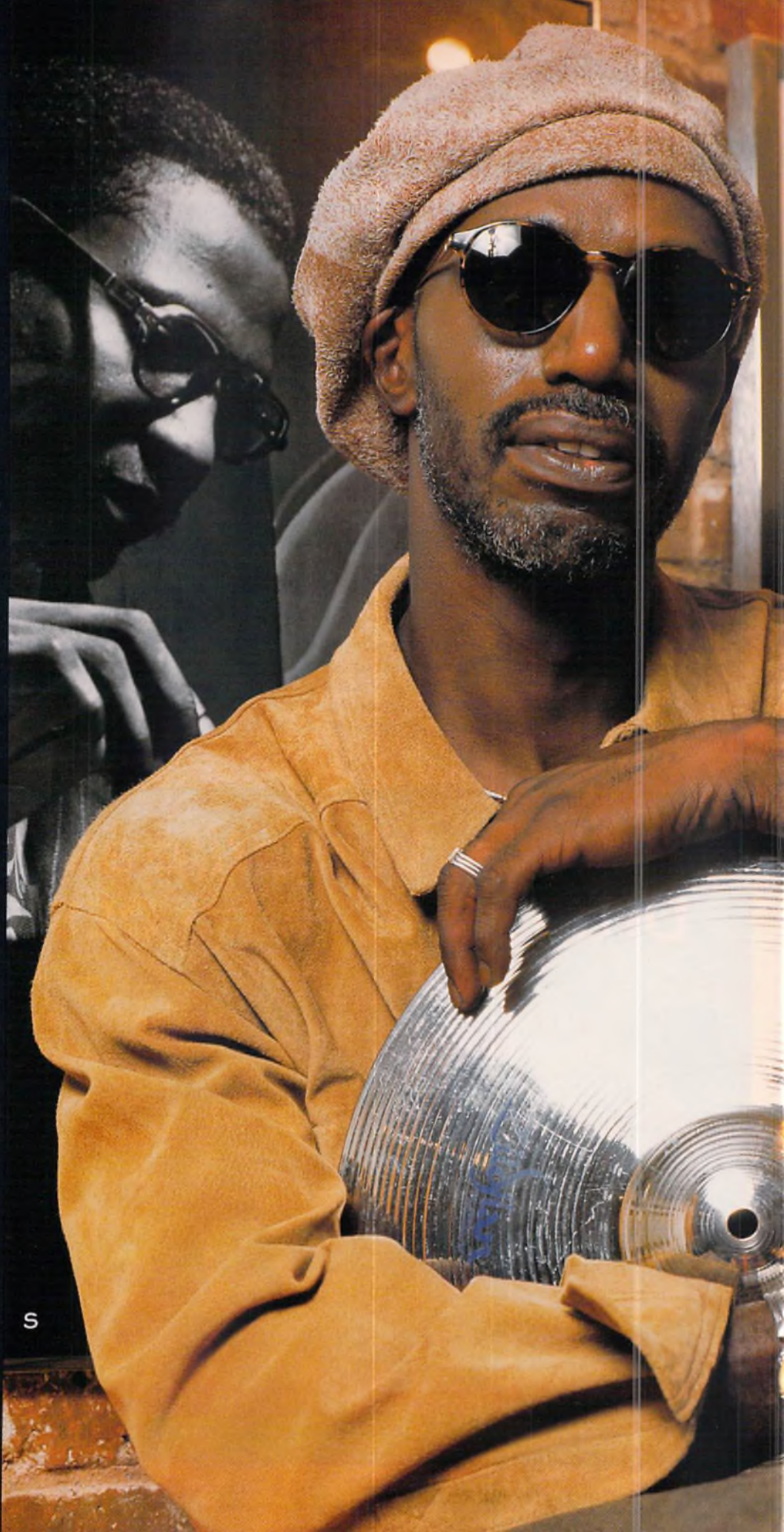
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SON OF MONK



S



T.S. Monk Wants to Rock You Down & Bring Jazz to the Masses

In Walt Disney's 1994 summer blockbuster, a young lion, heir to his kingdom's throne, sorrowfully runs away from the pack after his father's death. The lion's return years later, his awakening to himself and to the circle of life, gives new hope to the animal kingdom around him.

T.S. Monk, son of Thelonious and Nellie, had his first gig with his dad's band at 19. He recently returned to the jazz world as a drummer/bandleader after some 15 years playing and producing r&b. Now 44, T.S. Monk is a dynamic ambassador for jazz entertainment. As spokesman for the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, and bandleader for *Take One* and *Changing Of The Guard*, he may not "save" the kingdom, but he's sure gonna pump some life into it.

T.S. speaks in the highest terms about his band—Don Sickler on trumpet, Bobby Porcelli on alto sax, Willie Williams on tenor, pianist Ronnie Mathews, and bassist Scott Colley. "If you come hear my band, we're gonna swing you to death, gonna knock your socks off," says Monk. "We're gonna blow out the back of the room."

ROBIN TOLLESON: *It sounds like you got into music with no pressure from your family.*

T.S. MONK: When I was eight, Thelonious was on his way to Europe and we were out at Idlewild Airport. He took me to one end of the terminal, turned and said, "I don't care what you do in life. And don't let anybody tell you that you have to be or do anything. I am me and you are you, and don't let anybody worry you about it." He had released me from the shadow in a fashion that most famous people don't take the time to do with their kids. That took all the pressure off of me, and I didn't start thinking about music until I was 13 or 14. He never mentioned music to me. People around me kept saying, "Do you know who your father is?" I really didn't.

RT: *It must have been exciting growing up with those kinds of house guests.*

TM: It was Bud and Max and Miles and Art and Diz and Bird and Trane. Everybody had a nickname. My first real gig was with my dad's band. The shock was when I left his organization, because growing up around him, the only musicians I knew was this crowd of names. I started out in fantasyland, and then found myself tossed into the real world. I was shocked that everybody didn't play like Charlie Parker. As far as I knew, if you played trumpet you either sounded like Dizzy or Miles or Fats Navarro or Clifford Brown. If you played drums, you sounded like Max or Art Blakey or Roy Haynes or Elvin Jones.

RT: *You recorded with your funk band for the Mirage label in the '80s. Now people are sampling your stuff.*

TM: I grew up in the '60s listening to Coltrane, Parker, Dizzy, Miles, Sly Stone, Temptations, Smokey Robinson, Jimi Hendrix, the Byrds, Beethoven. So it was a natural progression for me, and my father dug that, too. One of the guiding philosophies of music is to

find your own voice. Thelonious understood that process thoroughly, and I can see again his wisdom in not directing me. As a father who just wanted to see his son do his own thing, he did all the right things in a funny way to ensure that I ended up where I am today.

RT: *Why did you end up on drums?*

TM: When I was five or six, the first time I saw Art Blakey and Max Roach play, I understood the instrument. I'm a gadget freak, so I understood the instrument from an engineering standpoint. And when Max or Art played a figure, no matter how fast it was, I could see what their hands were doing, hear what the sticks were doing before I even knew what I was hearing. When I got a set I knew how to put the whole thing together, and the mechanics of the coordination. I never understood the piano.

RT: *You had a nice pool of drummers to study with.*

TM: The musicians coming through the house jammed a lot, but a great deal of time was spent on discussions of life. Being around Coltrane and Parker and Davis and all these cats, what I learned was the philosophy behind the music, which I think is the singularly most missing ingredient in most of the young lions that we have today. In the '50s and '60s, we lost Charlie Parker, Clifford Brown, John Coltrane, Bud Powell—the list is incredible. All that could be written down was a lot of the things they did technically. There was a rise of schools and jazz studies, and kids with technical proficiency at age 17 that would make Charlie Parker blush. Guys that have a lot of chops but don't play a story. That's because what couldn't be written down, what could only be conveyed through hands-on contact with the masters themselves, was the philosophy. To play a solo and make sense, to play an ensemble and make it sound like it's a million years old—that has to do with respect for the history and the cats that played that music.

If you really want to be a jazz musician, all you've got to do is put on Miles Davis' playing "Round Midnight," listen to those long tones, and you know you've got a long tone session coming up for the next 15 years. But swinging is about something that's in your heart, your attitude, a relaxed feeling. Max gave me my first lesson and Art gave me my first set of drums. Max talked little about paradiddles and single and double strokes, and very much about the drummer as a voice, the drum as a musical instrument, and the orderly and constructive approach to the drums.

My father used to talk about digging how a cat operates rather than what he's actually playing. What he's playing is his business. Your business is to play what you've got on your mind, not what's on his mind. Get the philosophy from him, but don't dare try to play what he's playing. The prime axiom behind modern American jazz is to be yourself, the individual. If I sound like Michael Jackson, are people going to go out and buy my record? But if I sound like Art Blakey, the jazz listener is going to say, "Damn, he sounds like Art Blakey," and run and get some nice vintage Art Blakey. If you hear somebody sounding like Miles, it makes you want some real Miles Davis. It's dangerous in jazz to copy. Our giants are so revered that when you plagiarize someone you offend people.



MITCHELL SEIDEL

RT: *It was interesting to read recently how Branford Marsalis seems disillusioned with his Tonight Show gig, and is playing less jazz now.*

TM: The crossroads the jazz community is at right now is really whether to become a boutique novelty musical industry or become part of the mainstream entertainment industry. If I was a television producer, I would be hard-pressed to find some jazz to put on television. Pop groups have been able to go on *American Bandstand* and *Soul Train* for years, lip synch with records and get great ratings. Why? It's because of the look. Right now, jazz presentation is not entertaining. So the music that Branford initially put on *The Tonight Show* was the right music in the wrong package. To simply come out and play that music, without major visual consideration, was a fundamental mistake.

My father, Dizzy, Miles, Coltrane, Elvin, Max, Art, every one of those giants were entertainers. Move one generation back and you've got Duke Ellington, Willie

"The Lion" Smith, and Louis Armstrong. Those guys would tell you a joke, give you a speech, recite some poetry, and then play the hell out of a song and get you to dance at the same time. When all those jazz masters died there was a vacuum, and people who were not qualified were writing theories, like "Monk turns his back to the audience to show his political disdain." The man turned his back on the bandstand because he had something to tell the band, the same reason Miles turned. He wasn't turning his back on the audience, he was turning his front on his band.

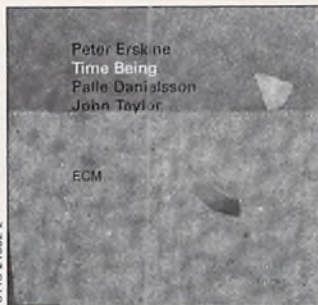
Jazz now has no sex appeal, no sensuality. Most jazz concerts are done in the worst of entertainment circumstances with the worst lighting and sound system. Most jazz musicians dress like shit. I don't care what you're selling, entertainment is fantasy. You have to give people something that they can't get at home. We haven't been doing it in jazz, and Branford, being young, was thrust into network television with none of the tools of entertainment to help him along. They haven't yet found a way to present jazz on television so that it is as visually effective as it is audiowise, and this is why Branford has had trouble. There needs to be drama, there needs to be suspense. I'm bringing show business back. Everybody gets mad at Harry Connick, but what's made Harry Connick popular is not necessarily his white face, which a lot of people would like to say. It's because he's entertaining, and you can't take that away from the kid. He's singing the same songs that Joe Williams and Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett have sung for 40 years, but he's packaged the hell out of it.

People today need to be pushed, kicked, cajoled, smashed into step. And it takes more than your pure talent. As a jazz musician I'd love that seven minutes on *Saturday Night Live*. You give my band that seven minutes and I'm going to sell 50,000 records the next day. Getting back to Branford's disappointment, I would say, Branford, don't be disillusioned. Be disgusted with the jazz industry for showing you how to do everything but be an entertainer. Jazz musicians tend to resent sensationalism. But I submit, on top of playing our asses off, we've got to get sensational about it.

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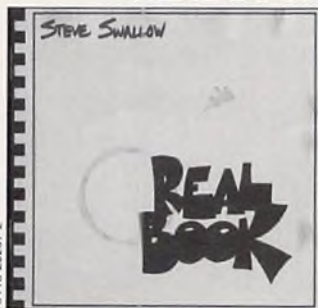
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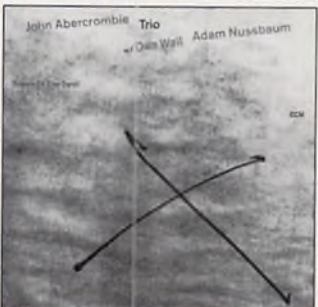
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RT: How do you pick the music your band plays?

TM: The basic principles that govern popular music are no different in jazz. The rhythm's got to be swinging, whatever swinging is in that culture. It's got to have a haunting melody that you remember. And then it's got to be clean and tight, it's got to have a structure and a form that's fairly easy for universal man to understand. The only rule that you add to that with jazz is that you have solos that tell stories.

RT: You've put a nice mix of material on your albums, standards and new things from your bandmembers.

TM: I approach making jazz records the way I did r&b records, which is that every tune is a hit by itself. I have something on my records for the esoteric types, like a "Cape-town Ambush." "Una Mas" for the people that love Lee Morgan. Stuff like "New York" for folks that dig Miles. Some Monk for anchoring. Some Clifford Jordan because he's a wild man. If you dig jazz, my record's going to entertain you.

RT: You play drums with a strong hand and a lot of sensitivity. There's a lot of communication going on.

TM: In jazz you're no stronger than the support team around you. The big mistake that most drummer/bandleaders make is thinking the drums have to lead the charge. Art Blakey and Max Roach surrounded themselves with the best musicians, picked the best music, then they just swung like hell and took a solo now and then. If you get a great bass player and piano player, it's like a magic carpet ride. You don't have to take solos, and everybody'll say, "Man, that drummer is smokin'."

The drummer's job is the dynamics of the band and to keep the tempo steady. The beat or pulse comes out of the bass. If you've got great dynamics and keep good steady tempos, everyone's going to think you're great. Then you take a couple solos in time now and then, where everybody understands where the beat is, and they'll say you're one of the greatest. As a drummer/bandleader, my job is to set the overall tone and attitude for the band, then listen and support my soloists and the rhythmic structures involved.

RT: On "Monk's Dream," I hear the melody very clearly in your solo.

TM: I learned that from playing with Thelonious. There are drummers that dazzle you with chops and guys that are really melodic. When I solo, I try to come from a musical perspective rather than rhythm. The two most famous drum solos in history were melodic solos: "Topsy" by Cozy Cole and "Wipe Out" by the Ventures. People respect chops, but they don't really get it. It's kind of a mystery. Buddy Miles had feeling and a melodic sense that was monumental,

so if you look down the annals of the greatest rock & roll drummers, Buddy Miles' name is up there with Keith Moon and Ginger Baker and Mitch Mitchell and cats with all these fantastic chops.

RT: I understand it was the beginnings of the Monk Institute in Washington, D.C., that got you back into drumming and jazz.

TM: It was a good promotional item to have me on the bandstand at our fundraisers. The only problem was that I found myself appearing with the likes of Wynton and Clark Terry and Dizzy, so I had to practice. I'd gotten so immersed in r&b and MIDI and drum machines that I'd stopped playing drums in about 1982. So when I came back to playing, I had no burn at all. In fact, it was like my battery was completely charged. I went from practicing 15 to 20 minutes a day to six hours a day. The music had to be top of the line, otherwise I knew I'd be drummed out of jazz like so many sons of jazz musicians.

RT: Some rising jazz stars have won the Monk Competition. What are the Institute's other goals?

TM: We've been promoting jazz education and jazz music. We put together a deal to open our first classes at New England Conservatory. We'll continue our commitment to the high schools. We're trying to make a big mid-course correction in jazz education and involve the masters that we have left in new curriculum development, and turn jazz education into what it should be: a springboard for jazz performers and not music teachers. We have a musical history in America made up of names like Ellington, Berlin, Copland, Monk, and Wonder. We can discard the names Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, and Liszt, because that's European history.

The Monk Foundation pulled me back into jazz like a giant hook. I can talk to congressmen about jazz in ways that congressmen understand, and talk to musicians in ways that musicians understand. It's part of what I owe, because this music took care of me my whole life. I had a great childhood, a great family life, a great career. Perhaps, I can pay back in terms of the way the music is perceived. I'm delighted to be back in jazz.

DB

EQUIPMENT

T.S. Monk plays Slingerland drums with a Ludwig snare drum, 10x12 and 12x12 tom toms, a 14x14 floor tom, and 18-inch bass drum. He uses Remo drumheads, plays DW pedals, A. Zildjian cymbals, a 14-inch medium-quick beat hi-hat, 20-inch medium-dot crash, 20-inch riveted thin ride, 20-inch crash-ride, 16-inch splash, 12-inch splash, and an 18-inch china. He uses Pro Mark Sticks.

DISCOGRAPHY

CHANGING OF THE GUARD—Blue Note 89050
TAKE ONE—Blue Note 99614

BOBBY SHEW ON THE YAMAHA YTR-6310Z

Most trumpet players can only dream of a horn that not only facilitates ease of playing in the upper register but also can produce the wonderful, rich sound desired in a brass quintet. Forget about the years of playing on an instrument that's "not quite right." Yamaha has now introduced the YTR-6310Z.

The evolution of the YTR-6310Z started in 1979, when Bobby Shew played the predecessor to this instrument, the YTR-636. Working with Yamaha designer Kenzo Kawasaki and dealer/designer Bob Malone, Shew tested this model in many types of musical circumstances. After numerous changes and refinements to the instrument, they came up with a horn that could work in any situation. With the introduction of the final product, Shew says, "I am finally getting a sound out of a trumpet that I always dreamt I could get."

What is so unique about the YTR-6310Z? According to Shew, "It has the ability to get the sound a jazz player wants, but still has the capabilities of really roaring and sizzling the way a lead player wants it to. A classical player can get a nice orchestral, dark sound out of it because it plays very efficiently and easily from top to bottom. A legit player can pick it up, use a big mouthpiece and get a wonderful sound, whereas a lead player can use a shallow cup mouthpiece and still be able to get out those high A's with ease."

"The whole idea is to let your air do the work."

Most experienced players' initial reaction to the "Z" will be one of confusion. It sounds like a large trumpet, but it produces a warm sound with relative ease of blowing. At first, Bobby felt the horn was really tight, but this was only because he overblew it. Says Shew, "Most players work on the assumption that a larger horn produces a larger sound and in turn makes you work



harder to get that sound. With the Z, once the player relaxes his airstream and eliminates the tension, he can get a lot more productivity out of a lot less physical stress. When most people try a new horn, they will play it much the same way they did their previous instrument. If you are playing on a larger bore instrument and then play on the Z, you will tend to overblow. Shew tells how to try the horn, "Depending on your ability, start off on a scale starting on a third space C or a second line G and play that octave chromatically. Then do other scales, both chromatic and diatonic, for about five minutes to where your body can feel the gradual physical adjustments as you go up and down the horn. Once you find that, you have locked into something that you can base everything else on. The whole idea is to let your air do the work. You will notice that with a reduction in physical work, you will have increased your productivity."

Some noticeable differences on this horn are the elimination of the third slide spit valve and the use of the metal valve guide. The larger tuning slide makes the trumpet more versatile and the large, thin wall bell frees up the vibration and helps focus the sound. Bobby prefers the lacquer model because he feels it responds better and has a warmer sound. All of these features combined together make this a very unique trumpet that can be used in any musical situation.

After many years of performing, Shew has found that this is the perfect horn for him: "The Yamaha 6310Z will work for any trumpet player as long as the player lets it work."

YTR 6310Z

B♭ trumpet
Step bore design
Medium size bore: 11.3mm (0.445")
Large bore tuning slide
Bell: 127mm (5")
Mouthpiece: 14B4
Gold lacquer finish
With silver-plate (YTR-6310ZS)

BIOGRAPHY

Bobby Shew spent many years as lead player for big bands like Woody Herman, Tommy Dorsey, Buddy Rich, Terry Gibbs, Louie Bellson, Maynard Ferguson, and Benny Goodman.

After moving to Los Angeles in 1973, he became busy with his studio career as well as his jazz career. He was heard on shows such as Bob Newhart, Mary Tyler Moore, Hawaii 5-0, Mork and Mindy, Happy Days, Laverne and Shirley, and recorded the soundtracks of movies like Grease, Rocky, and The Muppet Movie.

Bobby now travels worldwide playing jazz clubs, recording, performing with his own groups, and presenting clinics.

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Burning For Buddy

Seventeen

Drummers Tackle Big-Band Charts In Tribute To Buddy Rich

By Jim Macnie

Teeth and tenaciousness: two things liable to pop into someone's mind at the mention of Buddy Rich. They're part of the literal imagery that surrounded the virtuoso drummer most of his life: that great set of choppers (with which caricaturists had a field day) and that irrepressible verve that sparked every musician within rim shot. The latter dramatically shaped the bandleader's sound, but both remain apt metaphors for the music Rich created. It was gripping and resolute.

"When Buddy let loose, it was 'look out world!'" declares Max Roach. From "Traps, the Drum Wonder" (his nom de Vaudeville, circa 1920, at the age of two), to powering the Tommy Dorsey Band during the early '40s, to lifting up Charlie Parker during New York stints around the time of the Jazz at the Philharmonic gigs, to leading the splashy battalion he called a big band from the '50s on, Rich kept his virtuosity front and center. Every move he made was italicized. His music is the essence of emphasis, pulsing with certitude and display. Put them together and you've got a very entertaining notion of pride. "It takes a lot of confidence to play as aggressively as he did," muses Billy Cobham.

That being the case, the knockout performances by the 17 drummers on *Burning For Buddy* (see p. 42), Neil Peart's new tribute to the bandleader, stay close to the esthetic that inspired them: They all kick ass.

"Buddy was a guy who put out incredible amounts of energy," says Peart. "All of the performances we captured definitely reflect that." From Steve Gadd's "Love For Sale" to Ed Shaughnessy's "Shawnee," he's right on. With the broad span of percussionists invited to participate (besides Peart, Roach, Cobham, Gadd, and Shaughnessy, the list includes Kenny Aronoff, Manu Katché, Steve Smith, Omar Hakim, Joe Morello, Simon Phillips, Dave Weckl, Matt Sorum, Rod Morgenstein, Bill Bruford, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and Steve Ferrone), there's an intergenerational, pan-stylistic breadth at work. For a few weeks last winter, New York's Power Station had a virtual revolving door through which breezed rockers, funkies, and jazzers. All were juiced about tackling a Buddy Rich chart.

"The feeling of commitment and attitude was palpable in the air," explains Peart's co-

producer and Buddy's daughter, Cathy Rich. "People would come into the room and immediately ask, 'What's going on in here?' The vibe was unmistakable."

Some players knew the material cold. "I am a Buddy fanatic," confesses Weckl. "To be honest with you, when I was 14, I practiced to his version of 'Mercy, Mercy, Mercy' all day long." "Smitty" Smith had a head start on the competition as well. He did a mini-tour with Rich's big band a few years ago. "The last gig was near the local college of my hometown, and by that time we were killing. So when I got to this session, it was simple: 'What do you want me to play, man?' Bam. All done."

Peart himself was a bit more intimidated. "Make that enormously intimidated," he amends. "It takes a while to get the feeling of swing to sound natural."

For the last 20 years he's been the drummer for Rush, a band of Canadians that combines rigorous structural designs and a performance derring-do that has sated those who like their prog-rock cerebral and gutsy. He isn't the first rocker who wanted to sit behind the throttle of a big band (the Rolling Stones' Charlie Watts beat him to it). But, along with Cathy and her husband, Steve Arnold, he's put together a vital, well-rounded record that spotlights individuality while genuflecting to a hero. "One reason the record's a hoot is because Neil was so enthusiastic," accounts Roach.

It's an album that brings up the question of whether rock drummers have an aptitude for jazz. Rich's music contained the kind of animation that could crumble walls, full of chatter and blurts out of nowhere. He was an accent hound in the guise of a pressure cooker, who, at any given moment, might flam the audience into next week. Rockers

should be used to that, but raising the roof in a different musical language remains a daunting task; lessons must be learned, skills developed.

Peart knew the feeling firsthand. In '91 he participated in a concert for the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Program, playing with the highly regarded Buddy Rich Big Band (who, Roach reminds, "are a hell of a band" and make this record what it is). There, he didn't really feel his performance of "Cotton Tail" was up to snuff. "Neil's meticulous about everything he does," offers Cathy. Peart's chance to right the situation came when Rush took a hiatus due to a birth in the band. "The studio is a much more controllable atmosphere," he chuckles. "Let's just say I got much closer to really playing 'Cotton Tail' this time around."

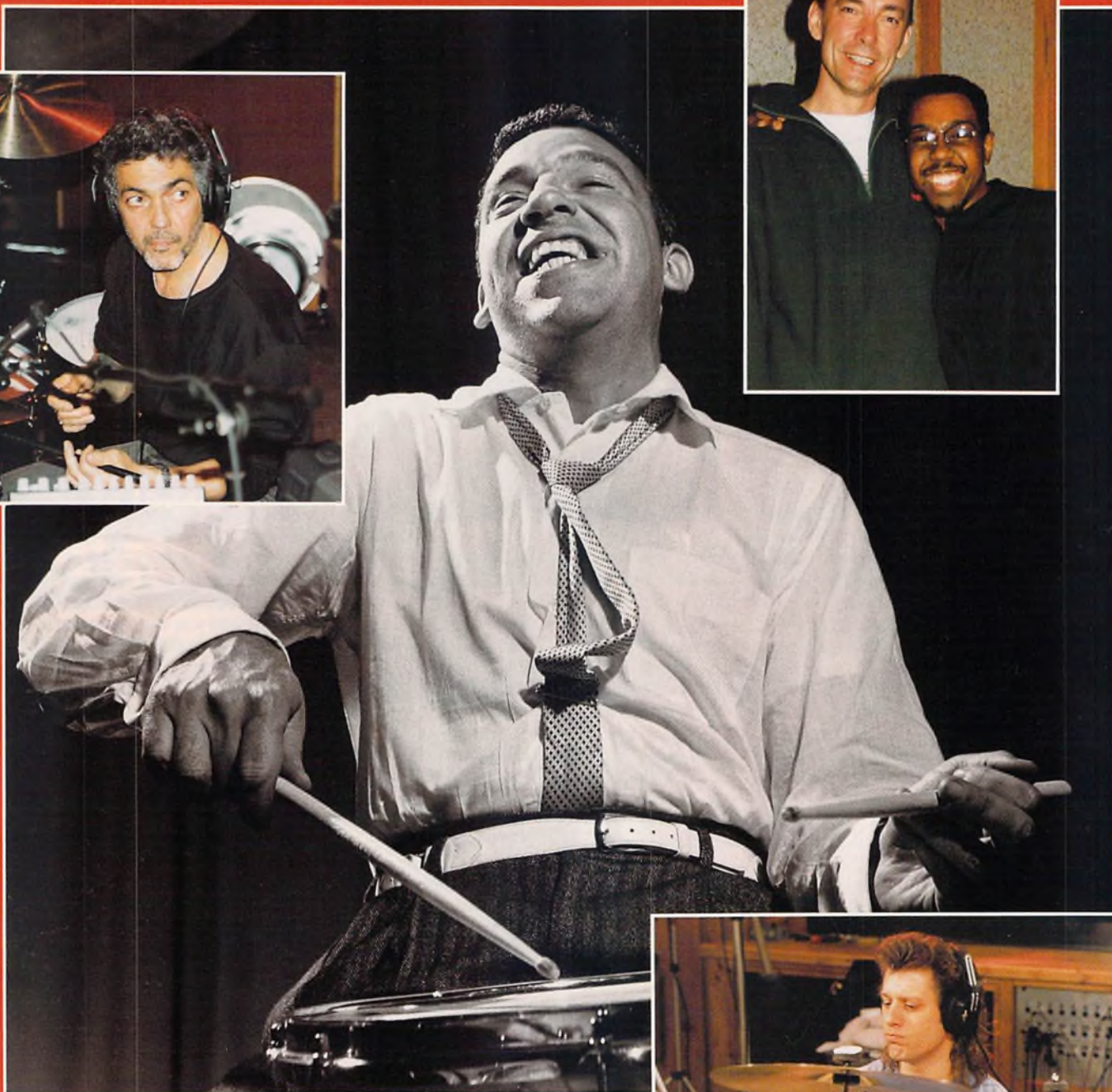
On November 6, there's yet another chance for some of the *Burning For Buddy* drummers to address their tunes. Weckl, Peart, Ferrone, Aronoff, Morgenstein, and Sorum will play at this year's Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship concert at the Manhattan Center in New York City.

We spoke to some of the participants of the *Burning For Buddy* project, which will have at least one more edition released somewhere in the future. ("Volume Two is more swing-oriented," explains Peart. "I call it the 'cruise volume': just put it in the car [stereo] and drive on.") Memories of Buddy himself dominated the conversations, but the topics also leapt to a drummer's duties, the hows and whys of personal style, and the rigors of competition.

Max Roach:

Buddy's band was one of the few left after the demise of the big-band period. [Count] Basie's, Duke [Ellington]'s, Woody [Herman]'s . . . only a few lasted through the heavy expenses of road travel. They were the only ones making noise. Plus, that's a great band. So I think we all were involved for the same reasons—out of respect for Buddy's contributions, and what he did for people.

Buddy and I had plenty of wars together! One of the most memorable was when I started to win the polls in the magazines, "the youngster from New York," you know? I was invited to Southern California, and was escorted by Clark Terry. It was Buddy, Gene Krupa, and Louie Bellson. Me, Dizzy [Gil-



HERMAN LEONARD

*"To even play the Buddy Rich tunes,
you're a marked man: assuming the
responsibility, going up against perhaps
the greatest drummer that ever lived."
—Marvin "Smitty" Smith*



Clockwise, from top left: Steve Gadd records "Love For Sale"; Neil Peart (l) in the studio with Marvin "Smitty" Smith; Dave Weckl lays down "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy." Center: Buddy Rich, circa 1954.

lespie], and Bird [Charlie Parker] were the talk of the town, and I felt good, really strong. But I knew who I was up against. Buddy was strong that day, but the guy who took out everybody was Gene. He razzle-dazzled the shit out of us. Buddy and I were competing with each other, and we learned a real lesson from Gene that day. Play to the audience. He had them rolling in the aisles. Ha! It was a lesson in show biz that Buddy never forgot.

He was more than just a natural, he was a phenomenal technician, too. Shit, he knew the instrument inside and out. He took some really hip solos. I grew up watching him develop "Quiet Please." He was one of the guys who helped bring percussion out to the front. You know the old jokes: "Who's in the band? Three musicians and a drummer." Some guys really believed that. We had to endure a lot of that crap. So Buddy's talent, and that of Chick Webb, Gene Krupa, and a few others turned that around. It's much more than just keeping time for everybody.

Marvin 'Smitty' Smith:

Cathy Rich set up five or six gigs with me and the band back in February of '92, and it was cool. When we went on the road, the guys in the band liked me because I really dealt with the music. I was talking to [saxophonist] Steve Marcus, and he explained that some of the other drummers who sat in when they were trying to keep the band going [after Buddy's death in 1987]—well, it was painful sometimes. They didn't deal with the music in a sincere manner. There was too much Buddy in them, or too much something else. I don't know.

I had a firm foundation regarding the concept of big band, plus a positive demeanor with the guys. It was, "Let's do this right, and when it comes to the very first note, let's burn." Be there for the main cause, the music.

We want to show people we're serious. I think that's a great attitude. It made it fun. Great experience to play the band book. Hearing the sound of the big band is great—all that power around you! And it feels great knowing that you can support it. I tried to do it justice, and not to play like Buddy—that would be the downfall.

To even play the Buddy Rich tunes, you're a marked man: assuming the responsibility, going up against perhaps the greatest drummer that ever lived.

Dave Weckl:

I grew up playing big band—it's always been fun for me. You have to be . . . you're responsible for 15, 16 guys, depending on the band. The key for me, and what I always admired about Buddy, is trying to get it to the point where you can be as free as possible creatively, and still make it work. He



HERMAN LEONARD

could play exactly what he was thinking without worrying, "Hey, am I playing something the band can follow?" Buddy played what Buddy played, and the group trusted him and followed. That's my goal, too. Especially in a big band: Live in it with the freedom of playing the way I want, but with the understanding of the rules. You've got to set up the guys.

Buddy's band wasn't like Mel Lewis' or Basie's band. There, it was cool to lay back a bit. The horns would lay behind and that was part of the feel. That would never work with Buddy's group. I prefer it when the horns have the same kind of time as the drums. I used to get into this with high-school pals, analyzing the time-thing of big bands when I was a kid. The band responds to the way that the drummer's time feels. At the Power Station sessions, I was trying to play in the spirit of Buddy.

Neil Peart:

I really wanted to carefully present the record to a modern audience. Accessibility was always in the forefront of my mind, knowing that many listeners are unfamiliar with the feel of swing.

I always recall the way reggae was first heard in popular music: people were so funny because they didn't know how to dance to it until they got used to the knee action. Swing is like that for some—if you don't know how to react physically, it can leave you sort of cold. So the sequencing was crucial. I carefully added hints of swing with each track, and waited until "Cotton Tail" to fully introduce it.

I was like most people of my generation with Buddy. I saw him do "Dancing Men" and "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" on the Carson show, and they stuck in my mind. They're so dynamic, they'll nail you immediately. People around the project who weren't familiar with jazz responded to them right away during the sessions. It's a matter of presen-

tation. I'm doing regular audi-

Honestly, been a lot of track records [Atlantic Records] when it began came. I'm interested in planting the seeds with Atlantic up after a shock, saying, "some jazz."

This kind of intimidating you're unused to. But two of the Aronoff and trad-swing wanted to. That carries elements of didn't know, them by dissecting the pieces.

There was a great deal of teamwork and unity. The horn players were startled to be asked their opinion! After a take, I'd ask the guys, "How was it for you?" I can't dissect the playing of 15 different musicians as they're wailing. I sat and listened to the horns a lot, even tried ignoring the drummers a bit by sitting in a place where I couldn't see them. I had to forego those free drum lessons.

All the drummers in my generation started from two sources: Either they saw *The Gene Krupa Story*, which was my route, or they saw the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show* and wanted to be Ringo. You can listen to most drummers and figure out immediately which is which. There's a major difference.

Joe Morello:

I guess most people think of me as a small-group drummer, so it was fun to play against type. With small-group stuff, it's interplay that's crucial. When you're working a big band, it's holding the band together, cuing the brass that's important. I love it because you can hit the drums a little bit harder, keep the horses going down the right path. "Drumorello" is a thing that was written for me way back. It's just a set-up for the drums.

Buddy's reputation as a hothead came from being a perfectionist: He used to argue with Dorsey, and Tommy was a perfectionist as well. There have been so many stories about him being a rough guy, but he was always a gentleman with me. If we were in the same town, he'd always call up and invite me over to his gigs. I think the reason he liked me was because I didn't play like him. There are several guys from my generation who tried to ape Buddy, doing all the solos

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and battles. But no one will ever equal what he did in that style, not the way he played it. These guys had great facility, but you have to be original to have the spark.

I think I was one of the few guys who practiced with Buddy. One time in San Francisco, we were at the Shrine Auditorium and he was in Oakland with Harry James. We went back to the hotel, and it was late. He'd just got some new cymbals from Zildjian. It was 3 a.m. "Look at these," he says. Crash, crash, splash! I said, "Hey man, you're going to get us thrown out of here, Buddy." "Screw 'em." Then he started pounding out some beats on the wall, and I'm thinking about jail. He takes out some sticks, "Whaddya think of these?" and all of a sudden it's 6 a.m. and we're banging out rolls. It was great. He'd say to me, "What do you think of so-and-so's playing?" I'd say, "Yeah, he's okay." Buddy would say, "Oh come on, he sounds like he's rumbling down the staircase." I'd laugh and laugh at his honesty.

Billy Cobham:

Going into the session, I tried to figure out what was expected, recall the Buddy Rich concept, think of how he projected his ideas through music.

Buddy would call upon his band to reach a certain level that he imagined, and sometimes the band couldn't provide it. I can see how frustration would set in. But he asked that of himself, too. And even his own body couldn't always provide that level. The mind had it, he heard it. But it was physically impossible. You try to do the best you can, and aim high, knowing that you might not achieve your goal. You aim for the horizon and figure if you get 500 yards out, you've made it. It's a heck of a lot better than standing on the shore your whole life. He aimed for things understanding that they might not be achievable. And he came real close.

There are people who provided major incentive for me, and Buddy was one. He played my instrument, I played his instrument. I had a guide in him, Max, Louie Bellson. They gave me a way to go, a path. These are the kinds of cats who lead bands whether it's their band or not. They lead by simply playing. That aggression was an important factor for me enjoying him.

A drummer wants to sit behind the band because of practicality. It's an effective place to be—giving the band security while still projecting yourself. But you don't just support the weaknesses of others. You try to provide an overall musical statement so that there is no doubt that without what you did, no one would play as effectively on either an individual basis or as part of the group. You're the spoon that stirs the soup. That's what Buddy did, and that's what I learned from him. DB

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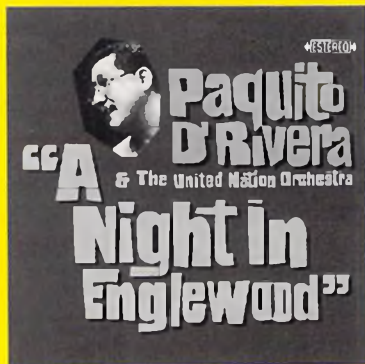
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Without Mr. Bauzá, American music would be radically different from what it is today — Peter Watrous, New York Times



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Seducing The Audience

SHIRLEY HORN

By Herb Boyd

Shirley Horn's allure is quite simple: she's so intimate, it seems she's singing for you alone. The essence of her style is part rapport and part seduction. It all begins with a soft flurry of impressionistic notes from the piano, followed by a hypnotic chord or two, and then a whispery, come-hither phrase. From that moment on, after casting a shy smile, she knows that for the rest of the evening, you belong to her.

But Horn is not exactly sure *how* she captivates her audiences. "It is something I've never given much thought to," she confesses, "but if I knew what it was, I'd bottle and sell it. On second thought, it may be the way I tell my song stories. I like to paint a picture and let the lyrics take me wherever the story leads."

And some of the portraits she etches with her voice and piano are collector's items (none of that paint-by-the-number jive for this artist). "I have no set routine, no formula when it comes to performing my songs," Horn says. "Nor does it make a difference what the venue is, concert or club. All I want is an audience that respects me and my music." Horn once had the reputation of getting up and walking off the bandstand if there was too much noise and distraction in the supper clubs. Even then, the artist in her demanded the concert stage.

Horn, who is particularly fond of European audiences, recently recorded her latest album, *I Love You, Paris*, live in France at the famed Theatre du Chatelet. "They were so quiet that I was glad when someone coughed, because it let me know somebody was out there. There were more than 3,000 people at the concert, and they were totally engrossed. I am at a loss to explain this adoration and why I'm so popular." For her French fans, this appeal may be just a matter of *je ne sais quoi*.



Listeners clearly love Horn's distinctive treatment of ballads, her special way of extending words or phrases and bracketing them with lush chords and a swinging linearity. She compares her unity of voice and piano with the impeccable embellishments pianist Jimmie Jones once provided for Sarah Vaughan. "His touch and technique were exquisite," she gushes. "This is what I try to do for myself."

Not only for herself is Horn an exceptional accompanist, but for others as well. On Carmen McRae's 1991 tribute album to Sarah Vaughan (*Sarah: Dedicated To You*), Horn's feel is intuitive, anticipating McRae's bluesy

"I have no set routine, no formula when it comes to performing my songs. Nor does it make a difference what the venue is, concert or club. All I want is an audience that respects me and my music."



bends, completing her aching romanticism. She enhances McRae in the same way that Johnny Mandel's orchestrations envelope her on the highly acclaimed *Here's To Life*, which soared to the top of the charts in 1992, received five stars in *DB*, and earned her a Grammy nomination.

Since her return in 1988 after a 25-year hiatus from the recording studio—a self-imposed layoff to be with her family, which includes her husband, Sheppard, and a daughter, Rainy—Horn has been busy making up for the lost time, yet clinging to an old habit. "When I am not packing and unpacking my bags, I'm basically a homebody who is just as comfortable standing over a stove or hammering a nail as I am playing a piano," says the accomplished carpenter and gourmet cook.

Horn found it difficult to swap her domestic tranquility for demanding tours and club dates. But the success of those initial albums on Verve was enough to renew her zeal for recordings and concert engagements (see *DB* April '91). Gradually, she recovered that singular style and charm, having lost none of the charisma or that dramatic edge in her voice, though it is now huskier and a bit drier. "For the most part my voice is pretty much unchanged since those early days," she says. "When I listen to the albums I did many years ago, I don't hear any difference

in my voice. Of course, I can't sing in the same key I sang in then, but I think my interpretations are more mature now, since I have experienced so much more. I can't sing as high as I once could, but I can sing louder."

She also believes experience and maturity have improved her skill at the keyboard, which has always been commanding and on par with the best of jazz pianists. It was during her first gig in New York City in 1960 that she impressed Miles Davis, who be-

came a sort of mentor (and later made a memorable guest appearance on her 1991 album *You Won't Forget Me*).

Other noted musicians, such as Wynton and Branford Marsalis, have also recorded with her, but her mainstays are bassist Charles Ables and drummers Steve Williams. Ables has been with Horn for 22 years and Williams for 14. "It takes time," she says, "to find the right musicians. Sometimes we are so close when we play that we are

VERY rare

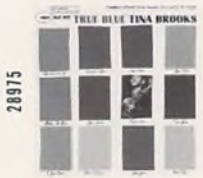
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moving as one. That kind of unity is so rare. It's magic."

This magic is nicely showcased on "Old Country" from *I Love You, Paris*. The ensemble sound is at once languid and then spirited, framing Horn's evocative, melancholy portrait of a lonely old man longing for the past. At the peak of interaction, the group suspends the sound and Horn lingers playfully on the word "country." Her ability to sustain a note indefinitely is a Horn

trademark. "Shirley sings so slowly on her album dedicated to Ray Charles [last year's *Light Out Of Darkness*], that I was able to drive three blocks before she finished a note," quips Delores Floyd, one of Horn's oldest and dearest friends.

The trio's ability to click, however, is not limited to those rather listless tempos where the bassist and drummer give new meaning to the word unobtrusive; they can also swing with elegant abandon. On up-

tempo numbers such as "Change Partners," Horn's octave runs are dazzling, thoughtfully buffeted by Ables' throbbing bass and rapid exchanges from Williams.

Horn maintains ties to her Washington, D.C., homebase, particularly to the Fort Du Pont Park Jazz Festival, now in its 19th year and threatened with extinction. (After opening this year's festival in August, Horn was unable to return for an event in her honor the following week because of a recurring foot ailment.) "If we lose this festival it will end one of the city's most precious sites for jazz," Horn laments. "Other than One Step Down, there is no place for us to work in D.C."

Horn has a slew of upcoming engagements, including concerts at Hostos College in New York City and the Herbst Theatre in San Francisco in January. Meanwhile, she is waiting to hear about writing the music for a film. "It's about an obscure French poet," Horn says, her voice barely audible, "and they want me to either do the soundtrack or to write the title tune. They are even talking about me having a small role." It won't be her first time doing a soundtrack; she has two to her credit—*A Dandy In Aspic* and *For Love Of Ivy*, which starred Abbey Lincoln, one of her favorite vocalists. Nor will it be her first screen appearance, should it occur; in 1990 she was seen briefly singing in a club in *Time In Tomorrow*.

Horn shrugs off a budding acting career the same way she dismisses her talents as a cook and carpenter. "The only thing that really matters is the music," she asserts, in a slow, deliberate manner with the same delicate phrasing that characterizes her singing. "Without the music, none of these other things would be possible. That's all [there is] to it." DB

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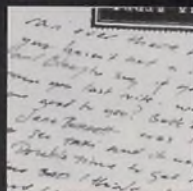
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- HERE'S TO LIFE! SHIRLEY HORN WITH STRINGS—Verve 314-511-879-2
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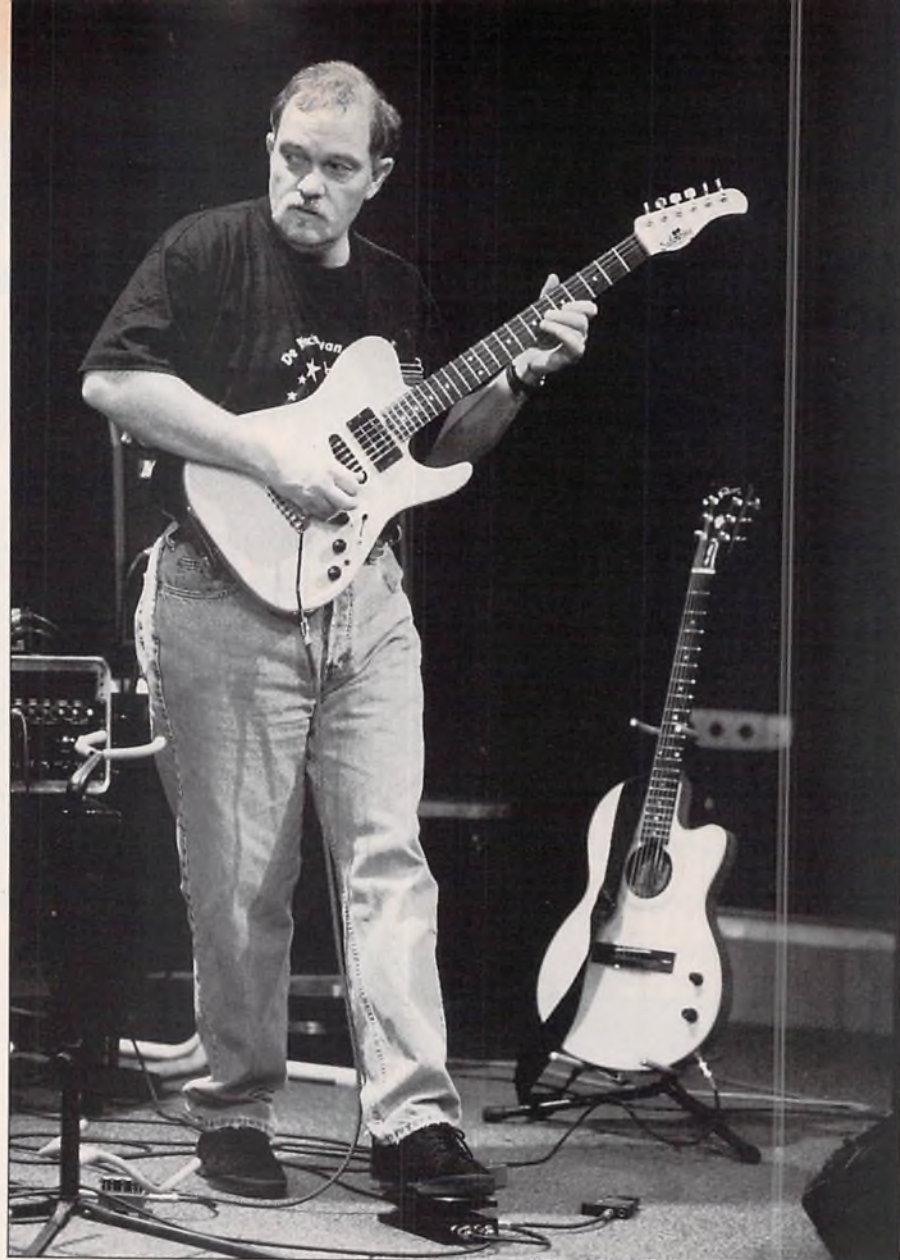
JOHN ABERCROMBIE

By Frank-John Hadley

The partnership between electric guitar and electric organ is hot property, burning now with greater intensity than at anytime in the last few decades. As organ trios go, none blazes up more creatively and boldly than the one fronted by world-class guitarist John Abercrombie. But, you ask, shouldn't their organ-fueled music be fun and simple rather than serious and complex? Aren't organ trios by definition all grit and gumption? Well, Abercrombie plays by his own rules, and his group evokes subtle pleasures much like an intelligent, risk-taking film director or novelist might. No chicken-shack groovin' here.

On the phone, he uses a firm, confident tone of voice to communicate his enthusiasm about working with Hammond B-3 specialist Dan Wall and drummer Adam Nussbaum. "This trio is definitely my main love. The organ is like the great common denominator in my life. Aside from Jim Hall and Bill Evans, whose music is very lyrical, the music that always attracted me was organ-trio music. Organ, guitar, drums. Hard-driving music. [There's] something about the sonority of the electric guitar and the Hammond organ. It seems like whoever invented the guitar was an organ player or vice versa as the instruments sound so well together."

Abercrombie may appreciate that give-no-mercy Jimmy Smith organ approach, but he's damn glad that Wall doesn't employ it. It'd be like he and his organist were wearing chains. "Dan Wall doesn't even play the pedals. He just plays the left-hand bass. His



bass floats a bit more. It's more like playing with an acoustic bass player, and that's what I love so much. It sets me up. I find it very freeing. Dan doesn't lock you into the traditional concepts. He has the ability to be very extended and be harmonically sophisticated and can play very modern types of songs."

No one will confuse the untraditional, atmospheric music filling the trio's debut album, last year's *While We're Young*, with Jimmy McGriff's blue funk or Jack McDuff's hot barbeque. The music has sort of an unintentional spiritual dimension, something along the lines of John Coltrane's Islamic entreaties to the Eternal. Abercrombie says, "The song 'A Matter Of Time' is very much influenced by John Coltrane's music where his band would play these long rubatos, like on the *Crescent* album. The melody would be stated completely with no tempo and then, all of a sudden, Elvin [Jones] and McCoy [Tyner] would bring in the tempo and Coltrane would play over it. In the case of my album composition 'Dear Rain,'" he continues, "that's completely out-of-tempo music. It's

free-ish music. Trane had a composition called 'After The Rain,' and there was another tune he called 'Dear Lord.' So this is 'Dear Rain.'" Let's hope Moslem fundamentalists approve of his poetic license.

Abercrombie's new album, *Speak Of The Devil*, is an extension of *While We're Young*—but with a difference. "There are more peaks and valleys. There are some very, very free ballads and there's some really demonic screaming, and then there's some very nice tune playing." One valley belonging to the Coltrane mountain range is "Chorale," complete with a long rubato passage leading to the introduction of the tempo. Many of the nine album tracks have the guitarist playing bluesier and edgier than ever before. Whatcha think, John? He laughs before saying, "Maybe that's because I've been hanging out with John Scofield."

Abercrombie's organ trio has its roots in a late-'80s free-jazz recording session that included organ player Jeff Palmer. "Adam Nussbaum and I had so much fun doing it that we said, 'Let's get some gigs and try to do something with the organ.'" Thinking

back on all the B-3 players he'd ever rubbed elbows with, he remembered an Atlantan named Dan Wall. "My association with him goes back about 12 years ago when we were involved in a record together for a fellow named David Earl Johnson, a percussionist. Dan's really listened to organist Larry Young, but he's also a piano player so he's listened to Bill Evans, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, and Keith Jarrett." Without too much trouble, he located the harmonically sophisticated player on the New York jazz scene. The trio was soon up and on its legs.

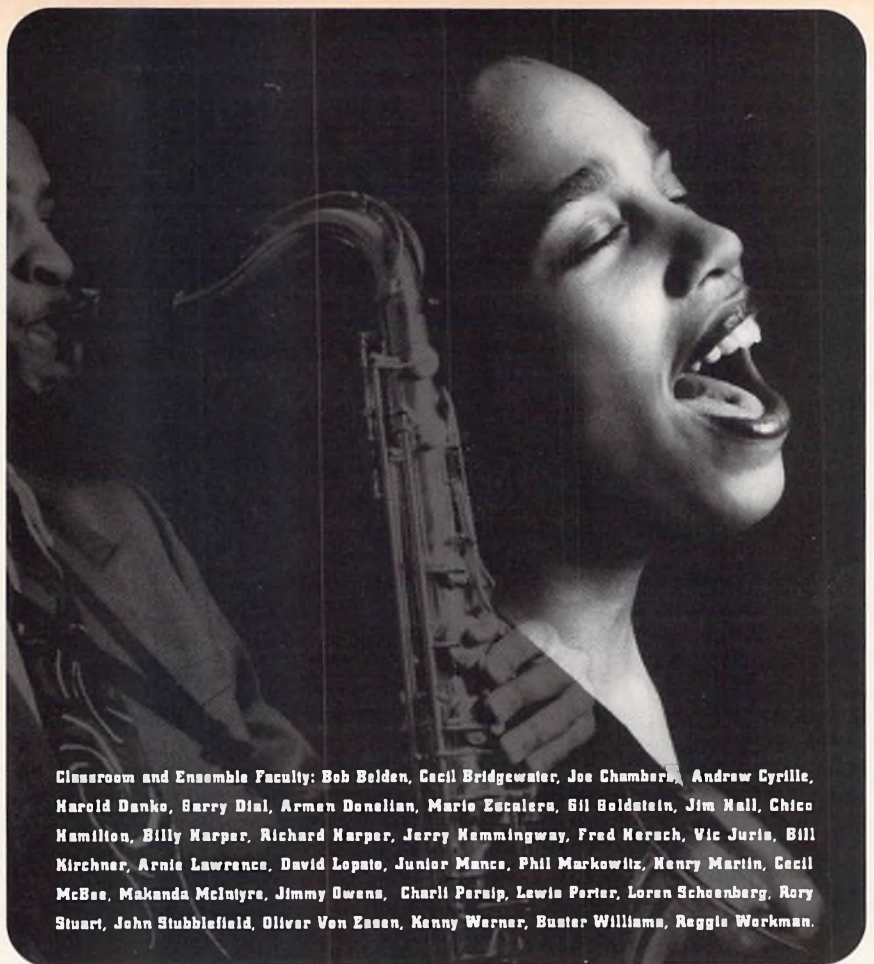
Abercrombie's delighted to speak of how, when, and where he first became fascinated with the organ. It was back in the mid-'60s when he attended Boston's single-brownstone Berklee School of Music: "I got introduced to organist Johnny 'Hammond' Smith and I started working gigs seven nights a week at a place called the Big M. I was thrown right into the fire. I knew a lot of tunes, but I had never played them in that kind of environment with somebody who was a real professional and played them every night. You had to learn the tunes right on the spot because there were no rehearsals. If you didn't know one, you learned it for the next night, for sure."

It mildly disturbs him that he's been pigeonholed as a modernist who can't swing. "So many people today hear [my] ECM records, especially the earlier ones, where some of the music gets very spacy and non-harmonic and floaty, and they don't realize I grew up playing 'Green Dolphin Street' with an organ trio. I think that's one of the reasons I keep coming back to the traditional format [with] the organ."

One night in Boston, young Abercrombie went to hear Tony Williams' Lifetime band, the seminal jazz-rock group with John McLaughlin and Larry Young. "I walked into the Jazz Workshop, and I remember it was the loudest music I had ever heard in my life. When you were in a small club like that with a band playing that loud, you couldn't move. The music actually would pin you to the wall. I didn't understand that music when I first heard it, and I don't even know if I still do, though when I go back and listen to the Lifetime records I hear some of the great stuff John played."

Around this time, too, he was bowled over by Jack McDuff. "I went to hear his band and George Benson, who was about 16 or 17 years old, played just incredible shit. Then I went back six months later and Pat Martino had replaced him, also playing incredible guitar. Realizing those guys were my age and I could barely play was a shock to me. But it was inspiring."

Inspiration has been his sidekick through the many years since Berklee, as a member of the early jazz-rock outfit Dreams, as part



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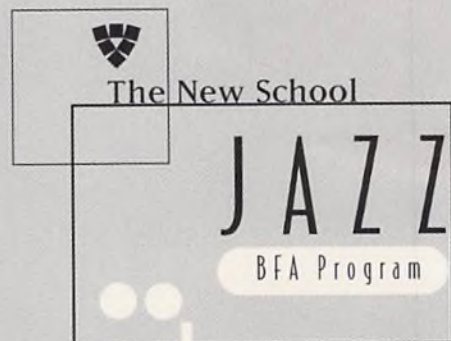
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of the exciting New York jazz loft scene in the '70s, and as a prolific ECM recording artist the past 20 years. Given his thing for organs, it's no surprise he lists 1974's *Timeless* as among his very favorite recordings. "I was beginning my association with Jack DeJohnette and Jan Hammer. I knew Jan was an excellent organ player, and, of course, I had this association with the Hammond B-3 from Johnny Smith. It was an interesting record because it was my first as a leader and it also had a little bit of that organ-trio vibe to it. And 10 years later, I had a little sequel titled *Night* using Jan, Jack, and Mike Brecker. I had been wanting to go back to that thing with Jan and Jack, back to the sound of the organ.

"I always think meeting Jack was one of the big turning points because it put me back on a track that I wanted to get back on, which was playing more jazz-influenced music, or multi-dimensional music, as Jack would call it; just being able to play different kinds of music within one band and not being stuck to the fusion bag; being able to play very abstract jazz music, but still play standard songs, write our own material, improvise and delve into more abstracted, very free rock-type fields."

"The organ is the great common denominator in my life. Aside from Jim Hall and Bill Evans, whose music is very lyrical, the music that always attracted me was organ-trio music."



Today, Abercrombie sometimes takes breathers from his organ trio. There's the recent reappearance of his historical band with DeJohnette and Dave Holland, Gateway. They've made a recent triumphant tour of Europe, conquered the Big Apple, and just cut an album slated for release sometime in 1995. He calls the work with these colleagues "a very liberating experience," as it balances "very unharmonic, very wide-open jazz" with "going back to some of my early trio influences like Barney Kessel, Ray

Brown, and Shelly Manne." He searches for the right metaphor to describe playing with these fellow heavyweights. "It's like somebody throwing you in a room with all these great foods and saying, 'Go ahead, you can do whatever you want in here.'

"I've become a stronger player, because fronting a guitar trio is rough. You really have to concentrate when you're playing with somebody like Jack and Dave, who are such powerful players. It's fun. But it's also really hard work."

In addition to his organ group and Gateway, Abercrombie also works with drummer Peter Erskine and bass player Marc Johnson, a longstanding relationship that's flourished just recently behind tours of the Continent and the album *November*. "Manfred Eicher from ECM had the suggestion to add saxophonist John Surman. I had only played with him a little bit years ago, and at first I didn't know if I liked the idea because it's something that changes the trio. It puts a different slant on the music. But the more I thought about it and listened to some of John's records, the more I loved his playing, so I thought it would actually make [things] even fresher."

He once used the guitar synthesizer to

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spruce up albums with Johnson and Erskine. No more. "I stopped using the synthesizer around 1990. I also gave up smoking. I felt the synthesizer was also becoming hazardous to my health. I think I gave up two bad things for me. I'm not condemning synthesizers. I just think I ran up against the stone wall with the thing. I felt the synthesizer was an addiction, because you would run out of sounds and you'd run to the music store quickly to find out what new synthesizer was in or what new update they had for your existing synthesizer. I realized this is crazy. Why do I have to search for new things when I can pick up the guitar anytime and always get inspired? To be honest, the sounds that the synthesizer produced themselves made me tired. Very tired and bored. The guitar never bores me. It frustrates me. But it never bores me."

And Abercrombie never gets bored about singing the praises of the Hammond. Hear his response when asked to discuss one of the more interesting sideman projects he's done. "Working for a short period with McCoy Tyner: I'll always remember that because of the way it felt to play with him. McCoy was comping for me, and my eyes were closed and I said, 'Geez, this is really

like playing with McCoy Tyner, and I opened my eyes and there's McCoy. He had a way of playing chords on the piano that was very much like an organ. [Reacting to] the organ is an uplifting experience. I find the organ really supports what I do in a certain way that I play. It feeds me very well.

"One of the things jazz has taught me to do

is to be spontaneous and try to let the music flow out like there's no separation between you and the instrument. I know that's an old axiom or old saying, 'The person and the instrument become one,' but that's my goal as a musician: to try to make it as natural as possible. But it's hard, you have to work hard at being natural." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

John Abercrombie plays two types of guitar. His electric is made by New Yorker Roger Sadowsky and resembles a Fender Telecaster. His other instrument is the standard Chet Atkins electro-acoustic model available from Gibson.

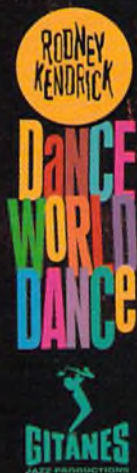
Abercrombie runs two pre-amps—the first built for him by New York craftsman Alex Aguilar and

the second manufactured by the Stewart Company—into a Walter Woods power amp. He uses the Boss SE-50 reverb/multi-effects unit. "It's all very compact and fits into one small box," says the guitarist of his amp arsenal. On the road, he rents speaker cabinets. He always uses D'Addario strings.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL—ECM 21511
WHILE WE'RE YOUNG—ECM 21489
NOVEMBER—ECM 21502
ANIMATO—ECM 21411
JOHN ABERCROMBIE/MARC JOHNSON/PETER ERSKINE—ECM 21390
GETTING THERE—ECM 21321
CURRENT EVENTS—ECM 21311
NIGHT—ECM 21272
GATEWAY—ECM 21061 (with Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette)
CHARACTERS—ECM 21117
TIMELESS—ECM 21047

with various others
NO WORDS—Blue Note 89680 (Tim Hagans)
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Roy Hargrove


Roy Hargrove Quintet with the Tenors Of Our Time 314 523 019-2

The Verve debut featuring Joe Henderson, Johnny Griffin, Stanley Turrentine, Joshua Redman.

★★★★ (5 stars) *Down Beat*

"A-" *Entertainment Weekly*



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CHEUNG CHING HING

Wynton & Lester Agree . . . On James Carter

By Larry Birnbaum

James Carter was touring Australia—unaware that two of his employers, Wynton Marsalis and Lester Bowie, had just had a run-in at a Manhattan club—when he had a dream. “It was at Sweet Basil,” he says, “because I could see the banner in the back, and we were playing ‘Oleo.’ Lester was on one side of me and Wynton was on the other side. We played the head, and at the end of the chorus, where we’re stating the melody, as soon as Lester comes in, I woke up. So when I got back from my tour, I called Lester up and told him about the dream. And he said, ‘Damn, dig

that. You heard about what happened at Sweet Basil?’”

What happened was that Bowie spurned Marsalis’ challenge to a trumpet duel; the dream of the two stylistic rivals sharing the same stage remained just that. But while the two don’t come together on the bandstand, they come together ideologically on Carter, a 25-year-old multi-saxophonist who bridges the gap between neo-traditionalism and the avant garde.

“James Carter is the man,” says Bowie. “He’s the tenor player of the future. I haven’t heard anyone who can touch him. Tenor

players like Joshua Redman are a dime a dozen, but James is different. James can play like that, and he can play like this. He can do just about anything he wants to do. He goes all the way back to the old swing, so he’s very well-versed.”

“I think that James is a tremendous musician,” says Marsalis. “I met him when he was like 15 or 16.” Marsalis recalls being impressed by Carter’s big sound when he heard the young saxophonist play “Equinox” during a high-school clinic. “He played with a lot of soul, and he really could hear. You know, I go to a lot of schools, and I always check the kids’ hearing and their reflexes—that’s how quickly they can respond to things that change. I’d have to say that in terms of talent, he’s in the top three or four kids that I’ve ever run across in any school: him, Eric Reed, Chris McBride, Roy Hargrove—they just could always play.”

Bowie says he can’t give Carter enough superlatives: “I’m expecting a lot from him. James plays everything, but he didn’t get trapped in the back-to-bebop bag. He’s got his own thing. By the time he’s 30 years old, I hate to think what he’s going to be playing. I mean, he can wipe regular cats out.”

Carter’s all-embracing musical vision and volcanic tone blow away all distinctions between swing, bop, and free-jazz. Performing with Marsalis’ Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra at this year’s JVC Jazz Festival, he drew gasps from the crowd when he capped off a burly, Ben Webster-ish solo with a squealing, Albert Ayler-esque cadenza. “I’m just glad I’m able to make sense out of all the various eras,” Carter says. “What I’ve done is live up to what the music is supposed to be about—ever-evolving but still having a reverence for the past.”

A precocious virtuoso, Carter was the subject of a full-page story in *People* magazine when he was 18. Showcased on the 1991 album *Tough Young Tenors*, he drew the attention of a couple of major labels, including Atlantic Records, which recently signed him to a multi-album deal (a release is due out early next year). “I wanted him here so badly because in my mind, he is an original voice on the saxophone, really bringing a new vocabulary to the instrument,” said Yves Beauvais, Atlantic’s vice president of A&R, special projects, who’s credited with producing the Ornette Coleman boxed set *Beauty Is A Rare Thing*. “To me, he sounds like Johnny Hodges has met Ornette Coleman—or vice-versa.”

Meanwhile, in a two-album deal with DIW, Carter has made his recording debut as a leader with *JC On The Set* (released by Columbia in the U.S.), accompanied by three of his fellow Detroiters. Carter’s huge, grainy tenor-sax tone makes an immediate impression on the title track, a bluesy original propelled by a honking, screaming

attack and spiced with quotes from "Ornithology," "Flying Home," and "Rhapsody In Blue." Elsewhere on the album he tackles a range of material from Don Byas to Sun Ra, including a baritone-sax deconstruction of Duke Ellington's "Caravan" that erupts into massive foghorn blasts and spine-tingling siren wails all the while remaining reverently true to the original.

"It all swings to me," Carter says. "I find

*"James Carter is the man.
He's the tenor player of the
future. I haven't heard
anyone who can touch him.
. . . I mean, he can wipe
regular cats out."
—Lester Bowie*



that a whole lot of musicians only go down to a certain level in the musical bag of history, and it's sad, especially among people my age who are supposed to be continuing the tradition. As soon as you feel like you've conquered the music by labeling it and saying it doesn't swing or it's avant garde, you get away from what you're supposed to be listening to the music for, which is enlightenment—you know, being lifted up spiritually. A lot of cats say that certain avant-garde players don't listen to what has come before them, but you can look at bop in that sense. During the time it was going through its revolutionary process, they were saying that they've thrown out what Louis [Armstrong] and all the swing cats have done previously, which isn't so. That's the thing about it—it's a continuum.

"People want to deal with it from a technical and categorizing standpoint, which is a travesty. With Coltrane, for example, you have a whole lot of cats who are dealing with his transcriptions, note for note, which is great for technical facility, but that's just the end product of the spirituality and the diligence of practice that went into getting to that. What I really get into as far as listening to Coltrane is the spirituality that was encompassed in these long solos, which are stretching and aspiring to go to a whole other level, regardless of what period he was in. That's what I get out of him, as well as Albert Ayler, Lester Young, Herschel Evans, Buddy Tate, anybody.

"As far as I'm concerned, it's all part of my

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musical vocabulary, because I've grown up hearing these individuals, and I respect their music. This is the way I choose to interpolate those influences, and I'll keep doing that, because that's just one more facet that will bring out the individuality—which is definitely needed, especially among the individuals who get thrown into this bag of 'young lions,' which I don't subscribe to. As far as personalizing it, that's something I'm going to keep doing, because in order for it to be embraced, it has to be . . . I won't say shuffled around, but put together in a particular program, so that it sounds like all the musics of past, present, and future are homogenized in one particular album."

Born January 3, 1969, in Detroit, Carter grew up in a musical household. "My mother played piano and violin during her school days," he says, "and she still sings a little bit. My brother Kevin is a guitarist—he played with Parliament-Funkadelic—and my oldest brother, Robert, sang lead vocals back in the late '70s with this group Nature's Divine. And my father, he played a mean radio." A saxophonist named Charles Green (currently featured with War) sometimes boarded with the

"I think that James is a tremendous musician. . . . I'd have to say that in terms of talent, he's one of the top three or four kids that I've run across."

—Wynton Marsalis



family, and nine-year-old James fell in love with his instrument. "He had this gold-plated [Selmer] Mark VI," says Carter, "and I was just fascinated by the superficial aura of the saxophone—the curves, the intricate keys, and the engraving."

He became attached to a broken saxophone at his next-door neighbor's house. "I just wanted to play it so bad," he says, "even though it wasn't playable. I was pantomiming, just to get that feel. Finally, my neighbors had a fire, and they were cleaning out

the garage. I said I wanted the horn, and they gave it to me and said, 'If we're not back for it in a couple of weeks, the horn's yours.' I kept the horn for about a month, but by this time I had my first playable horn, a King, which I purchased May 8, 1980. My mom got it for me."

Carter's taste and technique were nurtured by his private teacher, Donald Washington, a local saxophonist with whom his brother Kevin had gigged. "Kevin mentioned to him that he had a younger brother who was trying to play jazz but didn't have the proper tutelage," says James. "In school they were basically doing rudiments, Mary-had-a-little-lamb-type stuff. I'd cop off a Duke Ellington record, and the teachers would be pulling their hair out like it was blasphemous. So Mr. Washington finally decided to take me on, and I'd study with him two-and-a-half to three hours every Saturday. The lessons would include classical etudes, jazz scales, and free improvisation, and we also looked and listened to records and video footage. He's always one for sayings, and the one that encouraged your tonal growth was, 'Stop suckin' in!' You'd have to think about it. 'Stop suckin' in?' It would just hit you—'I'm not blowin' out'—

Branford Marsalis



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As a teenager, he played for a high school demonstration by Betty Carter and did recitals with the Creative Artists Collective, including bassist Jaribu Shahid and drummer Tani Tabbal, both members of his current band. He spent summers playing jazz at the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Muskegon County, Michigan, and when he won a scholarship to the famous Interlochen classical-music camp 100 miles away, he attended both sessions concurrently. In 1985 he toured Scandinavia with the Blue Lake Jazz Ensemble, a student band, and then returned to Europe the same summer as a member of the camp's faculty band, the Blue Lake Monster.

Earlier that year, he'd met Marsalis. "He played with our [high school] jazz ensemble," says Carter, "and afterwards I spent about an hour with him. He was playing chords, and I had my back turned, and I was telling him what chords he was playing, just by ear."

"I was playing some hard chords for him, too," Marsalis says, "like dominant-seventh chords with a major seventh in it. I always start off playing simple chords, like dominant-seventh chords, minors, and then I go up to harder chords. . . . He was getting all of them right; he was not missing one chord."

Carter and Wynton exchanged numbers, and the first gig they did together was at Blues Alley in Washington, D.C. Carter went on to play several jobs with Marsalis' quintet, most of them symphonic gigs featuring music from Marsalis' *Hot House Flowers* album. They performed with orchestras in New Orleans; Columbus, Ohio; Chicago; Denver—all while Carter was still in high school.

"In May of '88 I was included on a Detroit Institute of Art special, and I met Lester Bowie. We exchanged numbers, and I wound up playing with his regular quintet at Carlos I [in Manhattan] later that year, which was the first time I came to New York as a musician. That's when I first met [drummer] Phillip Wilson, and the next year I did a quartet with him in St. Louis, and I met Julius Hemphill. He started saying, 'I like your tone,' and all this. In August of '89 we started rehearsing for the *Long Tongues* production. In '90 I started a tour with Julius Hemphill and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane dance company. . . . which called for the saxophone sextet solely to provide all the music. Then later on that same year I did two records on DIW with the New York Organ Ensemble with Lester Bowie. Things were really drying up in Detroit, so I moved to New York in November of '90. And I did the *Tough Young Tenors* album the year after that.

"I also recorded with Julius Hemphill on Black Saint. And I recorded with Frank

Lowe; I think the album's entitled *Inappropriate Choices*. That was one of the last albums that Phillip Wilson did before he was murdered."

With one foot planted in the avant garde, Carter keeps the other in the mainstream, continuing to perform with Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. "We did his extended work *Blood On The Fields* in April," he says, "and before that we did a thing with the New York City Ballet entitled *Jazz*, which he wrote six movements for; and then the touring that we're doing with the regular repertoire band."

Besides alto, tenor, and baritone saxes,

Carter plays contrabass clarinet and has recorded as a member of Wendell Harrison's Clarinet Ensemble. His horizons are seemingly unlimited, but he remains unassuming about his prodigious talent.

"At the bottom of it, music experience is bringing us all together. My teacher always tells me, 'Study the music, study the music, study the music. Keep your eyes on the prize.' And for people to say to me, 'I've enjoyed your music. I've enjoyed where you're coming from. I really hear the tradition in you, but I also hear you in it, as a part of that tradition'—that's the prize itself, and I'm glad I got a hold of it." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

James Carter plays a Yamaha Custom, a Selmer Mark VI, and a Conn tenor saxophone, using a Geoff Lawton mouthpiece and Rico Plasticover reeds, numbers 2½ to 5—"whatever catches the

flavor at the time," he says.

"I also collect and restore instruments," Carter adds. "I have like 10 tenors, which range from 1921 to the present."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

JC ON THE SET—Columbia/DIW 66149
TOUGH YOUNG TENORS—Antilles 422-848767-2
with Lester Bowie
FUNKY T, COOL T—DIW-853
ORGANIZER—DIW-821
with Julius Hemphill
FIVE CHORD STUD—Black Saint 120140-2

THE FAT MAN AND THE HARD BLUES—Black Saint 120115-2
with various others
INAPPROPRIATE CHOICES—ITM Pacific 970062 (Frank Lowe)
LIVE IN CONCERT—Wenja Records WCD-190 (Wendell Harrison)

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Philly Joe Jones

The Forming Of Philly Joe

In this "Classic Interview," reprinted from our March 3, 1960 issue, DB asked the great timekeeper to tell his own story. What follows is a verbal solo that spans Jones' early influences, his then-current experience as a leader, and his views on the future of drumming.

By Ralph J. Gleason

“I always say a drummer has to find himself; seasoning means so much,” said Philly Joe Jones, the drummer who shot to the forefront of modern drumming with the Miles Davis group and is now leading his own combo.

“Young drummers today are coming up in an era where all of us, all the drummers the young ones admire, are playing modern drums. Therefore, the young drummer doesn't have in his mind the older drummers: Chick Webb, Baby Dodds, or Sid Catlett. They haven't ever seen Baby Dodds or sat and watched him play like I did. Or Sid. These are the drummers for the next 20 years. I don't care how the drums move. If any drummer can tell me he can't go back and listen to Chick and Dave Tough and Baby and Sid . . . and tell me that's not drums, I'll break up the drums and forget it!”

Let Philly Joe tell about Baby:

“When I was working with Joe Morris

opposite George Shearing in the Three Deuces on 52nd Street, I went across the street one night to the Onyx. Just casually, you know. And I happened to look at the placards outside that said 'Baby Dodds.' Well, I had always been reading books and things, and so I knew that Gene Krupa had been influenced by Baby and Baby had been hanging out with Gene.

“So, wanting to play the drums as bad as I wanted to, I said, 'I'm goin' to listen to this drummer.' So what I did, I went in the Onyx, and Baby was playing in there with a bass drum, and a snare drum, and *one* cymbal, a ride cymbal. It wasn't a sock cymbal. He was swingin' *so much* I was late an entire set! I didn't get back to work. I missed the entire set, and Joe fined me. I think it was a \$30 fine. I couldn't leave; I sat down and just stayed.”

Let Philly Joe tell about Sid:

“Sid was very close with me; he liked me. And I loved him, and I used to want to be around him as much as I could. Everywhere he was, I was there. I got most of my brush work from him. Sid Catlett used to sit down and show me the things I wanted to know. Of course, all the things I dream up now, I try to dream up original things. But the direction I got earlier, the foundation, the right way to go, Sid showed me. He taught Teddy Stewart of Kansas City, too. We used to practice

together, and it came out that Sid showed Teddy the same things. We used to talk about how Sid used to play the brushes with so much finesse that it was just fabulous.”

And Chick:

“I had heard Jo Jones years ago with the Basie band, and I always admired Jo's drumming, and I loved him, and I loved the things he played. Jo Jones was merely a heck of an influence on me when I was a kid. But my mind used to go past Jo Jones because at the same time, the Savoy was hollerin', and Chick Webb was playin'.

“Chick was the drummer I used to listen to. I'd be listenin' to those broadcasts, and my mother used to really holler at me because I kept the radio on all night! Chick used to have a theme song called 'Liza.' I memorized that tune, it's in my mind right now, I could hum the tune the way he played it. I used to listen to the drum solos that he played in between. . . . That's the reason why I fashioned the theme I'm using with this quintet I'm trying to get together. Of course, I'm using 'Blue And Boogie,' but I'm inserting drum things in between here and there; let them play a few, and then I play some drums and then go out with a big smash. Chick used to do that with 'Liza.' It always impressed me. It was a beautiful thing.”

On O'Neil Spencer:

“I changed my mind about drums when I met O'Neil Spencer. O'Neil was the first name drummer I met, and, as I often say to myself, thank God I met him at the time I did. John Kirby was working in town, and he came by one of our sessions and liked what we were playing, and he brought his drummer to hear me.

“When I met O'Neil, something just dawned on me. This man was such a beautiful drummer, he did so many things that I dreamed of. He made me think about drums differently. O'Neil used to say to me, 'Why don't you do this and do that? Why don't you play an afterbeat on the 2 and 4 with the sock cymbals?' And that used to fascinate me. I had never heard anybody do this, and John Kirby used to say, 'That's it! That's the way it's supposed to be.' O'Neil was the first person I ever heard do the 2-and-4 thing.”

On Slim Gaillard:

“Slim Gaillard used to teach me all the cowbell tricks, and the things that he plays on cowbell are authentic. Other guys might not dig it, might not get close to Slim and listen. I had to listen to him—I was playing with him every night. And he plays authentic, actual rhythms on that cowbell. That throwing-the-cowbell-up-in-the-air bit is something different. But he taught me the things to play on the top of the cymbal. Slim was responsible for all the Latin things that I've learned.”

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On local drummers who influenced him when he was a youth:

"There's an old fellow in Philadelphia who's still there playin'—he's playin' every night—named Coatesville. He used to teach me how to play the drums, and I used to sit underneath the bandstand in the club because I was too young to be there, but he'd sneak me in. He's still one of the swingiest older cats I've met. In 1938 or '39, I used to watch this guy and another old man. He used to play drums, used to sit up with a pipe in his mouth and play every night.

"I lived across the street from a place called the Lennox Grill in Philadelphia, and I used to peek through the windows in the back of the club. They had bars on the windows, and I used to always stand there and look at this drummer. He had a pipe in his mouth and a regular *old* setup of drums—you know, no hi-hat, nothing like that—just a bass drum and a little cymbal, cymbals were small then. But he was swinging like I don't know what. My mother used to come around the corner and look up and see me peeking in the window and say, 'Come on now,' and I'd go home—I only lived across the street. But I used to sneak out of the house sometimes at night because they'd be playin' after my bedtime . . . I had to go to school . . . but I used to sneak out, run across the street, 10:30, 11 o'clock at night and peek in that window and listen to him playing drums."

On Max Roach and Art Blakey:

"I left Philadelphia in 1947 and came to New York to live because during and before those years Max and Art used to come to Philly, and I'd be working in the clubs when they came to town, and I idolized them, and they used to say, 'Why don't you come to New York?' In fact, Art or Max would confirm that they've ridden with me when I was driving on the streetcar, and then Max came back a few years later when I was driving a grocery truck and used to ride with me in the afternoons, and we'd talk.

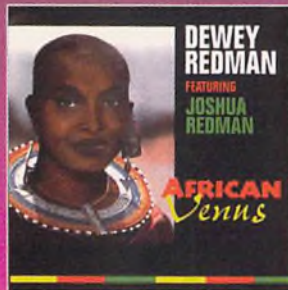
"I loved Max and Art, and I wanted to talk to them and be with them, and I couldn't because I was in Philly, so I used to buy a train ticket. I used to commute from Philly to New York and go to Max's house over on Monroe Street in Brooklyn with Kenny Davis. I'd eat dinner and stay maybe six, seven hours, and we'd play. We'd go into his bedroom, and Max would be showing Kenny and myself different things. We'd be, so to speak, swapping notes. Max introduced me to Kenny Clarke. He told me, 'This is Kenny Clarke, the forerunner of all of us!'"

On Miles Davis:

"Miles had this uncanny sense of time and rhythm, real different from anybody I've ever met. And he often said that my sense of time is strange. And so between the two of us having these strange senses of time, we



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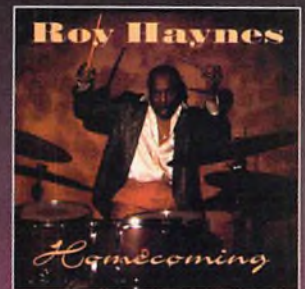


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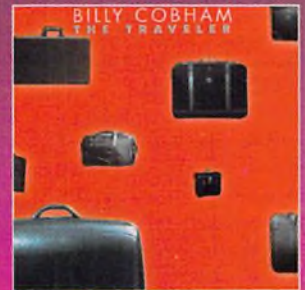


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just seemed to get together with the sense of time, and I could never lose him, and he could never lose me. I always knew where he was. As much as I like to play the *melody* in things on the drums, I could get with Miles and go into *anything*, just like he does with me; he never stays with the drummer; he goes way out. But I know where he's at, and I know what he's doing, and with Miles I could play some drum things without having to stick close to the melody on the drums to let him know where I was at. He would know the amount of time that I had to be playing, and I'd come out right, and it would bring him right back, and he'd come right back where I was . . . and it was always beautiful.

"The greatest experience of my life was with Miles, of course . . . I could never deny that—the greatest experience of my life *other* than the few times I worked with Charlie, meaning Charlie Parker. They were the greatest experiences of my life. To work with Miles later gassed me because I knew that he got all of his seasoning from Charlie.

"In Miles' group, Miles would let me play 'most anything I felt like playing. He used to have a firm hand on me. With Miles, I'm a sideman, and there's so much I can do and so much I can't do. Miles used to get angry

"I don't like to resort to tricks. Now, I try to do some kinds of trick things with the cymbals, but I want to do them in the rhythm."



about some things I would do and limit me and have me play certain things and tie me down, and I couldn't progress. I feel that if a drummer can experiment on the bandstand without upsetting the rhythm and disturbing people, it's good for you and makes you progress. But Miles wouldn't let me experiment too much, because he'd say I'd be getting in the way. With my own group, I can experiment the way I feel because it's *my* group! With my own group I feel more at liberty. I used to feel things with Miles that might have been some spectacular things, but I wouldn't do them because I was afraid

he would reprimand me.

"I believe in everybody in the band letting them play their own arrangements. That makes them a happy group. When I was in Miles' band, that was the thing that I didn't like in the band. Miles would never play anything that I would write or that anybody else in the band would write. Of course we could suggest, which I did. I suggested on numerous occasions how the format of an arrangement should be. 'I'll play brushes here,' like on 'All Of You.' Different things like that. That concept was me. I said, 'Miles, I want to play brushes in front of that' when he started the opening of 'All Of You.' That's my idea. We dreamed that up on a plane flying to Detroit or somewhere."

On young, outstanding drummers:

"Louis Hayes! He's going to be an excellent drummer. And a student of mine named Andrew Cyrille—he's becoming a very good drummer. And a protégé of mine from Philadelphia, a young boy named Endlove. They're going to be very excellent drummers."

On tricks and stick-twirling:

"It looks good. It's flash. It looks very good with those sticks being twirled in your hands, but you should be kept on the drums.

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"I don't like to resort to tricks. Now, I try to do some kinds of trick things with the cymbals, but I want to do them *in the rhythm*. It's not just a trick, and you don't hear it; it's a trick and you *hear* it. Twirl the sticks and that's a trick, and nobody hears it; it's all right, it looks flashy, but what looks flashy is one thing—what you hear is still rhythm that keeps it swinging. Don't do pantomime drums! 'Cause pantomime drums cannot be heard on a record.

"I've seen Buddy Rich do all kinds of solos, any way you can think of, and I've never seen him do tricks. He plays drums and cymbals all the time, both the hands and the feet. Buddy does things that are unbelievable for any drummer. I used to play the conga on stage while he was playing drums in his solo. I'd be playing rhythm, and I used to look over at him to see when he was going to come out of his solo . . . and I couldn't see

his hands! I couldn't see them! They were a blur, the sticks were a blur. He's the greatest drummer I've listened to when you start saying, 'Go in there and play those drums.'"

On playing loudly:

"I am comparatively a heavy drummer. I like to play heavy, and I play forceful, and sometimes I tend to get loud, and it might be overbearing because I've seen some customers who sit close to the drums get up and move. So I understand.

"A lot of drummers play for themselves and don't think about the audience. I do. I think about the audience at all times when I'm playing. I have a feeling for their ears as far as volume is concerned. But on some tunes, you just cannot come down and make the tune effective, so I have to play loud. If I would play it much softer, it wouldn't be any good. It would kill the brilliance of the tune.

"But even though a drummer can play loud, I notice the public will accept it if the drums are loud *and* musical. If you're loud and *not* musical, they won't accept it."

On the future of drums:

"The era has changed, and it's getting so that people are getting more modern-minded. We're talking about the moon. The drums have got to go to the moon! You can't

be playing the drums in 1923; it's 1960 now, and the drums have got to move along and progress, too. I think drums are changing constantly.

"We have so many young drummers that are coming up, and they listen to me and Art and Max and different cats that are playing, and they want to play different. They're constantly trying to surpass. That's the way I felt about the older drummers. I wanted to surpass what they did, so that I can be doing something progressive and get recognition; and the younger drummers that are younger than I are doing the same thing. Youth just comes on. Youth comes through, and it's with a different flavor. They're constantly searching, and there's no end to what you can do with drums.

"The only thing I can say is for all drummers, including myself—and I'm *really* scuffling just to stay this way—I want to keep time *behind* me and don't let it catch up. When time catches up with you, you become passé, so I'm striving to keep time behind me. I don't want time to pass me, and go ahead, and wake up someday and I'm old-fashioned. I say, don't let 'emit'—that's 'time' spelled backwards—don't let 'emit' get you." **DB**

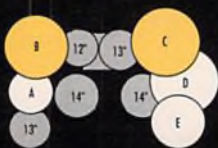
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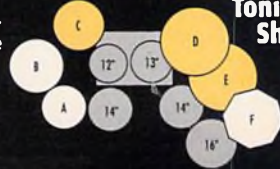
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Buddy Rich Big Band

BURNING FOR BUDDY—Atlantic 82699-2: *DANCING MEN; MERCY, MERCY, MERCY; LOVE FOR SALE; BEULAH WITCH; NUTVILLE; COTTON TAIL; NO JIVE; MILESTONES; THE DRUM ALSO WALTZES, PART 1; MACHINE; STRAIGHT NO CHASER; SLO-FUNK; SHAWNEE; DRUMORELLO; THE DRUM ALSO WALTZES, PART 2; LINGO; YA GOTTA TRY; PICK UP THE PIECES.* (75:48)

Personnel: Simon Phillips (1), Dave Weckl (2), Steve Gadd (3), Matt Sorum (4), Steve Smith (5), Neil Peart (6), Manu Katché (7), Bill Cobham (8), Max Roach (9,15), Rod Morgenstein (10), Kenny Aronoff (11), Omar Hakim (12), Ed Shaughnessy (13), Joe Morello (14), Bill Bruford (16), Marvin "Smitty" Smith (17), Steve Ferrone (18), drums; Mino Cinélu, percussion (7); Andy Fusco, Dave D'Angelo, Steve Marcus, Walt Weiskopf, Jack Stuckey, saxes; John Mosca, Rick Trager, George Gesslein, trombone; Dave Stahl, Ross Konikoff, Greg Gisbert, Scott Wendholt, Bob Millikan, Craig Johnson, Dan Collette, Mike Ponella, Joe Magnarelli, Tony Kadleck, trumpet; Gary Keller, tenor sax, flute; John Hart, Chuck Loeb, Bill Beaudoin, guitar; Chuck Bergeron, bass; Jon Werking, piano.

★★★★

I think Rich was jazz's greatest drummer. Neil Peart, the Rush rock drummer who produced this tribute, certainly agrees. Cathy Rich, the late drummer's daughter, endorsed the project (subtitled *A Tribute To The Music Of Buddy Rich, Volume 1*) and worked with Peart to select the drummers and band members. (All non-drummers except two are alumni of Rich bands, Peart's liner notes tell us.)

Rich regularly performed most of these tunes and arrangements. Now, even with a different drummer on each track, the spirit of his brash, fiery style dominates the album. Both rock as well as jazz drummers hold Rich in high esteem. (In the late '60s he began featuring rock/pop tunes such as "Uptight," "Norwegian

Wood," and "The Beat Goes On.")

Hearing some of the rockers play straight-ahead jazz is the biggest revelation. Peart drives the band explosively on "Cotton Tail." Morgenstein, the Dregs drummer, handles the complexities of "Machine" with Rich-like authority. Aronoff, a veteran of gigs with John Mellencamp, Bob Dylan, and Elton John, ripples on "Straight No Chaser," a real flagwaver.

Among the tried-and-true jazz drummers, Shaughnessy, Morello, and "Smitty" Smith each pull out all the stops. Morello tap dances across the set with tasty fills on "Drumorello." Gadd and Cobham, who work both sides of the street, fulfill their jazz legacy handsomely here. Roach, who is to bebop what Rich was to swing, does not play with the band but performs two typically masterful solos.

"Lingo," a synthesizer-laced Bruford original written for this album, is the least Rich-like chart. But it fits, too, in that it extrapolates where Rich might have been today.

Incidentally, there are other soloists, playing particularly well throughout. Among the missing drummers of the Rich persuasion are Louie Bellson, Butch Miles, and Jake Hanna. Nevertheless, this is a fine tribute. —Owen Cordle



John Scofield

HAND JIVE—Blue Note 27327: *I'LL TAKE LES; DARK BLUE; DO LIKE EDDIE; SHE'S SO LUCKY; CHECKERED PAST; 7TH FLOOR; GOLDEN DAZE; DON'T SHOOT THE MESSENGER; WHIP THE MULE; OUT OF THE CITY.* (64:20)

Personnel: Scofield, guitar; Eddie Harris, tenor saxophone (1,3,5,8,9); Larry Goldings, piano (2,5,9,10), organ (1,3-8,10); Dennis Irwin, bass; Bill Stewart, drums; Don Alias, percussion.

★★★★

At first glance, regular guy Scofield looks like a copycat. After all, a couple other guitar Johns happen to like organs of late. But, unlike Abercrombie and McLaughlin, Sco's funk precedes *Hand Jive* by a mile. The inspired additions of Larry Goldings on organ (it's been a good six, seven years since Scofield's released an album with a keyboardist) and current revived legend Eddie Harris on tenor are like relish, onions, and mustard on a Chicago-style hot dog; in this case, the dog is Sco's emerging canon.

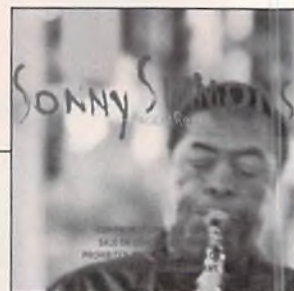
The heart of the album is driven by the superb funk of "I'll Take Les" (in homage to occasional Harris cohort Les McCann), "Dark Blue," and "Do Like Eddie"—songs that invoke the spirit of three Harris-related numbers, "Freedom Jazz Dance," "Cold Duck Time," and "Compared To What" (the latter two associated

with McCann). In this all-Scofield program, we also get the unabashed, smooth-as-glass swing of "Don't Shoot The Messenger" and "Out Of The City." And the ambling "Checkedered Past" drips with some kind of churchy blues, laced with Goldings' B-3 and piano, unison sax and guitar lines, and a soulful, mournful feel. The best composed tune, perhaps the best played one as well, "Checkedered Past" ends too soon. (The only dud is the grating pop ditty "Whip The Mule.")

Throughout, Bill Stewart and Dennis Irwin create a delightful, swinging funk beat, with a never-overt, always-implied rock feel. (Don Alias' percussion seems incidental.)

On the down side, former right-hand man, tenorist Joe Lovano was a strong and necessary solo voice opposite Scofield, giving the band a more complete sound. Most of the "blowing" on *Hand Jive* belongs to Scofield, making it a somewhat unbalanced, guitar-heavy program. Goldings' delectable organ is used more for flavor than solos. (His piano work is limited, too.) Harris' horn is likewise sparse (he's only on half the tracks here). As a result, Goldings and Harris end up supporting Sco's loose-yet-crafted funk, Eddie—when he does solo—playing like a countrified gentleman with an ache in his heart.

Still, more than other recent Scofield collaborators Bill Frisell and Pat Metheny, smooth Eddie gets closest to the heart of King John's muse: guitar dreams in the service of funk and jazz. Lee Townsend's production (Frisell, Jerry Granelli) is first-rate as he captures everything, including all those six-string textures and timbres Sco is famous for. So what if *Hand Jive* falls prey to the digital age, giving us fried soul food without the fat—it still tastes mighty good. —John Epland



Sonny Simmons

ANCIENT RITUAL—Qwest/Reprise 9 45623: *REINCARNATION; TRUMPET SHIP; THEME FOR LINDA; CRYSTAL; THE OTHER EAST; COUNTRY PARSON; ANCIENT RITUAL; SUNDOWN IN EGYPT.* (69:14)

Personnel: Simmons, alto sax, english horn (8); Charnett Moffett, bass; Zarak Simmons, drums.

★★★★ 1/2

Hats off to whoever is responsible for this. Simmons' last record was *Backwoods Suite* (West Wind), recorded with drummer Billy Higgins and a septet in 1982, and I must confess I didn't know he was still around. But he is... and how! In the '60s, Simmons recorded two superb early avant-garde records with Prince Lasha and played on a couple of Eric Dolphy sessions. With his wife, trumpeter Bar-

started his career as a singer, joins her on "Come Rain Or Come Shine," making up in swinging feel what he lacks in vocal elasticity.
—Larry Birnbaum



Betty Carter

FEED THE FIRE—Verve 314 523 600-2: *FEED THE FIRE; LOVE NOTES; SOMETIMES I'M HAPPY; LOVER MAN; I'M ALL SMILES; IF I SHOULD LOSE YOU; ALL OR NOTHING AT ALL; WHAT IS THIS TUNE?; DAY DREAM; B'S BLUES.* (73:02)
Personnel: Carter, vocals; Geri Allen, piano; Dave Holland, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Recorded live at London's Royal Festival Hall at

the tail end of a 1993 European tour. *Feed The Fire* features the all-star rhythm section of Allen, Holland, and DeJohnette in place of Carter's regular trio.

A strict taskmaster with her own groups, Carter allows the musicians here to challenge rather than just support her, and she rises to the occasion with an even more instrumental approach to singing than usual. It's a bravura performance; but without the visual accompaniment of Carter's dramatic posturing and rubber-faced mugging, the extended tracks leave the impression that you had to have been there.

The band takes center stage on the title track, with Carter scating along almost like a sideman (sideperson?) on her own set. Though they sound like they're trying to hold back, the musicians are still too boisterous on the languid "Love Notes," while "Lover Man" is too closely associated with Billie Holiday to withstand Carter's vocal contorsions. The balance is better on a series of duets—"If I Should Lose You" (with Allen), "All Or Nothing At All" (with Holland), and "What Is This Tune?" (with DeJohnette).

By the time the whole group comes together again on the Ellington-Strayhorn classic "Day Dream," the chemistry is just about perfect, with Carter back in the spotlight where she surely belongs.
—Larry Birnbaum



Marcus Roberts

GERSHWIN FOR LOVERS—Columbia 66437: *A FOGGY DAY; THE MAN I LOVE; OUR LOVE IS HERE TO STAY; SUMMERTIME; SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME; IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO; NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT; THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME; HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON; BUT NOT FOR ME.*

Personnel: Roberts, piano; Reginald Veal, bass; Herlin Riley, drums.

★ ★ ★

Jazz At Lincoln Center

THEY CAME TO SWING—Columbia 66379: *TAKE THE "A" TRAIN; BLACK AND TAN FANTASY; EXPRESS CROSSING; LIGHT BLUE; JELLY, JELLY; THINGS TO COME; BOY MEETS HORN; LOST IN LOVELINESS; BACK TO BASICS; TATTOOED BRIDE.* (64:32)

Collective Personnel: Jerry Dodgion, Norris Turney, Wes Anderson, Jesse Davis, Bill Easley, Todd Williams, Walter Blanding Jr., Joshua Redman, Victor Goines, Robert Stewart, Joe Temperley, James Carter, Herb Harris, various reeds; Kent Jordan, piccolo; Marcus Belgrave, Wynton Marsalis, Lew Soloff, Joe Wilder, Marcus Printup, Jon Faddis, Ryan Kisor, Nicholas Payton, Russell Gunn, Roger Ingram, trumpet; Art Baron, Wycliffe Gordon, Britt Woodman, Ronald Westray, Jamal Haynes, Wayne Goodman, trombone; Sir Roland Hanna, Eric Reed, Marcus Roberts, piano; Reginald Veal, Chris Thomas, bass; Herlin Riley, Billy Higgins, Lewis Nash, drums; Milt Grayson, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

There's something quaint about Marcus Roberts. Maybe it's his straight-up-and-down sense of time, or his sometime-use of plain vanilla chords, or the polite decorum of his trio performances on *Gershwin For Lovers*. Listening to this album gives you the feeling of a Sunday afternoon in the parlor with one of the "piano professors" tinkling amiably. Roberts generally takes the minimalist approach, occasionally growing more expansive with an Erroll Garner-like tremolo and a few Tatum-esque swirling embellishments. The arrangements seem carefully worked out, ranging from the Oriental placidity of "A Foggy Day" to the treble rainedrops and South Seas motif heard on "It Ain't Necessarily So" to the more conventionally swinging "Nice Work If You Can Get It" and "But Not For Me."

If these performances feel like period pieces, it's also because of the fidelity of bassist Veal and drummer Riley. Fully integrated into Roberts' concept, they bring to the gig a precision and cooperation reminiscent of Percy Heath and Connie Kay of the MJQ. Veal's rich bowed bass frames the otherwise Latin

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bara Donald, he made adventurous recordings for ESP, Arhoolie, and Contemporary (he and Donald also produced son Zarak Simmons, drummer on *Ancient Ritual*), but he dropped clean out of sight in the '70s. Now, at 61, the Bay Area altoman returneth.

Simmons' style is hard-edged post-bop. References to Ornette Coleman are inevitable, with fluid lines, a bright, lyrical melodic sensibility, a pinched, slightly nasal tone, circular phrase repetitions, and occasional gruff runs to the bottom of his horn. A couple of Simmons' tunes even resemble Coleman quartet classics ("Reincarnation," "Country Parson") and his english-horn work ("Sundown In Egypt") recalls Coleman and Dewey Redman's double-reed adventures with shenai and musette. But Simmons is even more steeped in bebop than Ornette, his in-the-pocket phrasing aligning him with Cecil Taylor's alto partner Jimmy Lyons.

An excellent showing from the rhythm team, too. Charnett's drummer dad, Charles, worked with Simmons as well as Coleman in the '60s; here he's deep, woody, and driving. Zarak has a laid-back force that recalls Higgins. Not flashy or too busy, he's right there, often interacting directly with Molfett—listen to him build intensity under Simmons' burning solo on the title cut.

Risky, provocative, wonderful stuff for a major label. *Ancient Ritual* is a true coup.

—John Corbett



Jodie Christian

RAIN OR SHINE—Delmark 467: *LET'S TRY*; *SONG FOR ATALA*; *BALLAD MEDLEY*; *YARDBIRD SUITE*; *COLTRANE'S VIEW*; *MR. FREDDIE*; *CHROMATICALLY SPEAKING*; *COME RAIN OR COME SHINE*; *CHEROKEE*. (64:38)

Personnel: Christian, piano, synthesizer (5), vocal (8); Roscoe Mitchell, oboe (2), soprano sax (5), alto sax (6); Art Porter, alto sax (1,3,5-7,9); Paul McKee, trombone (1,7,9); Larry Gray, bass; Ernie Adams (1,3,7,9), Vincent Davis (2,5,6), George Hughes (4,8), drums; Francine Griffin, vocals (4,8).

★★★★ 1/2

Although he's recorded with Eddie Harris, Chet Baker, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie, Don Byas, Sonny Stitt, and others, pianist Jodie Christian is hardly known outside his hometown of Chicago. An impeccable craftsman who usually

stays in the mainstream, Christian was also a founding member of the AACM, and he still dabbles in the avant garde from time to time. Here, on his second album as a leader, he brings the unlikely pairing of saxophonists Art Porter and Roscoe Mitchell to bear on a highly eclectic set of standards and originals, integrating disparate sensibilities into a scintillating whole that argues more eloquently against the compartmentalization of jazz than any critic could.

Soloing only occasionally, Christian holds the session together with rich, ringing chords and jarring, jabbing tone clusters, shifting smoothly from the nostalgia of the "Ballad Medley" to the fulminating free-jazz of Mitchell's "Mr. Freddie." Mitchell, known as a hard-core experimentalist, becomes a persuasive if somewhat quirky balladeer on Christian's "Song For Atala," while Porter, normally a soft-core funkster, blows more-than-respectable hard-bop on "Let's Try" and pushes the changes of "Cherokee" almost to the breaking point. Christian does show signs of musical schizophrenia, however, on his composition "Coltrane's View," which switches abruptly from impressionistic reverie to nerve-shattering cacophony and back again.

Porter and Mitchell generally steal the spotlight on *Rain Or Shine*, but Paul McKee contributes solid, straightforward trombone work and Francine Griffin sings and scats with cool aplomb on "Yardbird Suite." Christian, who

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exotica of "Summertime"; his fingers take over for a full-bodied, bluesy "They Can't Take That Away From Me." Riley tap dances suavely on "Nice Work." Come to think of it, "nice work" describes this whole album, Roberts' first trio recording and his first on Columbia.

The pianist also appears on five tracks on *They Came To Swing*, a compilation from the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra's live performances of the last couple of years. On these, he is listed as musical director. On the whole, this Wynton Marsalis-dominated, Ellington-weighted program is expertly and faithfully played. Among the originals, Marsalis' "Express Crossing" is a wild train ride into Raymond Scott-ville. Among other non-Ellingtonia: Dizzy Gillespie's "Things To Come" still thrills with its (what else?) dizzying pace and a dizzying break and solo by Jon Faddis.

—Owen Cordle



Bob Belden's Manhattan Rhythm Club

PRINCEJAZZ—somethin'else 5565: *ELECTRIC CHAIR; BALLAD OF DOROTHY PARKER; VENUS DE MILO; PURPLE RAIN; POWER FANTASTIC; LOVE 2 THE 9'S; WHEN WE'RE DANCING CLOSE & SLOW. (59:15)*
Personnel: Various artists, including Belden, soprano and tenor saxophones; Wallace Roney, Tim Hagans, Phil Grenadier, trumpet; Kenny Garrett, alto sax; Mike Stern, Jimi Tunnell, electric guitar; Jacky Terrasson, acoustic piano; Kevin Hays, acoustic piano, Fender Rhodes piano.

★★★ 1/2

WHEN DOVES CRY—Metro Blue 29515: *DIAMONDS AND PEARLS; PURPLE RAIN; KISS; WHEN DOVES CRY; ARMS OF ORION; NOTHING COMPARES 2 U; 1999; LITTLE RED CORVETTE; THE QUESTION OF U; WHEN 2 R N LOVE; BABY, I'M A STAR. (57:23)*
Personnel: Various artists, including Phil Perry, Holly Cole, Cassandra Wilson, Tsiidi Le Loka, Loris Diran, vocals; Jimi Tunnell, lead and background vocals, electric guitar, synthesizer, organ, bass, Moog bass; Everette Harp, alto sax; Greg Osby, soprano sax; Belden, soprano and tenor saxophones; Larry Campbell, pedal-steel guitar; Tim Hagans, trumpet; Clark Gayton, trombone; Chuck Wilson, clarinet; Benny Green, Mike Cain, acoustic piano; Fareed Haque, acoustic guitar; Rob Schwimmer, Hammond B-3 organ.

★★★ 1/2

Taking on a pop superstar's catalog and coming up with imaginative, jazz-informed arrangements of well-known and even obscure tunes is fraught with peril. But saxophonist/arranger Bob Belden, for the most part, avoids sanitizing the works of gifted funk-rock luminary Prince

and intrepidly delivers not one, but two impressive collections of the great Purple One's songs. Originally released earlier this year in Japan on the Toshiba-EMI somethin'else label, both *When Doves Cry* (*Purple Rain* in Japan) and *Princejazz* have their shortcomings, especially when the proceedings get too infused with the slick and overproduced trappings of pop music. But the discs are replete with inspired and at times delightfully invigorating interpretations of Prince melodies by a stellar

cast of deferential vocalists and musicians.

When Doves Cry, the more pop-oriented of the two, features many of Prince's hits including the funkified "When Doves Dry," seductively shaped by Cassandra Wilson's soulful singing and Greg Osby's soprano sax flights, and the jazzy "The Question Of U," coolly cultivated by Holly Cole's lush vocals, Chuck Wilson's smoky clarinet lines, and Benny Green's sparkling piano work. Jimi Tunnell shines on three tracks, putting some rocking guitar bite into "Little Red

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photograph: Billie Holiday, 1945 by Sherry / Art + Commerce

Corvette," and singing up a storm on the bubbling-with-funk "Kiss" and the blazing "Baby, I'm A Star." The low marks go to two of the three instrumentals, "Arms Of Orion" and "When 2 R N Love," which are rendered with a too-polite touch.

Conceived in *When Doves Cry's* wake, *Princejazz* is a stirring instrumental outing of intoxicating ensemble interplay and striking improvisational excursions by such contributors as guitarist Mike Stern, pianist Jacky Terrasson, and trumpeters Wallace Roney and Tim Hagans. The album's only weaknesses are

the rendition of "Power Fantastic," which fails to live up to its name on both counts, and the deliciously mellifluous ballad "When We're Dancing Close & Slow," which plods on a bit too long. Otherwise, from the pensive "Venus De Milo" to the funk-rockin' "Electric Chair," Belden's arrangements triumph. Especially notable are his different versions of "Purple Rain": a dreamy exposition featuring a trio of electric pianists on *Princejazz* contrasting with Holly Cole's read sweetened by Larry Campbell's pedal-steel guitar on *When Doves Cry*.

—Dan Ouellette



Joshua Redman

MOOD SWING—Warner Bros. 7072: *SWEET SORROW; CHILL; REJOICE; FAITH; ALONE IN THE MORNING; MISCHIEF; DIALOGUE; THE ONENESS OF TWO (IN THREE); PAST IN THE PRESENT; OBSESSION; HEADIN' HOME.* (70:01)

Personnel: Redman, tenor sax; Brad Mehldau, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

★ ★ 1/2

Dewey Redman

AFRICAN VENUS—Evidence 22093: *AFRICAN VENUS; VENUS AND MARS; MR. SANDMAN; ECHO PRAYER; SATIN DOLL; TAKE THE 'A' TRAIN; TURNAROUND.* (59:36)

Personnel: Redman, tenor and alto saxes, musette (1), voice (1,3); Joshua Redman, tenor sax (2,3,5); Charles Eubanks, piano; Anthony Cox, bass; Carl Allen, drums; Danny Sadownick, percussion.

★ ★ ★

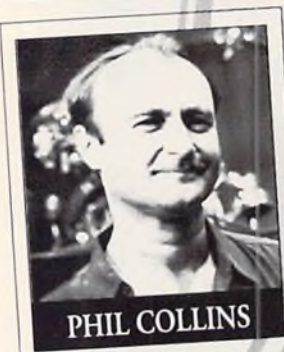
Both senior and junior Redmans have a sax sound of their own, though they're miles apart. Dewey's is gruff, gritty, Texan; Josh's is smoother, sinewy, supple. Each reedman plays well here, and their solo space is perhaps the best aspect of both *African Venus* and *Mood Swing*.

In Dewey's case, there's the question of a couple of Ellington-associated tunes that have been over-used—not even Joe Henderson makes "A Train" sound like a good choice as a blowing vehicle these days. "Mr. Sandman" features an ill-advised Dewey vocal part. Only Ornette Coleman's "Turnaround" serves as a strong jump-off point; it's given as straightforward a blues reading as possible, with a cool piano part from Eubanks and an excellent solo from Cox (who sounds great throughout). Dewey's own tunes are good—the title cut features an expansive musette (musing and glossolalic vocalizations. "Echo Prayer" has his most adventurous blowing over a slinky background, and "Venus And Mars" is an uptempo cooker on which you can plainly hear the difference between him and his son.

Joshua's being hyped into the ground. This disc's promo pack included a propagandistic "in-the-studio" video, but it doesn't make a slick tune like "Chill" sound less trite. It's perfect for lite-jazz radio, though, where it's sure to do well. All material is written by him, and it is, by and large, run-of-the-mill. Joshua's real talent as a tenor stylist does shine through here and there, however, like on the gospel-soaked "Rejoice" and the surprisingly outside "Dialogue." Drummer Blade, most promising member of the young band, is put to particularly bad use on the rhythmically flat "Faith" and bossa cheese-

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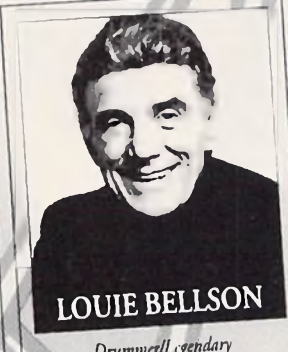
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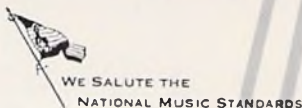


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ball "Alone In The Morning." Too bad. Joshua could emerge as a player of real interest and substance; records like *Mood Swing* won't help him confirm that reputation. —John Corbett



Danilo Perez

THE JOURNEY—Novus 63166-2: *THE CAPTURE; CHAINS; THE VOYAGE; THE ARRIVAL; AWAKENING; NEW VISION; PANAMA 2000; REMINISCE; FLIGHT TO FREEDOM; AFRICAN WAVE; LIBRE SPIRITUS.* (59:22)

Personnel: Perez, piano; David Sanchez, tenor and soprano saxes; George Garzone, tenor sax (3,7); Larry Grenadier, Andy Gonzalez (6,9), bass; Ignacio Berroa, drums; Milton Cardona, Kimati Dinizulu, Giovanni Hidalgo (3,6,9), Guillermo Franco R. (7,9,10), percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ 1/2

Edward Simon

BEAUTY WITHIN—AudioQuest 1025: *MASTERY OF ALL SITUATIONS; BEAUTY WITHIN; RARE DAYS; IN SEARCH OF POWER; REPRISE 1; EL DIA EN QUE ME QUIERAS; HOMECOMING; THE CALLING; REPRISE 2.* (51:26)

Personnel: Simon, piano; Anthony Jackson, bass; Horacio Hernandez, drums; Diego Urcola, trumpet (3,4,6).

★ ★ ★ ★

Perez, from Panama, and Simon, from Venezuela, both grew up playing salsa, came to the U.S. as teenagers to study classical music and jazz, and apprenticed with established bandleaders—Paquito D'Rivera and Dizzy Gillespie in Perez's case, Bobby Watson in Simon's—before stepping out on their own. Yet despite their strikingly similar backgrounds, the two pianists take sharply contrasting approaches to Latin jazz on their latest releases. Perez's second solo outing is an ambitious concept album that combines Afro-Caribbean rhythms with modal jazz to trace the slave trade from Africa to the Americas, while Simon's debut as a leader uses a contemporary-trio format to create a personal, introspective mood.

As if to compensate for the absence of Latin percussion on Perez's first, self-titled album, *The Journey* features four hand drummers percolating behind what often sounds like a trumpet-less version of Miles Davis' high-energy '60s quintet. Saxophonist David Sanchez plays Wayne Shorter to Perez's Herbie Hancock on tunes like "The Arrival" and "Panama 2000," with Danilo occasionally roiling the keyboard like Cecil Taylor or reaching into the piano to pluck the strings. But what makes *The Journey* extraordinary is its brilliant execution and solid structure, with percussion and solo-piano interludes separating the longer band

tracks. And when derivative ingredients merge—as on "Chains," where a languid post-bop ballad melts smoothly into a Yoruba chant—the results sound remarkably original.

Less an outward-looking pastiche than an inner exploration, Simon's *Beauty Within* draws its Afro-Caribbean flavor from the music itself, without Latin percussion. Anthony Jackson's electric six-string bass and Cuban expatriate Horacio Hernandez's Weckl-esque drumming give the trio the feel of one of Michel

Camilo's groups, but Simon avoids Camilo's showy pianistics in favor of a darkly brooding style more akin to Bill Evans. His mood swings abruptly from exuberant to morose—sometimes, as on "In Search Of Power," within the same tune—as his style shifts from Latin to jazz. But though Diego Urcola's trumpet adds a Milesian cast to three tracks, Simon himself looks neither backward nor ahead, keeping the music in a relentlessly restless present-day groove. —Larry Birnbaum

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**Jan Garbarek/
Hilliard
Ensemble**

OFFICIUM—ECM 21525: *PARCE MIHI DOMINE; PRIMO TEMPORE; SANCTUS; REGNANTEM SEM- PITERNA; O SALUTARIS HOSTIA; PROCEDENTEM SPONSUM; PULCHERRIMA ROSA; PARCE MIHI DOM- INE; BEATA VISCERA; DE SPINETO NATA ROSA; CREDO; AVE MARIS STELLA; VIRGO FLAGELLATUR; ORATIO LEREMIAE; PARCE MIHI DOMINE. (77:44 minutes)*

Personnel: Garbarek, soprano, tenor saxes; David James, Rogers Covey-Crump, John Potter, Gordon Jones, voices.

★ ★

This disc begins with vocal music (from Gre- gorian chant through to the 16th-century Span-

ish master polyphonist Cristóbal de Morales) sung by the Hilliard Ensemble, whose excellent recent work for ECM includes a disc of music by mysterious composer Walter Frye, as well as an appearance on British composer Gavin Bryars' newest collection, *Vita Nova*. But, by letting the Norwegian saxophonist improvise openly over the voices, a high-concept notion drags down what could have been a strong disc of early music.

Evidence of this comes in the form of the disc's high point, without Garbarek, on the second of three parts from Morales' *Officium Defunctorum*. ECM producer Manfred Eicher (who appears to be pushing this project personally, a relative rarity for him) is known for his pillowy, echoey reverb mania. That's much more appropriate for the Hilliard Ensemble than for jazz musicians, whose distinct timbral and tonal characteristics are blurred by such engineering. Garbarek, whose overall approach to the horn has been sculpted in accord with Eicher's production, noodles modally over the lovely singing. On "Primo Tem- pore" he hangs back and adds another voice, to stunning effect; he dovetails sweetly with David James' counter-tenor on "Beata Viscera."

But Garbarek is generally too high in the mix, overpowering the singers, and more often than not adds a syrupy, incongruous romanticism.

—John Corbett



Lost Tribe

SOULFISH—High Street 72902 10327-2: *WALKABOUT; WHOUNIT; IT'S NOT WHAT IT IS; DAZE OF OL'; ROOM OF LIFE; STEEL ORCHARDS; LA FONTAINE (THE FOUNTAIN); SECOND STORY; PLANET ROCK; FUZZY LOGIC; H. (57:58)*

Personnel: David Binney, alto saxophone; Fima Ephron, bass; David Gilmore, Adam Rogers, guitars; Ben Perowsky, drums; various guests.

★ ★ ★ ★

In its second High Street outing, Lost Tribe's pop-cum-jazz fusion teems with restless en- ergy, punctuated by bristling rhythms, invigo- rated by hard-edged and angular guitar and saxophone playing, and steeped in a striking melange of styles, including bebop, free-jazz, power rock, hip-hop, and funk.

Most of the tunes, with their fluctuating tempo and meter shifts and spasmodic mood swings, develop with a refreshing sense of urgent surprise: e.g., the pensive beauty of "Room Of Life" erupting into a feverish avant sax wailing; the unsettling, ominous guitar march of "Steel Orchards" momentarily being stalled by a spiraling sax solo. From the bracing guitar crash through the fast-and-furious "H" to the saxophone reflections on the quiet, mysterious "La Fontaine," this disc grips and caresses with a rare mix of power and delight.

—Dan Ouellette

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**Larry
Luchowski
Quartet**

SHADOWPLAY—Lake Shore Jazz 006: *BREATHE A SIGH; WOODY; MEPHISTO; REMEMBERING YOU; CHIT CHAT; YOUNG AND FOOLISH; IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU; QUINTESSENTIAL. (52:20)*

Personnel: Luchowski, piano; Edward Petersen, tenor saxophone; Larry Gray, bass; Jeff Stitely, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

With a debut album heavy on original composi-

tions, the heart of Larry Luchowski's esthetic is hidden halfway through the recording, with the two standards "Young And Foolish" and "It Could Happen To You." Just a few phrases into "Young And Foolish" (*sans* tenor saxophonist Edward Petersen), it's clear we're in Bill Evans/Scott LaFaro/Paul Motian territory. From the tenderness of Luchowski's single-line melodies and the full tone of Larry Gray's imaginative bass lines to Jeff Stitely's restrained brush-work, it all fits that classic model.

These seasoned Chicago musicians (Luchowski is 48) are more than clones, although their playing is more satisfying than surprising. There's a Monkish quality to the stuttered diction of "Chit Chat," and the quartet's wit here comes as a nice change of pace from the otherwise wistful atmosphere of *Shadowplay*.

Edward Petersen is a chameleon of a tenor player. He's a suave conversationalist on "Chit Chat," but on "Breathe A Sigh" (a ballad that starts out like gossamer and develops a backbone), he makes his high tenor lines as evanescent as any blown by Joe Henderson. Petersen is less appealing in his funky Ernie Watts mode, as featured on "Woody."

"Remembering You" shows everyone at their best, with Petersen toning down to smoky, wafting lines and Luchowski subtly tying everything together. If only every debut sounded this mature.

—Elaine Guregian



James Newton

SUITE FOR FRIDA KAHLO—AudioQuest 1023: *THE VERDICT; THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING; ELLIPTICAL; SUITE FOR FRIDA KAHLO: MOVEMENT 1—FRIDA, MOVEMENT 2—THE BROKEN COLUMN, MOVEMENT 3—LAS DOS FRIDAS, MOVEMENT 4—THE LOVE EMBRACE OF THE UNIVERSE.* (57:26)

Personnel: Newton, flute; George Lewis, George McMullen, trombone; Sonship Theus, drums, percussion; Darek Oleszkiewicz, bass; Kei Akagi, piano; Julie Fevas, bassoon (4-7); Pedro Eustache, flute, bass flute, bass clarinet, tenor sax (4-7).

★★★★

Mexican painter Frida Kahlo proves to be the perfect inspiration for flutist James Newton's centerpiece suite on his latest album. His playing not only plumbs the depth of emotion in

Kahlo's poignant and startlingly anguished self-portraits, but his desire to link art with socio-cultural realities fully reflects her politically aware worldview. The resulting four-movement work is a gem that exquisitely pays tribute to Kahlo even as it advances Newton's prowess as a composer.

Influenced by such composers as Charles Mingus and Brazil's Villa Lobos, Newton's jazz suite is also informed by European classical and Asian music, firmly grounded in blues sensibilities and buoyed by improvisational surprise. The second movement is particularly compelling, with scurrying flute lines by Newton and Pedro Eustache paving the way for a dirge-like double-trombone lament. Based on one of Kahlo's most agonizing and grievous self-portraits, "The Broken Column," the piece mirrors both the artist's severe pain as a result of a tragic accident and her resolve to overcome the calamity.

As a prelude to the featured composition, Newton offers three strong numbers, including "The Verdict" (a tempo- and mood-shifting piece spurred by the L.A. riots) and the lighthearted and whimsical "Elliptical," an adventurous improvisational duet featuring Newton and longtime trombone cohort George Lewis playfully conversing with shrill overblowing and lyrical cat & mouse chases.

—Dan Ouellette

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Al Di Meola

ORANGE AND BLUE—Bluemoon 79197: *PARADISIO; CHILEAN PIPE SONG; TAALINA CHANT; ORANGE AND BLUE; THIS WAY BEFORE; SUMMER COUNTRY SONG; IF WE MEET AGAIN, PARTS 1 & 2; CYPRUS; THEME OF THE MOTHER SHIP; PRECIOUS LITTLE YOU; CASMIR; ON MY OWN.* (65:30)

Personnel: Di Meola, electric, acoustic and classical guitars, guitar synthesizer, synths, violin, drums, cymbals, santour, Hawaiian string harp, percussion; Mario Parmisano, piano; Marc Johnson, Pino Palladino (4), bass; Hernan Romero, vocals, charango, guitar; Noa, vocals (3); Gumbi Ortiz, percussion (4,10,12); Andres Boyarsky, sax (4); Conrad Herwig, trombone (4); Mike Pinella, trumpet (4); George Dalaras, vocals (9); Peter Erskine (6-8), Manu Katche (9,11), Steve Gadd (10,12), drums; Simon Shaen, violin (12).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

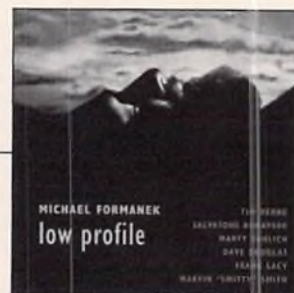
On his latest outing, Di Meola mines the Metheny motherlode (lilting Brazilian-flavored pop-jazz with falsetto vocals doubling guitar lines) while interjecting his own trademark bravado along the way.

"Paradisio," "If We Meet Again," and the title track are almost too close for comfort to Metheny's lush, impressionistic, and heavily arranged *First Circle*, *Letter From Home*, and *Secret Story*, but Al asserts his own aggressive signature on the suite-like "Chilean Pipe Song" and "Summer Country Song," both of which are anchored by Marc Johnson's authoritative basslines. Pianist Mario Parmisano also plays a key role throughout this record, comping tastefully behind Di Meola's lyrical single-note lines on both acoustic guitar and mellow-toned Gibson jazz guitar.

A romantic at heart, Di Meola spends a chunk of time basking in schmaltz on ballads like "This Way Before," "Precious Little You," "Cyprus," and the luxurious "On My Own," which features the virtuoso plectrist on both acoustic guitar and Steinway grand piano. Then he flaunts his legendary chops on "Casmir," a kinetic Spanish-tinged romp that harkens back to exhilarating mid-'70s fare like "Race With The Devil On Spanish Highway."

The difference here is that 18 years later, a matured Di Meola understands the value of tension *and* release rather than just going for the all-out burn.

—Bill Milkowski



Michael Formanek

LOW PROFILE—enja 8050 2: *GRUGGLY; THE IMMACULATE DECEPTION; RIVERS; GREAT PLAINS; PARADISE REVISITED; ISONYCHIA; SHUDDAWUDDACUDDA; UNCOMMON GROUND; SIGNS OF LIFE; THE BLACK ROSE; BIG SPIRIT PEOPLE.* (76:56)

Personnel: Formanek, bass; David Douglas, trumpet; Ku-umba Frank Lacy, trombone; Tim Berne, alto and baritone saxophones; Marty Ehrlich, clarinet, bass clarinet, alto and soprano saxophones; Salvatore Bonafede, piano; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

If Michael Formanek's profile on this CD were any lower, you might not notice the selfless bassist's playing at all. The elusive leader solos infrequently, and emphasizes the collective in

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the sound mix, often combining his bass with Tim Berne's rowdy baritone sax or Marty Ehrlich's bass clarinet.

Formanek gets uniformly strong performances from a troupe that could be billed as the "Talent Deserving Wider Recognition" All-Stars. Ku-umba Frank Lacy's plunger-muted trombone is particularly effective and vocal on the gruff "Groogly." Trumpeter Dave Douglas contributes strong solos on "Rivers" and the wistful "The Black Rose," the latter tune evoking Wayne Shorter's "Blackthorn Rose." Douglas' tone and attack on this album reminded me of Woody Shaw. Marvin "Smitty" Smith is dynamic on this date. He doesn't solo much, either, but he's a constant presence, egging on soloists, building the momentum of "Rivers" and "Shud-dawuddacudda," and adding brushwork to the graceful "Isonychia."

Formanek has assembled a diverse, wide-ranging book of compositions, though without a strong personal imprint. The bassist favors episodes and encounters for smaller groupings within his septet. On "Paradise Revisited," this approach seems premeditated and contrived. *Low Profile* is finally an album of good moments which needs cohesion.

—Jon Andrews



Aki Takase

SHIMA SHOKA—enja 6062: *MERAVIGLIOSO*; *IDA LUPINO*; *A. V. S.*; *POINT*; *PRESTO V. H.*; *SHIMA SHOKA*; *ROCKING (SIC) IN RHYTHM*; *TIMEBENDS*; *DR. BEAT*; *HANABI*; *GIANT STEPS*; *GOODBYE PORK PIE (SIC) HAT*; *VALSE HOT*. (59:43)

Personnel: Takase, piano.

★★★★

Berlin Contemporary Jazz Orchestra

THE MORLOCKS—FMP 61: *ANY PIECE, BUT A'S PIECE*; *CONTRAREFLECTION*; *RIGAUDON NR. 2 AUS DER WASSERSTOFFMUSIK*; *MARCIA DI SATURNO*; *THE MORLOCKS*; *JACKHAMMER*. (69:03)

Personnel: Takase, Alexander von Schlippenbach, piano; Henry Lowther, Thomas Heberer, Axel Dorner, trumpet; Tilman Denhard, tenor sax, flutes; Darcy Hepner, alto sax; Evan Parker, soprano and tenor saxes; Walter Gauchel, tenor sax; Claas Willecke, flute, baritone sax; Jörg Huke, Marc Boukouya, Sören Fischer, Utz Zimmermann, trombone; Noboyoshi Ino, bass; Paul Lovens, percussion.

★★★★

Japanese-born, Berlin-based pianist Takase first came to my attention at a live duet performance with Portuguese vocalist Maria Joao,

where she played an absolutely devastating version of Coltrane's "Giant Steps." It's every bit as powerful on *Shima Shoka*, the marvelously varied solo disc which features seven of her own compositions and six by Carla Bley, Charles Mingus, Sonny Rollins, and others. Sly Monk references imbue "Meraviglioso," there's elegant Beethoven-ish rubato on "Timebends," while barreling, rolling left-hand figures set up the late-arriving theme on Ellington's "Rockin' In Rhythm." Gifted with breathtaking chops, she's not too smooth for her own good. Careful,

though, 'cause you may experience vertigo listening to her continuous, lightning runs on "Dr. Beat."

The subject of "A. V. S." (and composer of *Shima Shoka*'s most outre piece, "Point") is Takase's husband, German pianist Alexander von Schlippenbach. Together, the spouses conduct and hit the keys with the Berlin Contemporary Jazz Orchestra, whose *The Morlocks* is a most satisfying large-ensemble disc. Unlike Schlippenbach's other gargantuan assembly, Globe Unity Orchestra, the BCJO

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doesn't avoid straight jazz material; check the changes on "Jackhammer," which includes a beautiful trumpet solo from Henry Lowther, or the swells around Evan Parker's soprano on "Contrareflection." At the core of the ensemble is a longstanding free improvising trio—Schlippenbach/Parker/Lovens—that comes all the way to the surface on the graphically scored roller-coaster ride "Rigaudon." Among

BCJO's lesser-known players, bassist Ino and trombonist Huke deserve particular mention. Huke takes a stellar break with time and timbre master Lovens on "Any Piece, But As Piece," a composition written by Schlippenbach as a birthday present for Takase. Ino, who recorded a duet LP with Takase in 1985, provides a stunning unaccompanied intro for "Marcia Di Saturno."
—John Corbett



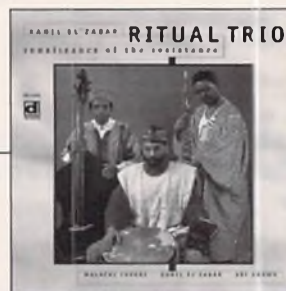
Oversize Quartet

PLAYS MUSIC BY RICH LATHAM—Accurate 4800: *MONKFISH; CLUMSY CARR; HEAVY CATS; THE MERCENARY; MR. SCIENCE; RODENTS OF UNUSUAL SIZE; DORIAN LAPEL; MARTIAN HEROES; TWO BLIND MICE; FIXING A FLAT; MYOSOTUS PALUSTRIS; COELACANTH; SHARK SONG.* (71:57)
Personnel: Saul Cline, soprano saxophone (1-10,13); Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone; Dave Barraza, tenor saxophone; Dan Graham (1-10,13), Daichi Kondo (11,12), piano; Chris Frey (1-10,13), Matt Pavolka (11,12), bass; Cristiano Micalizzi (1-10,13), Sebastian De Krom (11,12), drums.

★ ★ 1/2

Rich Latham assembled his Oversize Quartet from recent Berklee students to play Latham's straightahead compositions. Liner notes indicate that Latham, a guitarist, now writes for his players, omitting himself entirely from the ensemble. The tunes can be pleasant, but lack color and variety. Little happens over the course of this album to grab or hold the listener's attention.

Thelonious Monk is clearly important to Latham, and "Monkfish" offers some interesting harmonies. Monk's "Straight No Chaser" recurs as a theme throughout the album. As soloists, only pianist Dan Graham and saxophonist Dave Barraza manage to create tension or inject personality into the largely interchangeable tunes.
—Jon Andrews



Kahil El'Zabar/ Ritual Trio

RENAISSANCE OF THE RESISTANCE—Delmark 466: *SWEET MEAT; ORNETTE; RENAISSANCE OF THE RESISTANCE; TRANE IN MIND; GOLDEN SEA; FATSMO; SAVE YOUR LOVE FOR ME.* (60:30)
Personnel: El Zabar, drums, thumb piano, vocal; Ari Brown, saxes; Malachi Favors, bass.

★ ★ ★

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de siècle culture has become that even those who defy the new norms of neo-traditionalism do so in a retrospective spirit. Take drummer/percussionist Kahil El'Zabar, a longtime member of Chicago's AACM whose Ritual Trio puts a crafty outsider's spin on material that's almost subversively conventional. Although the album's title seems to set a radical agenda, the title track itself turns out to be an impressionistic modal ballad in the wistful minor-blues vein of Gershwin's "Summertime," while "Trane In Mind" is a boppish evocation of early Coltrane.

Nevertheless, *Renaissance Of The Resistance* redefines the mainstream with wry turns, sly nods, and subtle winks, and its nostalgia extends from Africa to the avant garde. Ari Brown's rich-toned, blue-shaded tenor and soprano saxophones follow their own earnest logic, from Rollins to Ayler and beyond; Malachi Favors' resonant bass vamps or walks with offbeat authority; and El'Zabar's traps, hand drums, and thumb piano keep a deceptively regular beat, suggesting standard time in the *Twilight Zone*. Except for El'Zabar's straight-ahead vocal on the standard "Save Your Love For Me" and the dated, '60s-style blowout on Brown's "Fatsmo," this is a postmodern album all the way—a living, breathing, sound for jazz in the '90s that's informed rather than consumed by the past.

—Larry Birnbaum



Ron Holloway

SLANTED—Milestone 9219-2: *CARAVAN; MY SHINING HOUR; SLANTED; PENT-UP HOUSE; MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE; FREEDOM JAZZ DANCE; IN WALKED BUD; SHADES OF TYNER; AUTUMN LEAVES; I THOUGHT ABOUT YOU; SNEAKIN'*. (67-01)

Personnel: Holloway, tenor saxophone; Tom Williams (1,4,11), Chris Battistone (2,3,6-9), trumpet; Lennie Cuje, vibes (3,7); Paul Bollenback (1,5,11), Larry Camp (7), guitar; George Colligan (1,4,6,9,11), Reuben Brown (2,10), Bob Butta (3,7,8), piano; Keler Betts (1,2,10,11), James King (3,7,8), Tommy Cecil (4,5), Pepe Gonzales (6,9), bass; Lenny Robinson (1,4-6,9), Steve Williams (2,3,8,10), John Zidar (7,11), drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

Holloway's brawny tone, authoritative delivery, and soulful warmth serve him well in this debut.

At 41, the Washington tenor man projects a maturity born of gigs with Root Boy Slim & His Sex Change Band, Gil Scott-Heron, and Dizzy Gillespie.

The performances, with their tailor-fitted personnel, reflect Holloway's purposeful way with the modern-mainstream tradition: a barreling "Caravan," a Monkish title track, a blistering tribute to McCoy Tyner, and the full-bodied balladry of "My One And Only Love" and "I Thought About You," among others. Pianist

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Brown deserves special mention for his lovely
Wynton Kelly-out-of-Bill Evans intro to "My
Shining Hour." Trumpeter Williams is note-
worthy in his three appearances, too.

—Owen Cordle

ley's gruff reading over guitar splinters ("Art In
Heaven") to "Rawalpindi Blues." But for the
most part, *Darn It!* overcomes stylistic impedi-
ments successfully, revelling in the way Haines'
terse writing can endure so many different
kinds of interpretation.

—John Corbett



Paul Haines

DARN IT!—American Clavé 1014/18: *THREATS THAT MATTER; CURTSY; WHAT THIS IS GOING TO SUPPOSE TO MEAN; FUNNYBIRD SONG; OUTSIDE THE CITY; ART IN HEAVEN; RAWALPINDI BLUES; STICKS IN THE MUD; THERE AREN'T THESE THINGS QUESTIONABLE ALL OVER; LES PARAMEDICAUX EROTICQUES; JUBILEE; ON THE WAY TO ELSEWHERE AND HERE; INEXPLICABLY; POEM FOR GRETCHEN RUTH; JUST WHEN I THOUGHT; THIS DEDICATION; THREATS THAT COUNT; WHAT THIS WAS GOING TO SUPPOSE TO MEAN; BREAKFAST; SNOW VARIATIONS ON DARN IT!; DARN IT!; ROUTE DOUBT; ASK ME IF YOU KNOW; THOSE SWEET BLUE OLIVES OF BOMBAY; HELLO; MRS. DRESSUP; THIRD WORLD TWO MEDLEY; BREAKFAST (LATE); THE PLEASE FASTEN YOUR SEATBELT SIGN; TESTING TESTING; DARN IT! REPRISE (DOWN IN BACK!); THREATS THAT CAN'T READ; C'ETAIT DANS LA NUIT.* (46:56/50:23)

Personnel: A cast of thousands, including John Tchicai, Jack Bruce, Carla Bley, Don Pullen, Derek Bailey, Robert Wyatt, Henry Threadgill, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, John Oswald, and Kip Hanrahan.

★ ★ ★ ★

Kip Hanrahan's most rewarding productions to date (*Tete a Tete*, *Desire Develops An Edge*) have caught vastly disparate musicians, singers, songs, styles, and genres in a giant spider web of Latin percussion. *Darn It!* is more like a strand than a web: it strings together an outrageous number of artists performing one after another in a polyglot line that stretches from Paul Bley's solo-piano "Threats That Matter" through funky dance numbers by Greg "Iron Man" Tate to a duet by trombonist Roswell Rudd and Canadian poet Paul Haines. "C'Etait Dans La Nuit." Even its beautiful package, designed by artist/filmmaker/musician Michael Snow (who also contributes a lovely piano piece) enforces the compilation's linearity, unfolding into a long accordion of personnel and poetry.

Haines is the through-line. His poetry has been the basis for other musical adaptations, such as Carla Bley's *Escalator Over The Hill* and most recently Curlew's *A Beautiful Western Saddle*. Highlights include Danish saxophonist John Tchicai with Andrew Cyrille ("Those Sweet Blue Olives Of Bombay"), Robert Wyatt's lilting voice echoed with soprano lines by Evan Parker ("Curtsy"), and John Oswald's music-box cut-up collage ("Funnybird Song"). Some links are tenuous, almost untenable, like the transition from Derek Bai-



Jack Bruce

CITIES OF THE HEART—CMP 1004: *CAN YOU FOLLOW; RUNNING THRO' OUR HANDS; OVER THE CLIFF; STATUES; FIRST TIME I MET THE BLUES; SMILES AND GRINS; BIRD ALONE; NEIGHBOR, NEIGHBOR; BORN UNDER A BAD SIGN; SHIPS IN THE NIGHT; NEVER TELL YOUR MOTHER SHE'S OUT OF TUNE; THEME FOR AN IMAGINARY WESTERN; GOLDEN DAYS; LIFE ON EARTH; NSU; SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD; POLITICIAN; SPOONFUL; SUNSHINE OF YOUR LOVE.* (53:55/63:00)

Personnel: Bruce, vocals, bass (3-9,14-19), piano (1,2,6,11-13); Clem Clempson (5-9,19), Gary Moore (14-18) guitar; Francois Garny, bass (10-13); Simon Phillips (8-14,19), Ginger Baker (3-5,15-19), drums; Gary Husband, keyboards (2,10,19), drums (6,7); Bernie Worrell, keyboards (6-10,12,13,19); Malcolm Bruce, keyboards (6), guitar (19); Jonas Bruce, keyboards (9); Dick Heckstall-Smith, saxophones (3-6,8,9,11,19); Art Themen, saxophone (6,8,9,11,19); Henry Lowther, trumpet (8,9,11,19); John Mumford, trombone (8,9,11,19); Gary "Mudbone" Cooper (13,19), Maggie Reilly (10), vocal; Pete Brown, vocal (17), percussion (19).

★ ★ 1/2

A live double CD from 1993 celebrates this progressive rock pioneer's 50th birthday and many musical tangents. A familiar cast reprises Cream material, Pete Brown collaborations, classic covers, and more.

Bruce's music can be more morose, simplistic, harmonically awkward to the ear, and his jazz chops won't make anyone forget Patitucci. The funk of "Neighbor, Neighbor" is ponderous despite fine accompaniment. "Over The Cliff" is a painful remake of the bebop attempt from Bruce's 1971 Atco album *Things We Like*, with Bruce and Baker starting strong and practically running out of gas.

"Statues" boasts a new, hip, acid-jazz vibe, and the 7/4 romp "Smiles And Grins" is as ambitious as any Rush track. There's a rawness in "Theme For An Imaginary Western." "Bird Alone," from 1980's *I've Always Wanted To Do This* (Epic) with Billy Cobham and David Sancious, is upgraded smartly with the formidable Husband and Worrell. The highlight of "Spoonful" is a backward out-vamp from a still-feisty Baker. Gary Moore rocks hard on "Life On Earth" and "NSU," making Eric Clapton's absence less conspicuous and giving this "event" some needed punch.

—Robin Tolleson



Parallel Worlds

Dave Douglas

PARALLEL WORLDS—Soul Note 121226: *SEHR BEWEGT; PARALLEL WORLDS; IN PROGRESS; REMAINS; PIECE FOR STRINGS; BALLAD IN WHICH MACHEATH ASKS EVERYONE TO FORGIVE HIM; LOCO MADI; ON YOUR LEAVING; FOR EVERY ACTION; GRAND CHORAL.* (63:22)

Personnel: Douglas, trumpet; Mark Feldman, violin; Erik Friedlander, cello; Mark Dresser, bass; Michael Sarin, drums

★★★★ 1/2

THE TINY BELL TRIO—Songlines 1504: *RED EMMA; PUNCHY; ROAD/HOME; HEAD-ON KOUVLODSKO; THE DROWNED GIRL; LA BELLE SAISON; SONG FOR MY FATHER-IN-LAW; SHARDS; FELJAR; FILLE D'ACIER; ARABESQUE FOR CLARINET AND PIANO; CZARDAS.* (55:42)

Personnel: Douglas, trumpet; Brad Schoepach, guitar; Jim Black, drums.

★★★★

Trumpeter Douglas has emerged as one of the most intriguing young musicians and composers of the last few years. An outstanding player, gifted with a wonderfully fluid style and a deep bag of tonal and timbral effects, he's also a terrific writer and arranger, with a rare sensitivity for unfolding, mid-length works.

Parallel Worlds and *The Tiny Bell Trio* offer two distinct but complementary ways into his work. The former shows off his compositional abilities, utilizing an unusual, texture-rich string/trumpet/percussion lineup. It's bound to be saddled with the "third stream" tag (which Douglas didn't help by asking Gunther Schuller for liner notes), but *Parallel Worlds* has a simultaneous sense of drive and flexibility that classical/jazz collisions tend to lack. Feldman is brilliant, as always; check out his solo on Duke Ellington's "Loco Madi." Other non-Douglas material includes Anton Webern's tone-colorific shorty "Sehr Bewegt" (which segues seamlessly into the lush, startling title track), Kurt Weill's passionate "Ballad In Which MacHeath Asks Everyone To Forgive Him," and Igor Stravinsky's "Grand Choral" (taken from *Histoire Du Soldat*). The trumpeter slyly arranged these pieces to incorporate improvisation into their performance.

Douglas' own compositions are neatly arranged, often sectional, and use truly ingenious voicings. There's depth to the pieces; rather than playing solos off of heads, Douglas

requires soloists to weave in and out of changing written parts, not unlike Henry Threadgill used to in his sextet. The result? More for the listener to listen to, more for the player to draw from and refer back to. All in all, Douglas takes elegant, sometimes stately scores, and injects them with a big dose of vitality.

The Tiny Bell Trio is a taste of Douglas' looser, more bananas side. The title of the tune "Punchy" nutshell the disc—the group zips around wildly, zany, daftly. There are bouncy, playful pieces like "Red Emma" and "Head-on Kouvlodsko," as well as another Weill heart-breaker ("The Drowned Girl"), a couple of pieces by Joseph Kosma ("La Belle Saison" and "Fille D'Acier"), a re-arranged piece by Germaine Tailleferre ("Arabesque For Clarinet And Piano"), and a traditional Hungarian tune ("Czardas"). Schoepach plays electric guitar with Paul Motian's Electric Bebop Band and in the excellent trio Babkas (whose self-titled first record was also released by Songlines). In this context, he moves freely between choppy chordal comping, slinky linear soloing, and more extended string-thangs.

One thing *The Tiny Bell Trio* and *Parallel Worlds* share is superb drummers—both very young, both highly creative, confident, and promising. Black is more overtly exotic in his kit-extensions, while Sarin blends in brilliantly with Douglas' small-scale orchestral maneuvers.

—John Corbett

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Abraham Burton

CLOSEST TO THE SUN—enja 8074 2: *MINOR MARCH; LAURA; E=MC; ROMANCING YOU; SO GRACEFULLY; CORRIDA DE TOROS; LEFT ALONE; CLOSEST TO THE SUN; SO GRACEFULLY.* (65:30)
Personnel: Burton, alto sax; Marc Cary, piano; Billy Johnson, bass; Eric McPherson, drums.

★ ★ 1/2

Burton, 23, possesses a fluid, lyrical sense of phrasing, and his robust tone gives his alto sax the authority of a tenor, but on his first solo album he displays more exuberance than maturity. Three-quarters of his band, including Burton himself, are current members of Arthur Taylor's Wailers; the fourth, drummer Eric McPherson, works with Jackie McLean, who taught both McPherson and Burton at the Hartt School of Music.

Burton hits the ground running on "Minor March," a McLean composition in a Coltrane-esque mode, then downshifts into the balladic warhorse "Laura," where he sounds more like McLean. McPherson's "E = MC," another modal sprint, gives way to Burton's own "Romancing You," a bluesy, lilting mid-tempo romp. But the album's centerpiece, "So Gracefully," is an overlong and embarrassingly literal take on Coltrane's "My Favorite Things." The flamenco-tinted "Corrida De Toros" is largely devoted to McPherson's pounding drums, while the title track is a Burton ballad that sounds as though it had been stitched together out of several familiar standards.

—Larry Birnbaum

10

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"SUITE OF WINDS" 4

Murphy/ Spearman/ Parker

SUITE OF WINDS—Black Saint 120102: *NORTH; SOUTH; EAST; WEST.* (47:31)
Personnel: Paul Murphy, drums; Glenn Spearman, tenor sax; William Parker, bass.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

Recorded in 1986, these powerhouse sessions, made by a collective that called itself "Trio Hurricane," are released here for the first time. Brief, fragmentary, repetitive heads frame explosive, energy-oriented blowing. Little-known drummer Murphy was the fantastic force behind some of late, lamented alto saxophonist Jimmy Lyons' best groups. Capable of stop-on-a-dime precision, he's a muscular, energetic player who knows well how to make things varied and interesting while keeping the free-jazz ball rolling.

Bay Area saxist Spearman is a fire breather, a protégé of '60s ragged-power tenorman Frank Wright. Like Wright, Spearman has a harsh, hoarse, sometimes screaming tone. In several spots on *Suite Of Winds* he reaches beyond the horn, emitting glossolalic vocalizations; to these ears, this diffuses energy rather than bringing it to climax. When he's more restrained, as on the ballad intro (unison sax/arco-bass melody) to "East," Spearman sounds good, sinking into hefty, tenderly packed lines. The real kicker of this disc, though, is William Parker. Amid the bash-and-burn, he sets up and shifts brilliant little bass motifs that serve as rhythmic and harmonic pivot points; elsewhere, at opportune moments, he seconds the motion with sawing bow work.

Lovers of aggressive free music by Albert Ayler, Peter Brötzmann, or Cecil Taylor (whose music is distinctly echoed on *Suite Of Winds*) should take note, 'cause this is down your dark alley.
—John Corbett



Fred Ho

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO MY HEART—Soul Note 121267-2: *JOYS AND SORROWS*; *THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO MY HEART*; *AN BAYAN KO*; *KANG DING LOVE SONG*; *STRANGE FRUIT REVISITED*; *LAN HUA HUA*; *BAMBAYA*; *CARAVAN*; *AULD LANG SYNE*; *THE MONKEY THEME*; *THE PIG THEME*. (59:24)

Personnel: Ho, baritone sax, flute; Sam Furnace, James Norton, alto, soprano saxes; Francis Wong, tenor sax, flute, piccolo; Allen Won, David Bindman, Hafez Moderzadeh, tenor sax; Martin Wehner, trombone; Peter Madsen, piano; John Shiflett, Kiyoto Fujiwara, bass; Royal Hartigan, drums, percussion; Pei Sheng Shen, sona, oboe; You Qun Fu, erhu; Pauline Hong, san shuen; Veatrice Williams, Cindy Zuoxin Wang, vocals.

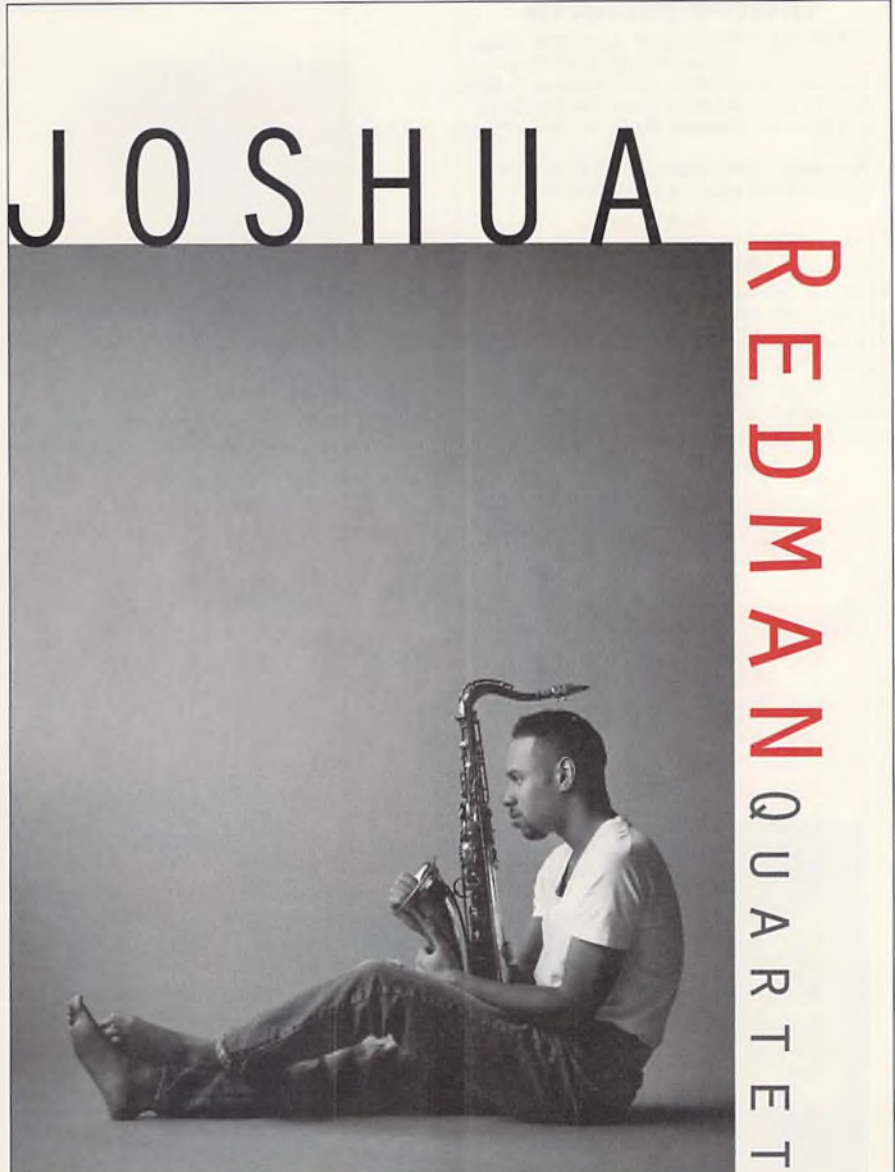
★★★★ 1/2

Fred Ho's style is a genre unto itself, a pioneering fusion of free-jazz and traditional Chinese music that manages to combine truculence and delicacy with such natural ease that it sounds positively organic.

Pei Sheng Shen's double-reed sona traces familiar Oriental airs against a throbbing backdrop of bass and drums on the opening "Joys And Sorrows." The long title suite follows, taking a jazzier course through Mingus-like episodes with whimsically Maoist titles like "Beware Bourgeoisie Boogie" and "Making Love In The Moonlight Before Socialism Comes." Cindy Zuoxin Wang sings "Kang Ding Love Song" in Chinese, then Veatrice Williams warbles "Strange Fruit Revisited," a postmodern version of the Billie Holiday classic, in English. Ho's

sonorous baritone duets with Wang on "Lan Hua Hua," and Sam Furnace's alto goes on-on-one with Royal Hartigan's percussion on "Bambaya." The Afro-Asian Music Ensemble gives remarkably fresh readings to "Caravan" and even "Auld Lang Syne" before Ho's other group, the Journey Beyond The Forest Orchestra, closes the proceedings with two striking Ho originals, "The Monkey Theme" and "The Pig Theme," stirring jazz, Chinese music, and nature sounds into an exhilarating blend.

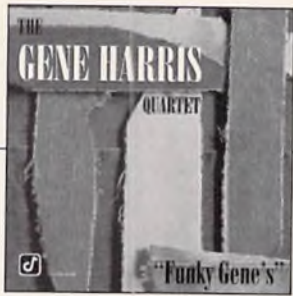
—Larry Birnbaum



M O O D S W I N G

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Gene Harris

FUNKY GENE'S—Concord Jazz 4609: *BLUES FOR BASIE; THE TROUBLE WITH HELLO IS GOODBYE; OLD FUNKY GENE'S; EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO ME; NICE 'N' EASY; AHMAD'S BLUES; BYE BYE BLUES; CHILDREN OF SANCHEZ; BLUES IN HOSS' FLAT.* (57:27)

Personnel: Harris, piano; Ron Eschete, guitar; Luther Hughes, bass; Paul Humphrey, drums.

★★★

Harris can overwhelm in the way that Oscar Peterson can overwhelm, piling climax on top of climax. He does that some on this album, but this is generally an album balanced by restraint. The pianist's forte is the blues, of which there are four here. He lays it on thick on the disco-ized title track, uses dynamics effectively on "Ahmad's," and shows his splashiest

style on the two tunes that frame the album. Eschete takes his time on these four, demonstrating that he, too, is a fine storyteller. He doesn't try to compete with Harris, and the group benefits from his more laidback style.

Harris applies a tinkle groove to the slower-tempo tunes: "The Trouble With," "Everything Happens To Me," and the easygoing "Nice 'N' Easy." Hughes and Humphrey are right on the money with the beat. Chuck Mangione's "Children Of Sanchez" is an atypically dark entry for Harris; even so, he keeps to the mood of the piece without letting the darkness overwhelm.

—Owen Cordle



Blue Dog

WHAT IS ANYTHING—Knitting Factory Works

152: *BLUE DOG; RADIO BOMBA; E=MC5; DUENDE (WESTERN SUITE); THEME/DREAM/RIDE/FLAMENCO/TANGO/TARANTELLA/BOLERO/AUDREY/TRAIN/THEME; MINOR THREAT; E=MC5 (RADIO EDIT).* (58:21)

Personnel: Mick Dobday, piano; Michael Graye, tenor saxophone; Erik Gustafson, electric and acoustic guitars; Alex Trajano, drums; Roberto Warren, percussion; Keith Malinowski (1), Grover Tigue (2), Paul Randolph (3,15), Jaribu Shahid (4-14), bass.

★★★ 1/2

A band for the cable-TV era, Blue Dog elevates restless channel surfing into a style. This Detroit-based ensemble takes its name from a gene-splice of Thelonious Monk's "Blue Monk" with Led Zeppelin's "Black Dog," unified by composer Mick Dobday's bright, deadpan piano. Gags, quotes, and non sequiturs fly by, alluding to the MC5, Bob Marley, Henry Mancini, and many others.

The spaghetti-western "Duende" suite references Nino Rota, the Doors, and "Fernando's Hideaway," all while showcasing Erik Gustafson's fine guitar work. John Zorn's Naked City and the "fake jazz" of the Lounge Lizards are obvious influences, but Blue Dog's transitions often seem closer to "shuffle play" than the logic which edits Zorn's jump-cuts. Both smartass and kickass, Blue Dog asks, "Can your band do this?"

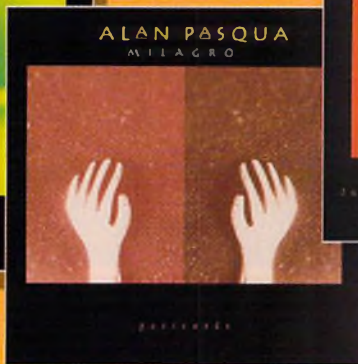
—Jon Andrews

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Benny Ad Hoc

by John McDonough

If you were **Benny Goodman** and had put your name on an era in American music, what would you have done during all those years after the swing era to keep your playing fresh? Would you have kept changing your repertoire and played a long succession of the fresh tunes? Or would you have stuck with the old ones and rotated them through a long succession of fresh musicians in ad hoc combinations?

Goodman, for the most part, did the second. And it did indeed keep both the primary repertoire, which spanned "Stompin' At The Savoy" (1935) to "Rachel's Dream" (1945), and Goodman's own playing remarkably unexpected; often, one senses, to Goodman himself (which is the way it's supposed to be). So while the following five Goodman titles contain little in the way of new material, there's a generous amount of very fine playing.

And nowhere more so than in Volume 9 of the Yale Archive series, *Live At Basin Street, 1954* (MusicMasters 65111-2; 74:18: ★★★★★^{1/2}). This may well be the best in the Yale series so far, a series sometimes a bit disappointing in its spottiness. Here his sound is pristine throughout and his time and ideas on the money. Recorded at about the same time and with some of the same musicians Goodman used on the Capitol *BG*



Goodman: at the top of his form

In Hi Fi album (regarded as one of his best postwar albums), these performances reveal a master musician at the top of his form.

Did I say a master musician? Correction! Make that at least three. For here also is some of the best, most crackling and driving Mel Powell of this or any time. It is remarkable indeed that the avant-garde paths Powell was blazing in serial and electronic music as these records were being made in 1954 never crossed over or even touched his jazz work. Be that as it may, this CD is as much a delight for Powell's work as it is for Benny's.

The surgical precision of third master musician Charlie Shavers' trumpet attack on seven tracks is very much at home in this tight, sturdy little ensemble, whether he is muted ("Don't Be That Way," "One O'Clock

Jump") or open ("How High The Moon"), though the schmaltzy Shavers ("Dark Eyes") is expendable. He adds a formidable and unexpected power to "Avalon" when all but the closing formalities seem to remain.

On drums Morey Feld is not afraid to pour on the bass pedal, lest anyone forget this is straight, ³/₄ swing time. And Steve Jordan's rhythm guitar and Israel Crosby's bass keep everyone in the groove.

Four Goodman world tours are covered, one on each of four CDs assembled in a set called *Benny Goodman: World Wide* (TCB 4301-2). All the material is from the collection of Kurt Mueller, a close Goodman friend and contemporary. I will rate them separately with times and leave you to divvy up the averages.



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The first CD, *Bangkok 1956* (63:26: ★★★★★), takes up Goodman's first important goodwill tour in the days when the State Department became a patron of the arts and jazz, a weapon in the Cold War. The band is vintage BG: three trumpets and four saxes. And when they bite into "Let's Dance" at an unusually fast tempo, the stage is set for a Class A Goodman set. Mel Davis is the principal trumpet soloist and Budd Johnson is marvelous in his tenor spots. Benny stretches out for a long "Roll 'Em," which makes no great demands on the band. But fans will note some phrasing elasticity with the reeds on such stalwart charts as "Don't Be That Way" and "Sugarfoot Stomp." There are three small-group sides and a couple of pieces by the King of Thailand that are arranged for the band and stand on their own as admirably decent pieces, not just one king pulling strings for another.

Next is *Basel 1959* (57:40: ★★★★★), which finds Benny in the company of Flip Phillips, Red Norvo, Jack Sheldon, Bill

Harris, and a fine rhythm section. Of all the TCB material, this is the only one previously issued. But its circulation was limited (Artistry 108), so few are likely to have it. Moreover, this presentation had three extra tracks. The material favors the 1941-45 repertoire: "Slipped Disc," "Rachel's Dream," etc. The version of "Get Happy" follows the arrangement used on the aforementioned *BG In Hi Fi* album, and Goodman is alternately probing, reckless, and soaring. But the one that steals the concert is a dazzling run through "Breakfast Feud," where Goodman demonstrates a truth of the jazz life that fans and critics often overlook: that the more familiar the material is to a player, the more creative he can be with it.

The third stop is *Santiago de Chile: 1961* (40:57: ★★★), where Goodman is in action with another big band along the same lines as in Bangkok. Buck Clayton, Herb Geller, Jerry Dodgion, Tom Newsome, and Mousey Alexander are among the principals, but it's not that well served. Although "Bugle Call

Rag" gets things off to a good start, three other tracks back a vocalist and the rest are unexceptional. There are several good small-group pieces, including a charging "I Got Rhythm" with some furious vibes work by Harry Sheppard. Sound, though satisfactory, is a bit murky in spots.

The final hop brings Goodman to *Berlin 1980* (57:50: ★★★½), which is the most relaxed and unceremonial of the four CDs. Here it's just Benny with a four-man quartet, none of whom are familiar to me. But that's fine. Nothing to prove here. Just sit back and play it as it goes and see what turns up, like the old "I Got Rhythm" riff turning up in the middle of "The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise." And listen to Charly Antolini's thundering drum intro on "Airmail Special." One delight here is the live dimension the concert hall adds to the sound and thus to the overall character of the music.

Any Goodman fan will want this four-CD set, and the MusicMasters Yale album is for everybody. DB

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Postmodern Materialist

by Howard Mandel

Bill Laswell: studio auteur and provocative electric bassist or hack producer and jammer? His handful of new releases beg the question.

Laswell's dedication to an ominously pulsing (if seldom swinging) beat, non-linear (ambient) structures, and quasi-collectivist (actually, directed) esthetic links the adequately recorded **Material Live From Soundscape** (DIW-289; 61:57; ★★½) of 1981 to the disappointing all-

tabla (Zakir Hussain, Trilok Gurtu), qanoun (George Basil), ghatam (Vikku Vinayakram), traps (Sly Dunbar), etc. The resulting surface exoticism offers none of the musical substance any of these artists' traditions offer in their unadulterated form. I find the whole long album *immaterial*, like a smoke screen—including its climax, a meretricious electric-bass version of John Coltrane's "Naima."

Similarly, pleasures of the Black Arc rock-funk series produced by Laswell elude me. *Lord Of The Harvest* (Rykodisc 10301; 43:05; ★★), which co-producer **Zillatron** (Bootsy Collins) avows is silly, sets garbled nonsense amid special effects rave-ups. *Under The 6* by



Laswell's Hardware: Stevie Salas, Buddy Miles, and Bootsy Collins

star studio session *Material: Hallucination Engine* (Axiom 314-518 351-2; 67:17; ★★) of '94 and *Asian Games* (Verve Forecast 314 518 344-2; 35:26; ★★★★★) from '88, wherein synthesist/keyboardist Ryuichi Sakamoto prepared digital samplers for willing pianist Yosuke Yamashita and Laswell-invited sidemen Nicky Skopelitis ("Fairlight, sounds") and Aiyb Dieng (percussion). Sakamoto, at the time involved with the soundtrack to Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*, produced little less than a third of the short program, and the delicate Japanese motifs are only sparsely embellished with Laswell's signature intimations of industrial noise—so bassist/sitarist/soundmeister Laswell here earns credit for a deft touch and some taste. The sound is crystal-clear and there are more definite beginnings, middles, and ends than on the sprawling Soundscape set "Chaos Never Died," during which drummers David Moss, Charles K. Noyes, and Mark Miller clatter against guitarist Fred Frith, non-keyboard electrician Michael Beinhorn, and Mr. Material himself, who lets them all flow.

In the decade-plus since, Material has become a per-project collection of improvisers and ethnic musicians who seldom play face to face. Laswell designs the settings and mixes the tracks. On *Hallucination Engine*, Wayne Shorter blows soprano as though influenced by Marcus Miller's last Miles albums. Also out front are William S. Burroughs, Simon Shaheen, violinist Shankar, and ney player Jihad Racy; bassists Jonas Hellborg and Bootsy Collins help create pseudo reggae, Moroccan, Middle and Far Eastern auras with virtuosos on

Slavemaster (Rykodisc 10302; 39:39; ★★)—hip-hop-hollering bassist Islam Shabazz's quartet with soul-psyche guitar ace Michael Hampton—will thrill teen headbangers deep into the Manichean heresy.

Third Eye Open (Rykodisc 10304; 52:34; ★★½) by **Hardware** (guitarist Stevie Salas, Bootsy Collins, and drummer Buddy Miles) is polished-to-the-format "classic rock" in the manner (without the originality) of Hendrix's Band of Gypsies: the lyrics, like the music, concern macho self-indulgence. On *Hell And Back* (Rykodisc 10305; 42:01; ★★), the **Buddy Miles Express**—featuring the veteran heavy drummer with two guitars, keybs, bass, and the Uptown Horns—hovers between anachronism and self-parody. At least Buddy's over-the-top, soul-sincere vocals on "Born Under A Bad Sign" and "Let It Be Me" win grins, and the sentiment "Be Kind To Your Girlfriend" bears repeating.

O.G. Funk's *Out Of The Dark* (Rykodisc 10303; 50:48; ★★) boasts ex-Funkadelics Billy Bass, Mudbone Cooper, Bigfoot Bratley, and Bernie Worrell joined by a clutter of guitarists and vocalists in gratifyingly limber, loose, and liquid Clintonesque party moods. Nothing they ain't done before—in fact, there are several familiar and, as usual, effective chants ("I wanna know if it's good to you baby . . ."). So one wonders what, besides his Brooklyn studio and staff, Laswell contributed, though he's thanked right after God.

Hey, someone's got to feed the maw of Moloch, and everyone's got a right to their own funky stuff. But Bill: we hardly know ye. **DB**

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Drums Lead The Way

by Robin Tolleson

This batch of drummer-led releases should, for the most part, put to rest those tired drummer/musician jokes. They no longer apply. Also dispelled is the notion that drummers' solo albums are either drum solos or otherwise musically incomplete. The fine music produced here is the product of musicality and "big ears" as well as drum chops.

Confidence and just plain joy of playing are traits immediately apparent on **Roy Haynes'** *Homecoming* (Evidence 22092; 62:45: ★★★★★½). The drummer pushes and pulls this music along with what he plays and what he doesn't, with his bursts and skids. There is a grounded feeling throughout with a strong balance of tom-tom barrages, kick-bottom accents, snare and cymbal flourishes. His melody and timing are showcased superbly as he trades choruses with bassist Ed Howard on Coltrane's "Equinox." Also on hand are tenorist Craig Handy and pianist David Kikoski.

Any thought of drums in the 1970s had to include **Billy Cobham**. Some of his solo albums have been brilliant, others painfully patronizing and ill-conceived. *The Traveler* (Evidence 22098; 67:42: ★★★), featuring keyboardist/drummer Gary Husband and Ira Coleman on bass, shows he's playing as well as ever, and maybe less. "Fragolino" shows off restraint as well as chops in several genres, and "Mushu Creole Blues" offers very interesting moments. Bill is concerned with sound and texture on this release as well as open pastures for his single-stroke salvos.

Peter Erskine is back with another trio record. On *Time Being* (ECM 21532; 64:29: ★★★★★), an album of all-original material, he often stays out of the line of fire, but blows wind on the coals. Some drummers may wish he hadn't gone quite so ECM on this one—you know, *somebody* play. It does get playful on the title track, and "Bulgaria" features pianist John Taylor as a sort of "outside" Vince Guaraldi. "Ambieside" displays a seemingly effortless swing and Latin mix between Erskine and bassist Palle Danielsson.

Strong and sensitive, **Cindy Blackman** shows off impressive playing and composing chops on *Telepathy* (Muse 5437; 50:35: ★★★★★½). The leader emulates Tony Williams' Lifetime-era work on "Reves Electriques Du Matin," while maintaining her own human voice in implied whispers on "Jardin Secret." She pushes a band that includes Jacky Terrasson, Clarence Seay, and Antoine Roney, airing it out and swinging with a real sense of knowledge and respect. **Winard Harper's** straightahead release, *Be Yourself* (Epicure 66368: ★★★), is an in-sync debut as leader after four albums with brother/trumpeter Philip. The drummer's solo style isn't really traceable, but is surely musical—it's joyfully rocking. He covers the gamut from laid-back hip-hop funk to hard-bop on pianist Reuben Brown's "Lil' Willie." He's cushioned along by estimable bassist Buster Williams, Eddie Henderson, David "Fathead" Newman, Don Braden, and Antonio Hart.



Cindy Blackman: strong and sensitive

The often understated Englishman **Bill Bruford** leads Earthworks in a collection of live dates on *Stamping Ground* (Virgin 7243 8 39476 2 1; 68:19: ★★★★★). The group showcases his fine groovesmanship and advancing techniques on tuned electronic percussion—the chordal drums play melodies on several tracks. This fusion doesn't try to be cute. It jams. He slams the acoustic kit hard on "Emotional Shirt," shifting from a mechanical funk to a sparse, clean pulse under Iain Ballamy's sax. His move from cymbals to snare and toms for Django Bates' piano solo gets a rise out of the audience.

Paul Motian is that "different drummer" of which people speak. *Trioism* (JMT 314 514 012; 48:57: ★★★★★) features Bill Frisell and Joe Lovano (Dewey Redman on one track) in some altogether atmospheric implied-time playing. Motian swings with the most fragile of grooves, mixing brushes and sticks on the opener. He's got a high sense of independence in all four limbs, keeping a cymbal barrage swishing under his tom rolls, involving the kick greatly, power rolling to punches, and making 62 sound real young. **Jerry Granelli's** *Another Place* (VeraBra 2130 2; 51:28: ★★★★★)—featuring sopranoist Jane Ira Bloom, trombonist Julian Priester, vibist David Friedman, and bassist Anthony Cox—is another great example of spontaneous composition. Granelli plays everything with class—rock, Latin, ballads with great touch on brushes. There's a freedom in everything, a swing. He seems to have a great sense of humor as well, and his music comes off like grand "B Movie" soundtracks at times.

Ralph Peterson's *Art* (Blue Note 27645; 56:57: ★★★★★) is one of two fine Blakey tributes out. Peterson builds incredible dynamic peaks, only to bring the drums to a whisper. Wayne Shorter's "Free For All" has tremendous lift, and Peterson gives his "Art Of Blakey" an unabashed spanking. The respect is evident in the bashing and listening done on "I Remember Bu." Noteworthy members of this quintet include pianist Michele Rosewoman and bassist Phil Bowler. **Sebastian Whittaker**

is another passionate straightahead player. His *One For Bu!!!* (Justice 0203-2; 62:04: ★★★★★½) utilizes a septet and has plenty of "swang." He swings over any type of feel, employing a solid "southern" backbeat and a limber kick drum to help with flourishes. Whittaker approaches the tunes musically, laying back at times to build tension. Alto player Jesse Davis, musical director/trombonist James Lakey, and David

Craig on bass lend ample support.

He's a big-band drummer, combo man, symphonic percussionist, and jazz educator. With *Signature Series Presents Steve Houghton* (Bluemoon R2 79195; 47:19: ★★½) Houghton gives a clinic in tasteful accompaniment, respecting the music and not stepping out too far. Houghton arranges for three different trios, then augments with horns. The playing is crisp but doesn't push the action. The drumming and arranging is too safe, too in-the-pocket for these ears. Houghton's octet includes Billy Childs, Marc Johnson and Tim Hagans, whose talents are given too little room to breathe.

Joe Morello offers musical delights as you'd expect on *Morello Standard Time* (DMP 506; 56:08: ★★★★★½), leading his quartet on rhythmic jaunts with excellent hi-hat work, well-placed bombs, and highly intuitive playing. His solo on "Someday My Prince Will Come" could be followed perfectly from three rooms away. That's the strength and focus in this master's playing. He can turn the beat around with any of them, yet much of Morello's beauty is in how he keeps the cat in the bag. Morello also guest stars on the **Robert Hohner Percussion Ensemble's** *The Gamut* (DMP 505; 56:48: ★★½), where he's featured on an 11-minute version of "Take 5" and "Blue Rondo A La Turk." Hohner's 14-piece ensemble breaks away from an overly arranged "chamber percussion" feel here and on two tracks with mallet man Dave Samuels. This disc doesn't present much percussive interplay, but "drum heads" may enjoy the African clavé, drum corps, and chromatic drum features.

Ed Blackwell sounds wonderful on *What If Be Like?* (enja 8054; 67:45: ★★★★★), recorded at Yoshi's in Oakland, Calif., two months before his death in 1992. Blackwell has a great supporting cast in Graham Haynes, Carlos Ward, Mark Helias, and Don Cherry. The drummer plays it straight, plays it wicked, lets it rip, and lets it breathe, and you can hear the smile across his face as he deals. Constantly searching the skies. Nobody ever played like him, nobody ever will. **DBB**

Celebrating Monk (Sr.)

by Bill Shoemaker

It's rare when one event substantially captures the gist of an era or a great artist's legacy, but a certain November 1981 event delineated both the emerging sensibility of the '80s and the legacy of the then-ailing **Thelonious Monk**. Finally issued as a four-CD set, the long-anticipated documentation of *Interpretations Of Monk* (Columbia/DIW 395/

buoyant and well-mannered lyricism of his youth to soar through the timbres he perfected during his European years only to boomerang back to a well-balanced landing on his original idiomatic turf. On humorous tunes like "Friday The 13th," Rudd mixes higher-order thinking and low comedy in a swaggering-yet-subtle synthesis of dixieland zeal and New Thing plasticity.

Two of the pianists were inspired choices. No one is better equipped to make the vital connection between Monk and Bud Powell than Harris. And, no one has extrapolated

already matured. Though his most innovative years were behind him by '63, Monk still continued to evolve as a pianist, gleaning the essence of musics nurtured in the church and the parlor as well as the saloon. Subsequently, despite very different settings, the two albums share a colloquial quality, though Monk's rollicking sense of fun is more rampant on the Newport set. Monk was far from stagnant, and his rapport with Rouse is key to assessing his vitality during this period.

With the addition of previously unreleased big-band versions of "Bye-Ya" and "Light Blue"



Monk: a classical tradition for jazz reconciled with uncompromising individualism

398; 50:21/52:24/44:28/58:39. ★★★★★) confirms the concert's legendary status, as it is one of the most rewarding recordings of recent years. The mix of hard-boiled discipline and playfulness this assemblage of Monk contemporaries, acolytes, and beneficiaries brought to Monk's compositions remains the dominant interpretative standard for his music—faithfulness to the composition is the most direct route to interpretative freedom. In doing so, they showed how jazz's urge for a classical tradition and its mandate for uncompromising individualism—a duality that's at the root of the current ideological rupture in jazz circles—were reconciled in Monk's works.

Monk colleagues Charlie Rouse, Ben Riley and Steve Lacy, '60s avant-gardists Don Cherry, Ed Blackwell, Roswell Rudd and Richard Davis, and pianists Mal Waldron, Barry Harris, Muhal Richard Abrams, and Anthony Davis never fail to give the ensembles tangy details. Lacy's sly voicings and Rudd's bead on Monk's roots in the music of the '20s and '30s are pivotal to several arrangements. These are compositions to dwell in, and this aggregation sets up house and cooks. Cherry not only essays the harmolodic implications of Monk's music, but he also digs into bop, blues, and torchy lyricism. Once a prime exponent of Monkian correctness, soprano saxist Lacy proves to be even more daring than Cherry. Halfway through his solo on "Four In One," Lacy makes a decades-wide leap through his own stylistic evolution, jettisoning the rhythmically

Monk's jabbing comping style and angular chromatic devices to form a more readily identifiable style than Waldron. Their inclusion were obvious choices; it's the presence of Abrams and Davis that made an impressive statement. They are latter-day by-products of the Harlem Renaissance-era push for classical standards that produced Powell (who, after all, introduced "Round Midnight" to Cootie Williams; Powell also recorded "Off Minor" almost a year before Monk). Their meticulous technique is palpable on their respective solos; while Abrams' "Crepuscle With Nellie" and Davis' "Monk's Mood" have the bearing of concert music, they also bare the soul of the music.

Still, for all the democracy fueled by Davis, Riley, and Blackwell (who was well-matched with Harris), Charlie Rouse towers above the proceedings. Throughout this Council of Trent-like marathon, Rouse talks, sings, and hollers Monk with unmatched effortlessness, melding the demands of Monk's compositions with plainspoken blues. His 12-year tenure with Monk was a distilling process that rivals that of the world's finest Scotch. As evidenced by two 1963 recordings, *Monk Big Band And Quartet In Concert* (Columbia/Legacy C2K 57636; 53:21/54:21: ★★★★★) and *Live At Newport 1958 & 1963* (Columbia/Legacy C2K 53585; 40:15/51:21: ★★★★★; a twin-bill package featuring Monk's quartet and Miles Davis' '58 sextet with John Coltrane and Cannonball Adderley), the Monk/Rouse collaboration had

and a quartet reading of "Misterioso," *Big Band And Quartet* serves the vital need for Monk's December '63 Lincoln Center concert to be available in a single package. In addition to detailing the contextual contrasts created by the program's rotation of big-band and quartet performances, the expanded program reinforces the view that the '63 orchestrations were more cogent than those used at Monk's 1958 Town Hall concert. Arranger Hall Overton reduced the low brass he employed in '58, relying more on the high-gloss edges and old-timey charm provided by Phil Woods (who doubled on clarinet) and Lacy (who, remarkably, didn't solo), as on "Light Blue." The relatively unassuming *Live At Newport* has the seemingly unlikely bonus of Pee Wee Russell's pungent clarinet on "Nuttty" and "Blue Monk." But where's "Played Twice" and "Bright Mississippi," announced by Willis Conover as part of the set? Given the disc's short playing time, an explanation is in order.

On both sets, Rouse brilliantly offsets a polished bop vocabulary with a simple, gutsy sense of line. Repeatedly, Monk lays out during Rouse's solos, prompting gymnastic sequences on treacherous tunes like "Evidence" (*Big Band And Quartet*). While Russell tapped Monk's early-century influences at Newport, and Thad Jones' Lincoln Center cornet solos (especially on "Oska T," *BBAC*) confirmed Monk's idiosyncratic modernity, Rouse's solos synthesize the two strains of Monk's music into a single voice—his own. **DB**

Guitar Blues

by Bill Milkowski

The basic 12-bar, three-chord (I,IV,V) progression remains the backbone of the blues. Whether it's a rural Delta style, urban Chicago, or post-Hendrix rock, the song remains the same. And yet, there is a myriad of variables within that simple form—particularly for guitar players—that helps create an individual's expression. Fine points like right-hand attack, left-hand touch, string gauge, wood density, pickups, amps, effects, and plectrum thickness all have something to do with shaping each note and forging a signature on the instrument.

Left-hander **Eddy Clearwater** is a forceful six-stringer who came out of Magic Sam but forged his own path. On *The Chief* (Rooster Blues 2615; 44:43: ★★★★★) he lays down some gritty West Side Chicago shuffles and belly-grinding slow blues that highlight his raw chops, soulful vocals, and earthy, humorous lyrics on tunes like "Find You A Job" and "Blues For Breakfast." And he may have penned an axman's anthem in the Chuck Berry-flavored "I Wouldn't Lay My Guitar Down." With Chicago all-stars Carey Bell on harmonica, his son Lurie Bell on guitar, Lafayette Leake on piano, and Casey Jones on drums, this cooking 1979 reissue session feels like just another Saturday night party at Kingston Mines.

The dynamic guitarist **Melvin Taylor** packs a little more sting and flaunts a bit more fretboard flash than Clearwater with his *Blues On The Run* (Evidence 26041-2; 43:51: ★★★★★). Backed by Chicago stalwarts in drummer Casey Jones, bassist Willie Love, and pianist Big Moose Walker, Taylor ascribes more to the Buddy Guy school of fancy, fleet-fingered filigrees than the rawer, economical approach established by Chicago Westsiders like Magic Sam and Hubert Sumlin. The reissue of this 1982 studio session (originally released on the French Isabel Records label) features killing versions of Albert King's "Travelin' Man," T-Bone Walker's "Cold, Cold Feeling," and two jump-blues tunes associated with Louis Jordan and later covered by Clarence Gatemouth Brown, "Low-down Dirty Shame" and "Just Like A Woman." Vocally, he's no Otis Rush, but this cat's got a lot more in his trickbag than most blues guitarists, as he proves on a sophisto-funk version of Kenny Burrell's "Chitlins Con Carne."

Luther Allison's *Soul Fixin' Man* (Alligator 4820; 53:59: ★★★★★) is a heavy dose of organ-driven blues-rock with soul-searing vocals, a slashing guitar attack, and an assist from the Memphis Horns. His first Stateside recording in nearly 20 years (he's resided in Paris for the past 10 years), Luther's latest picks up where Freddie King's *Texas Cannonball* left off. This is high-powered, funky electric blues for the Stevie Ray Vaughan/Buddy Guy set with a few unique twists thrown in along the way, like the African-flavored anthem "Freedom" and the churchy rendition of Guitar Slim's "The Things I Used To Do" featuring Luther's bone-chilling vocals accompanied only by organ. A welcome return for the Arkansas native and former Chicago resident.

A versatile artist who combines touches of gospel, r&b, jazz, blues, and rock into one



Luther Allison: searing vocals and slashing guitar

CARYLL PEARLMAN

dynamic package, **Joe Louis Walker** delivers the goods on *JLW* (Verve 314 523 118-2; 55:20: ★★★★★½). Walker's vocal style is firmly rooted in the big-voiced school of O.V. Wright and Otis Redding. His guitar style ranges from a sweet-singing B.B. King approach ("Inner City Man," "Alone") to a more frenetic Buddy Guy style ("12-Step Lovin'," "On That Powerline") and he's one of the more expressive slide players around (check out "Hold On" and the Stones-ish "Rain On My Mind"). The Tower of Power Horns add punch to funky numbers like "Lost The Will To Love Me" and "Hold On," a Stax-flavored Walker original with guest vocalist Angela Strehli. The Gospel Hummingbirds pitch in on the churchy "Inner City Man," which also features some soulful call & response tenor sax work by Branford Marsalis. This diverse disc closes on a countrified note with "Going To Canada," Walker's affecting Delta-flavored dobro-harp duet with James Colton.

If anyone deserves Stevie Ray Vaughan's blues-rock guitar crown, it's **Little Jimmy King**. An exciting player of scorching intensity, he shares with SRV the towering influences of Albert King and Jimi Hendrix. What's more, on *Something Inside Of Me* (Bullseye Blues 9537; 46:49: ★★★★★½), he uses Stevie Ray's Double Trouble rhythm section of bassist Tommy Shannon and drummer Chris Layton. He roars through "Under Pressure" like SRV steamrolled his way through "Couldn't Stand The Weather." The Hendrix influence is felt most strongly on the adventurous solo-guitar piece "Resolution #1" and on "Upside Down & Backwards," a reference to the way lefties Jimi, Albert King, and Little Jimmy King all play their guitars. The Albert influence is undeniable on Elmore James' slow blues "Something Inside Me," on a cover of Albert's "Can't You See What You're Doin' To Me," and on originals like the minor-key blues "Win, Lose Or Draw." Plenty of ripping, wah-wah-inflected, overdrive solos and smooth, soulful vocals throughout. And dig the cool cover of Cream's "Strange Brew."

Jimmy Thackery & the Drivers go after that same audience on *Trouble Man* (Blind Pig 5011; 43:54: ★★★★★½). The former Nighthawks guitarist screams with all-out, Stevie Ray-styled wah-wah abandon on raucous power-trio vehicles like "Doin' 100" and the title track. An excep-

tional axman, Thackery stings on the Albert Collins instrumental "Don't Lose Your Cool" and cops an authentic rock & roll attitude on originals like "She Needs Everything" and "You Came Back To Me." And he goes straight for the jugular on his own driving instrumental, "Hang Up And Drive," reminiscent of SRV's "Scuttlebuttin'."

The influential bluesman **Jimmy Rogers** kicks out some spirited Chicago classics *With Ronnie Earl & The Broadcasters* (Bullseye Blues 9544; 66:51: ★★★★★). A document of a 1991 concert in Germany, it opens with three instrumentals from Earl and the Broadcasters before the onetime partner of Muddy Waters takes the stage to "Rock This House." His gruff vocals and funky, finger-picked guitar work lends a touch of authenticity to Muddy's "Got My Mojo Working," Elmore James' "Shake Your Money Maker," and his own classics like "Walking By Myself" and "Can't Sleep For Worrying." Ronnie Earl pours on his trademark smoking guitar licks and harmonica ace Sugar Ray Norcia honks in a Little Walter tradition. And the rhythm section of drummer Per Hanson, bassist Michael "Mudcat" Ward, and pianist Dave Maxwell is strong.

More gritty Memphis blues from the **Preston Shannon Band** on *Break The Ice* (Bullseye Blues 9545; 43:40: ★★★★★). There's tons of soul in Shannon's raspy, Otis-inspired vocals and a decided B.B. King influence in his guitar playing. The Memphis Horns lend their authentic Stax/Volt touch on the classic Sam & Dave vehicle "I Got Everything I Need," on the Bobby Womack rave-up "Lookin' For A Love," and on Jimmy McCracklin's "I Got Somebody." And Preston quotes liberally from the Albert King book of licks on "Crosscut Saw."

Son Seals sings with field-holler intensity on *Nothing But The Truth* (Alligator 4822; 59:07: ★★★★★). His guitar work is searing and expressive, but he's hampered by the material here, which leans toward the contemporary pop-crossover camp. But when he's given a slow blues like "Your Friends," a straight shuffle like Hound Dog Taylor's "Sadie," or something like the soulful Albert King tribute "I Can't Hear Nothing But The Blues," he strikes with no-holds-barred ferocity. More of that on the next album, Son. **DB**

Punches & Probes

by Howard Mandel

Pianist **Mal Waldron** isn't *obvious*; he favors a locksmith's touch and artistic persistence over racy, competitive technique. Understated yet masterly leadership and instant responsiveness have characterized him through a long, still-evolving career; and he's created a provocative, revealingly beautiful body of work, among which are



Spinning all aswirl: Waldron circa 1970

these distinct yet consistently Waldronesque expressions of life, music, and style.

Blues For Lady Day (Black Lion 760193; 69:59; ★★★★★) is Waldron's compassionate, sometimes bittersweet celebration of Billie Holiday, whom he accompanied early in his career, late in hers. His musical debt to her is largely lyrical, though he also may have studied the great woman's genius for lagging, leading, *shaping* the beat—as well as the lick, phrase, chorus, performance, and all the dynamics. Waldron's concise solos on nine Holiday-associated songs establish his dark, dry, ruminative humor. He presses ideas for their secrets and conclusions; when they turn dour ("Strange Fruit"), he eludes despair. Like all pianists his age he's in Monk's shadow, but Waldron's own resources include unforced ease with "classical" conventions, rocking rhythmic drive, and a daring, unerring narrative sense.

Waldron's reputation as a solo recitalist begins with this well-known recording from Holland, 1972—and deservedly so. Black Lion's new CD issue now adds two 17-plus minute tracks he recorded with Dutch bassist Henk Haverhoek and drummer Pierre Courbois four days after his 40 minutes of solo work. One tune refers (in title only) to Miles, the other *ain't* the Beatles' "Here, There And Everywhere." Yet, the trio is exuberantly of its own era: Waldron conducts a free and equal triologue through a post-*Bitches Brew* flood of improv-relations.

The trio approach on the previously unreleased *Blood And Guts* (Futura 152262; 47:53; ★★★½), which expatriate Waldron, age 44, recorded at the American Cultural Center in Paris in '70, is more focused, even snappy. Bassist Patrice Caratini and drummer Guy Hayat are witty and capable of hanging with the pianist through his 10-minute essays that embellish brief lines selectively and probe with percussively insistent punch or syncopated gait. The ballad "My Funny Valentine" gets leaden, veering into "Old Man River," but Wal-

dron's "La Petite Africaine" spins all aswirl.

In larger ensembles, Waldron often maintains a field of harmonic possibility and rhythmic flexibility. High-energy blowers fare well with such support, and so do the melodically gifted—Waldron's *The Quest* with Booker Ervin and Eric Dolphy, and *Live At The Five Spot* with Dolphy, Booker Little, and Edward Blackwell, are the standards.

Where Are You? (Soul Note 131348-2; 58:58; ★★★★★) documents Waldron's 1989 quintet with Sonny Fortune (playing only alto sax here)

and Ricky Ford (tenor), two muscular improvisers. They twine like modally hypnotized snakes over his spidery lines for 22 minutes on indispensable bass anchor Reggie Workman's 9/8 composition, then waltz for "Marianne" that long, too. Drummer Eddie Moore, who died mid-solo six months after this session, is loose, buoyant, *on* as always. Waldron deliberates alone, somberly, on the title track (played twice), but his implacable waves propel comrades-in-sound against banks of harmony and rhythm to reach me. **DB**

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Songs From The Heart

by Fred Bouchard

Fred Hersch is the 31st pianist corralled by Carl Jefferson to play in the delightful environs of a jewel-like Oakland room. Maybeck Recital Hall (A: *Maybeck, Volume Thirty-One*; Concord Jazz 4596; 67:34; ★★★★★). One of many who've spoken of the

challenges of tackling a solo concert, Hersch, like Kenny Barron, is up to it, a-bristle with ideas and panache. His strong suit is a keen ear for superb melody, be it Ornette Coleman's, T. Monk's, or Cole Porter's. Ripe legato phrasing may mask his subtly off-the-beat measures and ambling lyricism, worked into familiar set-frames "Embraceable You" and "Body And Soul." "Haunted Heart" spins slowly out of pedal point, gorgeous, with a gently rocking swing, suffused in ruminative sadness.

On *The Fred Hersch Trio Plays...* (Chesky

116; 63:21; ★★★★★), the band takes brisk walks through jazz classics, and Hersch's personalized stampings—seconded by bassist Drew Gress and drummer Tom Rainey—are patently a far cry from fakebookery. (The three did likewise with Tin Pan Alley classics last year on *Dancing In The Dark*.) This trio thinks as one: "Milestones" whooshes in and out on brushes, Gress caresses "Iris" petal by petal, and they merrily dissect the magic of Monk's "Played Twice" and "Think Of One." Here, Hersch, ever with flair for spinning slow

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yarns, serves a lion's share of exquisitely controlled calm. The trio's Strayhingtonian hymns are a charmed "Mood Indigo" and languid "Daydream." (On *At Maybeck*, a lengthy, elegiac passage—drawing mesmerized hushes through "You Don't Know What Love Is" and "If I Loved You" before incanting "Heartsong"'s hymn to joy—explores the essence of caring and devotion.) Hersch plays as one in touch with all manner of emotion.

As for *Last Night When We Were Young, The Ballad Album* (Classical Action 1001; 70:16; ★★★★★), an album co-produced with Classical Action: Performing Arts Against AIDS (see DB Oct. '94), the music surpasses sheer quietude and slow tempi to reach a seamless, unrelenting depth of sadness, neither sentimental nor piteous, with moments of bright hope, clear-eyed and brave through massive experiences of pain. The entire album is cut of the same silk in mood, pace, spirit. Hersch plays piano except on George Shearing's solo for "This is All I Ask." Dave Catney's "Little Prayer" (sung by Sandra Dudley), and Tana-Reid's "Memories Of You" Cameos by Jane Ira Bloom on a quavering medley, Bobby Watson on "Soul Eyes," Phil Woods' clarinet on "Adios Nonino," and Gary Burton on "Lament" speak oceans of emotion; and Hersch's duets with singers—Andy Bey's sweet-souled "Nobody Else But Me," Leny Andrade's earthy "Quiet Nights," Janis Siegel's potently ambiguous "More Than You Know," and Mark Murphy's whispered, bereaved title tune—spell raw feelings of self-possession, passion, commitment, loss. On Leonard Bernstein's "Somewhere," Hersch sums up his case: be brave and strong through adversity. Aid the cause and enjoy the CD by calling 1-800-321-AIDS.

DB

Istanbul Jazz Festival
Esma Sultan Palace,
Open-Air Theatre/
Istanbul

Istanbul is where Europe meets Asia across the Bosphorus and where *caz*—that's Turkish for jazz—is resounding more and more. The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts presents an international festival of arts every summer, including a film fest, a theatre fest, a classical fest, and, this summer, the first-ever, nine-day Istanbul *Caz Festivali*. They struggled against economic troubles (a budget crunch that eliminated some of the expensive "names" programmed) and political troubles (a shoot-out with Kurdish separatists and anti-government terrorism from Islamic fundamentalists), but triumphed against all odds (there'll be another next year).

Istanbul offers essentially the same artists as established fests on the European circuit but hopes to encourage jazz travelers to venture farther. Istanbul itself is the appeal—the exotic East-meets-West culture, the exquisite mosques and palaces, the bazaars where shopping is an adventure. They're up against attitudes, even among artists, that Turkey is the Third World—and it isn't. "Some artists simplify what they do for the Turkish audience," said actress Emre Koyuncuoglu. "They think we're backward. They don't know that we're very sophisticated and very joyful."

Concerts happened each evening this past July (except for nights when everyone was presumed to be watching finals of the World Cup) at an open-air amphitheatre. After-hours music happened at the Esma Sultan Palace, a ruin reconstructed as an elegant bistro, where guitarist Larry Coryell played solo and guitarist Russell Malone fronted a quartet. I missed the opening night with Bobby McFerrin and the Cuban a cappella singers Samplings, but came in time for Milton Nascimento and the Toots Thielemans Brasil Project. Ivan Lins, Dori Caymmi, Eliane Elias, and Oscar Castro Neves all joined in a celebration of Brazilian Toots.

Others featured included the John Abercrombie/Dave Holland/Jack DeJohnette "Gateway" Trio and the Joe Henderson Quartet. Michel Petrucciani played some of the most imaginative and energetic jazz of the festival with a string quartet and Lenny White's drums as a colorful counterpoint. Another highlight was Noa, a lovely folk-ish balladeer in charming duets with guitarist Gil Dor. One of the lowlights was Marla Glen, an androgynous American growler of miscellaneous funk. Worst was the trio of Al Di Meola with Stanley Clarke and Jean Luc



Michel Petrucciani: imaginative, energetic

Ponty, whose "acoustic" instruments were amplified and synthesized into painfully loud Chamber Metal. Best was the reigning queen among jazz singers, Betty Carter. She

sang standards but was never in the least routine. She *worked* the trio (pianist Jacky Terrasson, bassist Eric Revis, drummer Will Terrell) through turn-on-a-dime changes in the tempo and the feeling of the songs, always spontaneous, always swinging. There was a serious wind off the Bosphorus that night—but Betty Carter blew harder!

Turkish musicians climaxed the festival. Maffy Palay, a trumpeter and favorite around the Istanbul scene, played easygoing ballads and bebop as if a Turkish Chet Baker. Okay Temiz, a percussionist with a battery of timbales, congas, cymbals, and what-nots, *exploded*. Okay's Magnetic Band featured traditional instruments, like the Turkish lute (also called an oud), alongside a clarinet and a trumpet. Rustem Gemberli played an hourglass-shaped hand-drum called a darbuka with flabbergasting fingers—an Uzi of rhythmic firepower. Okay's music is a "fusion" of Eastern tunes with salsa, samba, funk, and other foot-stomping, head-bopping, ass-wriggling grooves where "I" is never where one expects but is felt and is staggering. Okay's music was worth the trip—and Istanbul was worth the trip.

—Michael Bourne

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Technology And Drumming: Video And Beyond

by Will Parsons

Once studied congas with **Michael Spiro** in a large class where we would take turns listening and playing. During an inspiring Guaguanco (a Cuban groove), for which I was a designated listener, I spontaneously played a free-form solo. When we finished, no one mentioned my playing, so I asked Michael what would happen if I did that with the real guys. "Someone would hit you over the head with a beer bottle," he answered. Such are the ways of clavé.

David Garibaldi's *Talking Drums* (DCI, 88 min.), with Spiro and **Jesus Diaz**, uses clavé as its point of departure for three rhythm suites. These aren't common grooves: Guiro, Bembe, Yongo, Rumba Columbia, and Guaguanco in suite #1; Pilon, Mozambique, Comparsa, Conga in #2; and Osain, Conga Santiago, Merengue, and Rumba Iyesa in #3. This video has it all: fresh information, clear explanation, wonderful playing, and an enclosed booklet that includes all the basic parts.

On the other side of clavé, see **Airto Moreira's** *Rhythms And Colors* (DCI, 65 min.) and *Listen And Play* (DCI, 70 min.). Unlike larger Airto groups, in which he played percussion or drums, the bass-less quartet setting required that Airto create a tom-centered hybrid of both. This is a master at the top of his form: original, charismatic, and controversial.

Everything You Should Know About Playing Your First Gig (**Sam Ulano** Presents, 119 min.), **Bob Gaizen's** *Drum Tuning: Sound And Design* (DCI, 95 min.), and **Danny Gottlieb's** *Advanced Technique And Influences* (Homespun, 90 min.) are self-explanatory and excellent. **Joe Morello** could have used a combo to sharpen the musical focus in his technically admirable video, *Around The Kit* (Hot Licks, 73 min.). **Ginger Baker's** *Master Drum Techniques* (Hot Licks, 77 min.) connects the English drum rudiments with their African ancestors . . . thanks Ginger.

Both Letterman drummer **Anton Fig's** *In The Groove* (DCI, 75 min.) and Chili Pepper **Chad Smith's** *Red Hot Rhythm Method* (DCI, 72 min.) entertain without compromising content. Fig surveys shuffle styles, plays with a variety of groups, and shares wisdom and humor. For best results in Smith's case, get familiar with the transcription book/CD (Manhattan Music, 58 pp., 61 min.) before seeing the video.

The abundance of quality material has brought to video that mainstay of the record business: the budget sampler. *Power Solos* (CPP Media, 40 min.) features intercut solo excerpts of **Omar Hakim**, **Dennis Cham-**



Talking Drummers: Jesus Diaz (l), David Garibaldi, and Michael Spiro

bers, Simon Phillips, and Bobby Rock, while *Developing A Groove* (CPP Media, 40 min.) intercuts groovemeisters **Kenny Aronoff**, **Dave Weckl**, **Steve Smith**, and **Peter Erskine**.

Erskine's latest project, the sampling CD *Living Drums* (Sampleheads, 74 min.), was designed to create velocity-stacked sample kits that sound and respond like acoustic drums. Peter's control of nearly every aspect of the project is evident in subtleties like the right- and left-hand snare hits at nine different dynamic levels from edge to center of the head. For a Zen drum lesson, play the CD track by track and try to duplicate each sound and groove on your own drums. Originally written for dance, *History Of The Drum* (Interworld, 54 min.) exemplifies Erskine's use of samples, loops, sequencers, quantizing, and hard-hitting, funky, left-to-right through-playing.

Sampling CDs are aural meditations. Put on your best headphones, close your eyes, and listen. **Bashiri Johnson's** masterpiece *Supreme Beats* (Grandstreet, 252 min.) is a lesson in loop construction. Its four CDs comprise 67 loops categorized as Contemporary, Dance/Hip-Hop, African, and World. Each loop is presented as a whole and then broken into its component parts. While Johnson's approach seems intuitive, **Ernest Cholakis** is a mathematician of feel. His *World In Rhythm* (WC Music Research, 33 min.) is a collection of 22 r&b grooves and groove templates that allow both timing and velocity to be quantized to human feel.

Drummers aren't usually inclined to explore sounds patiently; we'd rather get busy. For a remedial lesson hear *Cymbal Sample Library* (Sabian, 80 min.), a two-disc collection of over 150 sounds sampled from more than 65 selected cymbals. For non-looped percussion you can't beat **Steve Reid's** *Definitive Percussion Sampler* (EYE & I, 55

min.). His *Bamboo Forest* (Sugo, 47 min.) provides a musical context for many of these same instruments in their acoustic incarnation. For the most sounds (1,125) in the last time try **Ross Garfield Drums** (Big Fish Audio, 55 min.).

Among recent book/CD packages, the CD often seems like an afterthought. This isn't the case with *Conga Drumming: A Beginner's Guide To Playing With Time* (Dancing Hands Music/Latin Percussion, 160 pages, 59 min.) by **Alan Dworsky** and **Betsy Sansby**. Each clearly

notated example of Tumbao, Bembe, Bomba, Calypso, Conga, Rumba Guaguanco, and Songo is on the CD.

Ed Uribe's *Brazilian Percussion & Drum Set* (CPP Belwin, 144 pp., 77 min.) devotes 43 pages and 35 minutes to traditional Brazilian instruments before moving to derived drumset styles. The challenge is to incorporate his perfect-for-looping, uniquely Brazilian phrasing of 16th notes. Nearly as comprehensive, **John Riley's** *Art Of Bop Drumming* (Manhattan Music, 80 pp., 73 min.) intelligently discusses and demonstrates comping, soloing, brushes, uptempo playing, lead sheets, drum charts, and "you'll-hear-it" (non-charts). The 16 quotes from master drummers add an inspirational touch.

Each year it seems there are more talented, non-reading drum students. **Bobby Rock's** *Encyclopedia Of Groove* (CPP Media, 48 pp., 66 min.) is a collection of practical rock and funk grooves and fills. Listen to a bar or two of each example and join in. Follow along in the book and pause when necessary. **Dave Weckl's** *Ultimate Play-Along* (Manhattan Music, 47 pp., 67 min.) provides a great-sounding, fairly easy transition from practice-room to real-world music-making. The book explains Dave's interpretation of charts in seven styles: Straight Eighths, Sixteenth Feel, Rock Shuffle, Rock Ballad, Latin, Straightahead Jazz, and Rock & Roll.

The looming year 2000 demands a re-evaluation of music: what's left to do? *De-tweevulate* (**Ivor Darreg** Memorial Limited Edition, 72 min.) provides 21 gateways to unexplored microtonal worlds, each potentially as rich as our familiar, equal-12 temperament. The sounds were samples played from a standard keyboard retuned by software. Odd tunings and unconventional setups are facts of life in acoustic percussion—just ask Airto. **DB**

1 Johnny Cash

"The Beast In Me" (from *AMERICAN RECORDINGS*, *American Recordings*, 1994) Cash, acoustic guitar, vocals.

[Two chords into the song] It's Johnny Cash. I know this song well because Nick Lowe wrote it. Nick, who was married for several years to John's stepdaughter Carlene, tells a funny story about writing it. They lived in England and Johnny was spending some time with them. Nick stayed up all night once to write a song for him and by 3 or 4 in the morning he was convinced he could hear Johnny sing it. The next morning, somewhat chastened, he played it for him in a small, wimpy voice. And that was that. John put it away for years until it surfaced on this new album, which is terrific, wonderful. The sound is great. Johnny's got such a recognizable style. I'll give this 53 stars. One for every state, one for the moon, and two for the outer galaxies.

2 Latin Playboys

"Same Brown Earth" (from *LATIN PLAYBOYS*, *Slash*, 1993) David Hidalgo, vocals, guitar; Louie Pérez, drums; Mitchell Froom, keyboards; Tchad Blake, bass.

I play this record all the time. I love it. I'll give this one 10 stars. David Hidalgo has such a great imagination. He could very well be a Duke Ellington some day. These songs are about real things, like people eating too much food and getting a bellyache. I also like the messing around with distorted sounds on this album. It's like getting somebody's home demo before the producer gets a hold of it and ruins it. This album proves there's hope for the corporate music industry, which was willing to bankroll this.

Michael Bolton should be locked in a room and forced to listen to this record for 10 years. No, I take that back. He should just be locked in a room and kept away from any other soul records he might cover.

3 NRBQ

"I Want To Show You" (from *KICK ME HARD—THE DELUXE EDITION*, *Rounder*, 1989/rec. 1975) Terry Adams, keyboards, vocals; Al Anderson, guitar, vocals; Joey Spampinato, bass, vocals; Tom Ardolino, drums; Donn Adams, trombone; Kelth Spring, tenor saxophone.

It's NRBQ, isn't it? Oh, this is great! Terry Adams is a wonderful musician. Inside that track, there's so much going on. The vocal harmonies sounded like The Band. The saxophone could have been from the Neville Brothers or Ornette Coleman. Plus Al is working on a Bob Wills guitar sound. It's terrific to get all that in one piece without

ELVIS COSTELLO

by Dan Ouellette

When Elvis Costello launched his punk-charged brand of new wave in 1977 with the album *My Aim Is True*, it marked the beginning of an adventurous career as one of the best songwriters in the pop world. Born in 1955 in Liverpool as Declan McManus, he was influenced by his parents' love of music—his father a singer in a big band and his mother a clerk in record stores, including one owned by Beatles manager Brian Epstein.

While angry, guilt-ridden rock songs filled his early albums, Costello's eclectic musical interests inspired him to explore soul, r&b, country, classical, even opera. He has collaborated with a broad range of artists, including Johnny Cash, Paul McCartney, and the Brodsky Quartet, and contributed to Hal Willner's remarkable Charlie Mingus tribute, *Weird Nightmare*.

Yet his most potent work has been in the company of the Attractions, the su-



perb band that backed him on all but one of his first dozen albums. Costello's most current release, *Brutal Youth* (Warner Bros.), finds him reunited with the group for the first time in seven years. Meanwhile, Costello is overseeing Rykodisc's ambitious reissuing of his entire Columbia catalog.

This was Costello's first Blindfold Test.

shoving any of it in your face. NRBQ is probably the greatest group in America. They defy all attempts to categorize them. They don't obey any of the rules. They're in that same alternative universe as the Grateful Dead. Did I give them any stars yet? They deserve 5,006.

4 John Coltrane

"Giant Steps" (from *THE JOHN COLTRANE ANTHOLOGY*, *Atlantic Jazz/Rhino*, 1993/rec. 1959) Coltrane, tenor sax; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Art Taylor, drums.

This sounds like it was made yesterday. It has an incredibly clean sound. It's not a new record, is it? If it is, then the sax player is doing something similar to what was recorded in the late '50s, early '60s.

DO: I'll give you a clue. It's remastered.

It's been incredibly remastered. That's not fair, especially after playing the Latin Playboys record, which was made to deliberately sound murky. So, I'd say it's Coltrane. It was disconcerting at first because it sounded too clean. I thought maybe this was a trick question, where there was something weird going on like when a Charlie Parker solo was taken off a record and a new backup band was used. Stars? Can I give 49 for this one? Coltrane was one of the few people who could play as many notes as this without becoming boring. When guitar players do this, I just want to shoot them.

5 Charles Brown

"B & O Blues" (from *THE SWINGTIME RECORDS STORY*, *Capricorn* 1994/rec. 1948) Brown, piano, vocals; other band members unlisted.

This is Charles Brown. It's an old one. His voice has gotten deeper as he's gotten older. It's wonderful. He's a terrific piano player, and he's got great style. His music is real, and it's got humor. I love his voice. He's been an inspiration to me. I've gone to a number of his live shows, and I love him. For this piece, I'll give 75 stars.

6 Charles Mingus

"Don't Be Afraid, The Clown's Afraid, Too" (from *LET MY CHILDREN HEAR MUSIC*, *Columbia Legacy*, 1992/rec. 1972) Mingus and ensemble.

Nine million stars for this one. It's Mingus. I love the tuba, and I love the burlesque element in his music. His work is the greatest. It's a bottomless well of music. I can't think of a composer since the '40s who is as imaginative as Charles Mingus. There's such a freedom in his music that allows for spontaneity. It's mind-boggling. Jazz is such a limiting name for what he did. It's truly American classical music. It's a great shame he wasn't as recognized as he should have been. DB