

# DOWN BEAT

*Jazz, Blues & Beyond*

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**CLASSIC  
INTERVIEW:  
Miles  
'64**

## Henry Threadgill

**Grabs a Big-Time  
Recording Deal**

**Joe Lovano &  
Gunther Schuller**

**Memories of Cab,  
Carmen & Jobim**

**Nicholas Payton**

**Mulgrew Miller  
Blindfolded**



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MARCH 1995

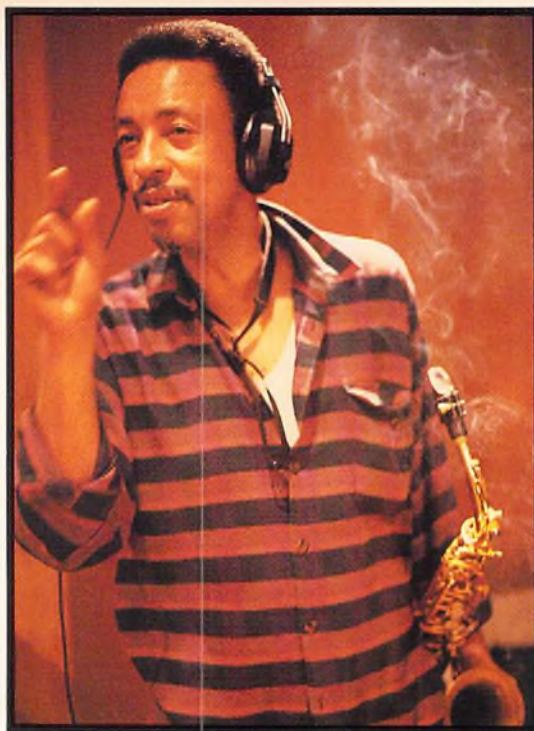
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### *Outside Moves In*

The outspoken nonconformist lands a major-label deal that means big-time distribution.

By Larry Birnbaum

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# MOVES IN

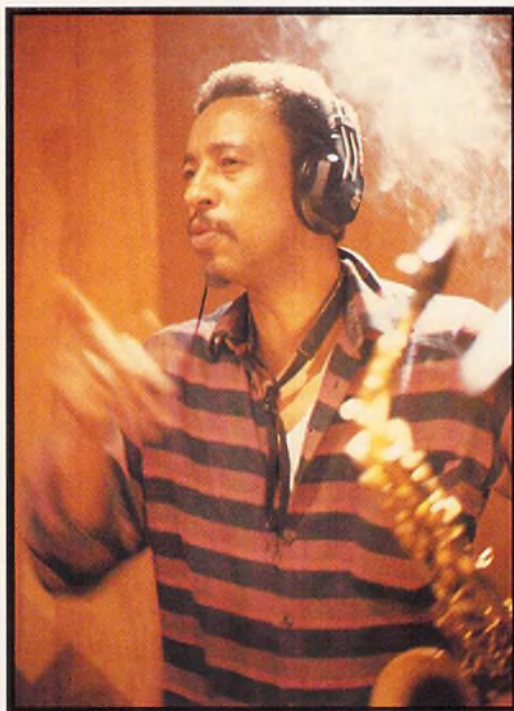
## Henry Threadgill Inks A Major-Label Deal

“I never did consider my music jazz,” says composer, arranger, bandleader, and multi-instrumentalist Henry Threadgill. “Jazz is part of my vocabulary, but I don’t do jazz specifically. I consider myself an international musician. The world is an international place, so I always felt my music should be marketed that way.”

In many ways, the 51-year-old, Chicago-bred Threadgill is the quintessential outsider, an artistic freethinker who falls between the cracks of established categories like jazz, classical, or world music. His compositions evince his experience in blues, gospel, Latin, reggae, polka and marching bands, integrating his global influences so smoothly into a singular, deeply personal style that they can’t really be called eclectic. Resolutely contemporary, his music looks forward, backward, and sideways at the same time, defying even avant-garde formulas. So when this outspoken nonconformist recently signed a multi-album contract with establishment pillar Columbia Records—the label that launched the buttoned-down young-lions movement he unabashedly condemns—more than a few eyebrows were raised.

“It’s not like he has offended anybody at Columbia,” says Steve Berkowitz, the A&R director who closed the deal. “It’s my feeling and Columbia’s that Henry is a great artist. His justification is to himself and his music, and we’re very happy to have him. Here we are, this gigantic record company, and fortunately there are people here who recognize the music as well as the hits. But Henry is his own complete package. He’s done all the work and made all the decisions. It’s our job to carry his music and likeness to a larger group of people, which means there has to be a marketing and press and sales plan. But the only thing I want Henry Threadgill to be is Henry Threadgill.”

On his Bill Laswell-produced Columbia debut, *Carry The Day*, Threadgill is gloriously himself—wry, witty, mournful, ironic,



ERIC FARBBER

outrageous—at the helm of Very Very Circus, currently the most prominent of his several ensembles. Reflecting his penchant for paired instruments, the group includes Brandon Ross and Masujaa on electric guitars, Edwin Rodriguez and Marcus Rojas on tubas, percussionists Miguel Urbina and Johnny Rudas, plus Mark Taylor on french horn, drummer Gene Lake, and Threadgill himself on alto sax and flute. The album also features guest appearances by Tony Cedras on accordion, violinist Jason Hwang, and Wu Man on pipa (a four-stringed Chinese lute), with vocals by Mossa Bildner and Sola.

Whimsical song titles like “Growing A Big Banana,” “Between Orchids, Lillies, Blind Eyes And Cricket,” and “Hyla Crucifer . . . Silence Of” only hint at the album’s conceptual breadth. On the title track, Threadgill’s alto squalls over a percussive Spanish chant; on “Vivjanrondirski,”

surrealistic lyrics weave through an accelerating twitter of exotic textures; and on “Jenkins Boys, Again, Wish Somebody Die, It’s Hot” the band charges furiously across a minefield of jagged melodic fragments and explosive rhythms. “Jenkins Boys,” Threadgill explains, was the fanciful name given to mirage-like heat waves that rose over the cotton fields of the antebellum South, where slaves never got a day off unless a member of the plantation master’s family died.

*Carry The Day* is hardly Threadgill’s first major-label venture. He emerged from Chicago’s experimental Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians [AACM] collective in the 1970s with the trio Air, which recorded for Arista’s short-lived Novus label, among others. After a number of independent releases, he followed the reactivated Novus imprint to BMG, where he cut several albums with his seven-member Sextett (see **DB** Feb. ’89). Very Very Circus first appeared on Black Saint, then switched to Island’s Axiom subsidiary to record 1993’s critically acclaimed *Too Much Sugar For A Dime* with producer Laswell,

gaining Threadgill his third top "Composer" award in **DB's** '94 Readers Poll in six years. Seeking an outlet for his orchestral works, Threadgill approached Columbia, which opted instead for the Circus, at least to begin with. "It was a little bit better budget," he says, "and more highly coordinated distribution, which I needed."

"Henry has built a base for himself in a lot of very different areas," says Berkowitz, "and the people who like him, whether you talk about [choreographer] Alice Farley or Ornette Coleman or Hal Willner or Willem Dafoe, are people who are into evocative, interesting music. Henry is an artist, and he's not necessarily thinking about a release; he's thinking about music. He's not going to have a hit; he's going to be Henry Threadgill. But if we can get the world-music marketplace and the jazz world and the modern classical world and the dance world to focus on him, then his audience will be at an all-time high."

For Threadgill, "There's a bunch of great musicians that can improvise in any context, and I've been meeting these people for quite a while. I just figured it was time for me to start working my ideas in on different instruments [from around the world] that I want to write for. It opens up so much more range for me, in terms of orchestration and timbre and color. And also the dialogue between different ethnic groups becomes very interesting." Driving his point home, Threadgill adds, "You have to do something on a cerebral, highly sensitive level to become cross-cultural; and then you get a third culture going, and I'm far more interested in that, because it has to do with evolution and extension, and it takes you away from incestuous behavior."

“Incest” may just be a euphemism for a word that begins with “mother,” and while Threadgill names no names, he is unsparingly critical of the very artists whose label roster he

has now joined. "There's an incestuous esthetic in jazz right now," he says, "and the ramifications come through in neoclassicism and all of these things that are retro. Retro is like using culture as an excuse, but there's something bigger than culture, and that is the evolution of humanity. Most people will first say that they are pink, black, brown, Catholic, Islamic, or something. But I first subscribe to being a human being, and when you deal with the nature of humanity, its inward motive is one of evolution. When one starts thinking on the basis of culture, and then to justify an esthetic that is retro and anti-evolutionary inside of that idea of culture, I think that's very destructive. That does not lead to growth and survival of the idiom or people. The strongest things survive, and when you get two strong strains mating, creating a third strain, then you have evolved to a higher level."

"When you study history, you see these episodes of retro thinking in nations and cultures, and hopefully this is just a period that will pass, because what's going on is of no benefit to posterity, and I don't find any benefit in it to the contemporary world. For people that say they're into jazz, that's really anti-jazz. All you've got to do is go back and read about the people who we consider to have been giants, and all of them would say one thing over and over: that this is not imitation music. It is not about somebody playing good. You've got to be talking about doing something new, something that turns everybody's head. It's about individuality, not copying. Buddy Bolden, Ornette Coleman, Charlie Parker, Cecil Taylor, people that struck out on their own—that's what it's about. It's rugged individualism."

"Now I don't have any problem with repertory groups. I think they're very good, because they're like mobile living museums. They give people a chance to experience the way something happened, performed by people that are highly versed in a particular era. But I don't think they should be presented as the

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vehicle of today. I think that is really counterproductive, and more than that, I think it institutes stupidity and ignorance in the minds of people. To try to play like Louis Armstrong, or even to write a piece of music and infuse it with a bunch of stylistic things that come out of the idiom that Louis Armstrong was involved in, it's like being in a clown suit. It's disrespectful, and it is a misunderstanding of the historical place of these musicians and what their music was really about."

Refusing to burn his bridges, however, the iconoclastic Threadgill maintains: "I've always said that the historical information of the music was where we came from. It was an improvised music, and we in the AACM never forgot any period of the music. We did not become stylistic in terms of any period of it but made reference to all of it. A lot of people thought that we were just mouthing things, but after the work I recorded with Air, the Scott Joplin and Jelly Roll Morton music, people had to look again and say, 'Well, yes, you do know something about that.' But I've been through periods, because I've got a body of work, and that's why you could say that some recordings during a particular period had a certain embodiment, certain emotions, ideas, thoughts."

"And music is connected to my social, environmental life. I always contend that art is not something that can be separated from the rest of life. It's more than musical curiosity; it's human curiosity. Basically, I am not informed by music. I get my information on another level, and I express myself in music. The music I listen to has very little to do with anything. I get more ideas about music watching theater or looking at some paintings or watching a choreographer work or reading a film script. That's how I get informed. And these are the type of ideas that I'm always concerned with that are prior to my musical thinking. My philosophical thinking goes to my conclusions musically."

Plainly, Threadgill is his own man, a virtual genre unto himself, but though no one can say how long his idiosyncratic music will thrive under a corporate umbrella, Columbia is optimistic.

"Booking this kind of music is not easy," says Steve Berkowitz, "but we are working with Henry and his management about festivals around the world, the timing of the release, and when he'll be through with the work that he's composing now and could be available to perform some of the music of *Carry The Day*. I hope that's what he'll do, but there's no guarantee that if he goes out on tour in what we think is support of this record, that he'll even play all this music, because he could be going on to something else."

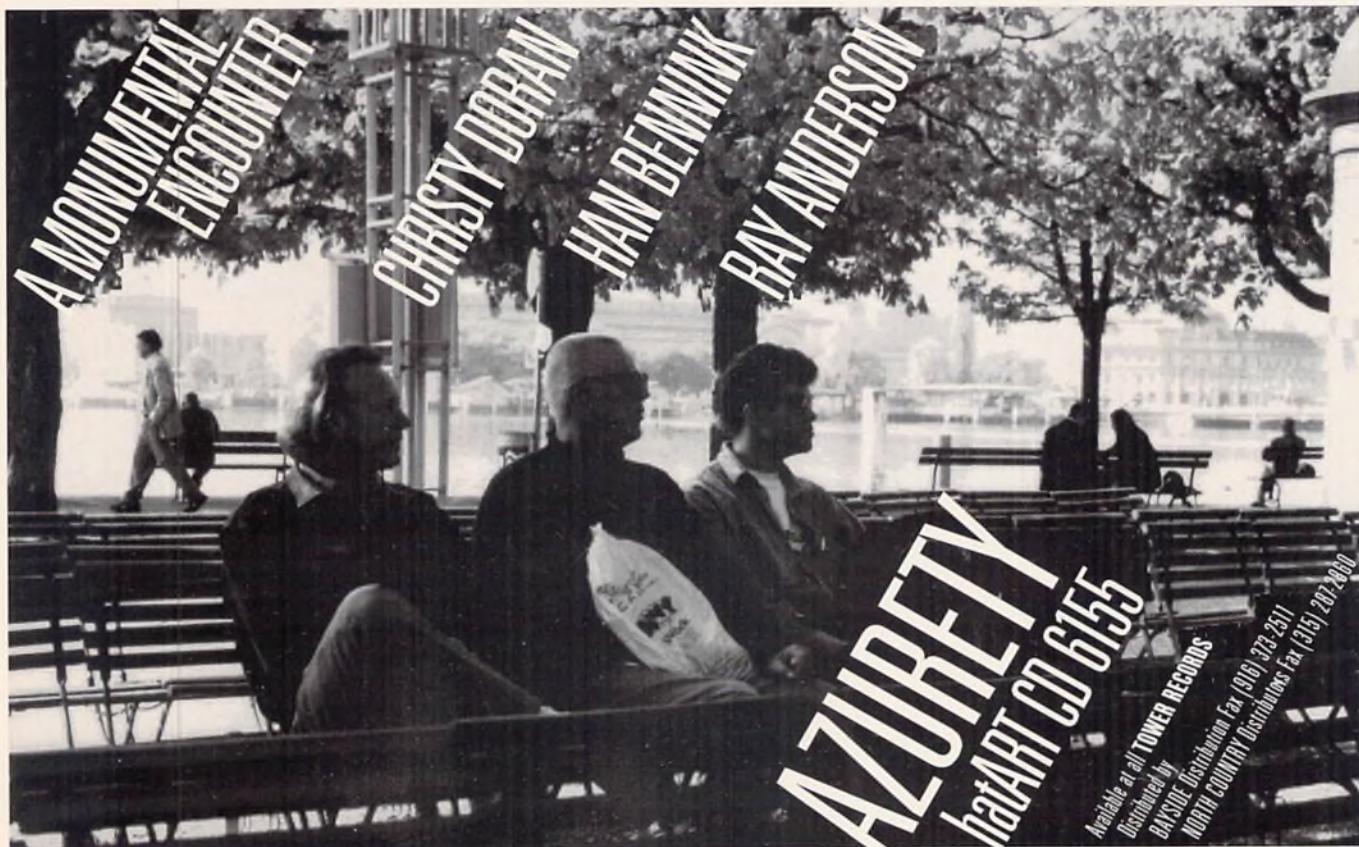
"I'm going to be trying to play a little bit at the release time," says Threadgill. "I will be touring; but touring is touring. I'm not particular about where I tour when I'm playing. I have no references or allegiances to any place on earth. I'm a citizen of the earth, so it's all the same to me."

DB

K. Leander Williams contributed to this story.

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

<i>CARRY THE DAY</i> —Columbia 66995	with Air and New Air
<i>SONG OUT OF MY TREES</i> —Black Saint 120154	<i>AIR SHOW NO 1</i> —Black Saint 120099 (New Air)
<i>RAG, BUSH AND ALL</i> —Novus 3052	<i>LIVE AT MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL</i> —Black Saint 120084 (New Air)
<i>EASILY SLIP INTO ANOTHER WORLD</i> —Novus 3025	<i>AIR MAIL</i> —Black Saint 120049 (Air)
<i>YOU KNOW THE NUMBER</i> —Novus 3013	<i>LIVE AIR</i> —Black Saint 120034 (Air)
with Very Very Circus	<i>AIR SONG</i> —India Navigation 1057 (Air)
<i>TOO MUCH SUGAR FOR A DIME</i> —Axiom 314 514 258	<i>AIR LORE</i> —Bluebird 6578 (Air)
<i>LIVE AT KONCEPTS</i> —Taylor Made 10292	
<i>SPIRIT OF NUFF . . . NUFF</i> —Black Saint 120134	



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# Orchestral Raps

## Gunther Schuller & Joe Lovano Discuss 'Rush Hour on 23rd Street'

By Bob Blumenthal



Variety of context, consistency of expression could be Joe Lovano's motto. When the tenor saxophonist makes music, the material and surrounding ensembles change from project to project, yet his melodic imagination and rhythmic engagement remain. The point was driven home during this listener's four live encounters with Lovano during 1994—playing standards with John Hicks and Walter Booker at Bradley's in April; leading his Universal Language band, including wife Judi Silvano on soprano voice, at the Boston Globe Jazz Festival in June; blowing hard with his more compact quartet at the Montreal Jazz Festival in July; and revisiting the legacy of Charles Mingus with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra in October. Each setting was different, and, in each instance, Lovano excelled.

Still, nothing has been as surprising as Lovano's fifth and latest Blue Note album, *Rush Hour*, where he collaborates with composer/conductor Gunther Schuller in a program that employs separate string and wind ensembles with Lovano and a rhythm section of Gunther's sons Ed on bass and George on drums as well as more intimate interludes featuring studio overdubbing. The eclectic program includes jazz classics, pop standards, and Lovano and Schuller originals.

For Schuller, the project marked a return to the arena of jazz composition after 30 years spent on such other pursuits as "classical" composition (including "Of Reminiscences And Reflections," which won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize), orchestral conducting, jazz scholarship (*Early Jazz: Its Roots And Musical Development* and *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz—1930-1945*), music education (he was president of the New England Conservatory for a decade beginning in 1967), producing recordings (on his own GM label), music festival directing (at Sandpoint, Idaho, since 1985), and jazz repertory (he co-directs the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra with David Baker). *Rush Hour* finds Schuller back in the provocative areas he explored in compositions for Ornette Coleman, Eric Dolphy, the Modern Jazz Quartet, and Orchestra U.S.A. in the late '50s and early '60s.

ERICH ANTONIOU

To discuss their joint project, Lovano and Schuller got together in the composer's Newton, Massachusetts, home. Given their initial meeting, it was the perfect location.

**BOB BLUMENTHAL:** *I assume that you guys met through Ed [who worked with Lovano in Paul Motian's quintet].*

**GUNTHER SCHULLER:** Exactly, but we actually met over 20 years ago.

**JOE LOVANO:** In 1972 or so . . . I was a student at Berklee, and Eddie was going to New England Conservatory when Gunther was president. I remember coming to this house for the first time. Walking through Gunther's library was just so amazing.

**GS:** We really met, though, at a record date when Ed wanted you to overlay a track.

**JL:** Right. The first time we worked together was on that *Life Cycle* album [1981], with Tom McKinley on piano, Billy Hart, Tom Harrell, and I came up from New York. Gunther produced that session.

**BB:** *How did you conceive of the project?*

**JL:** I was inspired by Gunther's music to open up my horizons and concepts of using different timbres and sounds around me. I love to improvise with other melodies and voices swirling around my ideas, so that I can draw from different points in the music and not just play from the harmonies and rhythms. That was the basis for having Gunther do orchestrations. I wanted to do some things by Ellington, Ornette, Thelonious Monk, and Charles Mingus; and I wanted Gunther to do these tunes, too, because he had a relationship with each composer. I didn't want to just do an album of some orchestrated songs. I wanted to get deeper into the beauty of the music and where the tunes came from.

**GS:** We were exactly on the same wavelength. If I were going to do a record like this, it would have to involve some recognition of the great heritage that precedes Joe Lovano in persons like Monk and Mingus.

**JL:** I wanted to do some other standards, which Gunther chose. Then he wrote three originals of his own, and I wrote some originals I could play as solos and unaccompanied things. I wanted to write my tunes *after* we recorded his pieces, as interludes that would be inspired by things that he wrote. That was different for me, too—recording three-quarters of the album, and then putting ideas together around what had already been written.

**GS:** I think I came up with the instrumentations. I had some ideas for string-backed arrangements, plus an idea for the original "Lament For M" with the strings. Then I made up sort of a monster 17-piece group of all kinds of wind instruments . . .



ERIC H. ANTONOU

"I not only had to get into my part, which was very free in terms of allowing me to improvise... but I also had to watch Gunther's every move."

—Joe Lovano

**JL:** With no doubling, by the way. Every instrument was a solo voice of its own, so you can hear every part so clearly.

**GS:** Those are more complex pieces; and part of the challenge for me was to use this mixed-wind ensemble with rhythm section while Joe played with and against and under and on top of all that. It's been 30 years since I've done anything in this area of writing jazz specifically for a recording session, the way I used to in the early '60s.

**BB:** *Do you take a different approach when writing a "classical" concerto for a featured virtuoso, as opposed to an extended "jazz" composition for an improviser like Joe?*

**GS:** In both cases, I write with the specific soloist in mind; but not in a limited sense, because you hope that others will play the piece. For the classical instrumentalist, the part would be written down and fixed. With Joe, while the parts are definitely fixed, I had the great pleasure of writing with the knowledge that he can improvise within atonal or even 12-tone pieces. The interesting thing was to figure out how much improvisation there should be against the written parts, and when these improvisations should occur. Joe goes in and out, from composition to improvisation, on the longer pieces. Allowing for improvisation is something I can never do in the classical realm, at least until now . . . and Joe understood my

compositions instantly, and then improvised meaningfully within them. One of the big problems in the history of jazz is that very often improvisations do not fit within compositions.

**JL:** That, for me, is the basis of improvisation: to play not only what you practice or think you know, but to deal with the material that's there. I try to shape my lines and my ideas completely around what's being played around me. There was a trio base on each piece, with tenor, bass, and drums, which keeps that creative improvisational line flowing through all of the compositions while the strings, woodwinds, brass, voice, and percussion come in and out. Another beauty of this date was that we didn't have a lot of rehearsals. We rehearsed and recorded the strings in one afternoon, then rehearsed and recorded the woodwinds and brass in one afternoon. I was hearing the orchestrations for the first time as we were recording, so my ears were *wide* open. Plus, I had to play under Gunther's baton, and follow him completely in tempo and dynamics, when to play and when not to play. It was a challenge, yet it felt really free.

**BB:** *Some improvisers would have wanted less writing. On "Headin' Out, Movin' In," for instance, where the written parts sound improvised, they might have gone for the same effect without so much notation.*

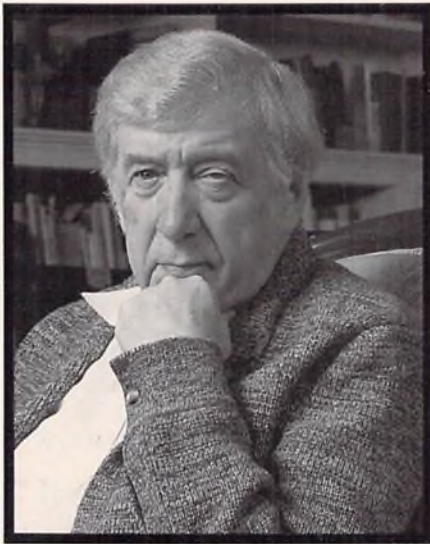
**JL:** That's a beautiful moment in that piece. There were all of these melodies happening, and I was free to improvise within that.

**GS:** We both understood that there would be a fair amount of composition, which would inspire the improvisation.

**JL:** That's why I wanted Gunther to do this. I didn't just hire an arranger, I wanted Gunther and his whole history. . . . He challenged everyone on every instrument at the session. Everybody was very excited to play their part and make it fit. You have to have a lot of trust to play jazz and improvise, and that was really there.

**GS:** I wanted to not only challenge the musicians, but also to raise the question of "whither goest jazz?" in terms of extended form and new forms. After not doing something like this for 30 years, I wanted to break new ground for how an 11-minute piece might be structured, including the entire range of possible expressions. Not in a way where you say, "Here comes the jazz, here comes the classical." Not as segmentation, but where it all forms one unit, whether written or improvised, coming out of the germinal concept. I also wanted to challenge Joe to do things he maybe hadn't done before, and to cover a lot of ground stylistically, from early bebop into free-jazz and all of the things that have





ERIC ANTONOU

wants to preserve the integrity of something previously created. I'm not saying that's the only way, but that's what I wanted to do as a tribute to Monk. In the case of Ornette, "Kathelin Gray" sounded like some kind of folk music. So I thought up this little ensemble of plucked instruments—harp, pizzicato cello, guitar,

orchestration evolves in constant variations. In most jazz compositions, you're always playing within repeat signs. **GS:** You know, you're right. There wasn't one repeat sign. Hah! I never thought of that. **JL:** "Prelude [To A Kiss]" is an introduction, the song, and an ending, one

**"With Joe...I had the great pleasure of writing with the knowledge that he can improvise within atonal or even 12-tone pieces."**

**—Gunther Schuller**

happened since then.

**BB:** *It must be a particular challenge to deal with composers like Coleman and Monk, who put such a strong personal stamp on their music.*

**GS:** Those two were the toughest assignments for me. "Crepescul With Nellie" is one of the most personal and idiosyncratic of Monk's compositions. Very few people play that piece, because you just can't fool around with it. Part of me always

bass, and drums—to accompany Joe on the soprano sax. I just filled in the implied harmonies I heard sketchily, then let the musicians play freely with them. It was the loosest of the pieces.

**JL:** Once we picked the material, I knew that Gunther would have a special approach on each tune having to do with the composer and where the tune came from, and then using his imagination to bring it further. All of these tunes are so strong—"Peggy's Blue Skylight," that was an incredible orchestration for woodwinds that he wrote. And if you check out each piece, there are no repeats; the melody never just comes back in at the end. Each

chorus. For me, it's like the orchestrations on a Frank Sinatra or Tony Bennett record, where they sing one chorus of the tune. Gunther wrote that way for me, and it taught me a lot about the *statement* of a song.

**BB:** *One concept you've dealt with for several years is the voice in the context of the ensemble.*

**JL:** For me, this record is an extension of my *Universal Language* recording, which is a working ensemble that includes strings, voice, brass, woodwinds, and percussion. Gunther wrote with voice in the ensemble on his original pieces and "Prelude To A Kiss," and also Judi was part of some of my pieces. We've been improvising together in a special way, and I also wanted that to be part of this recording.

**GS:** I used her instrumentally throughout, especially in those fearsome bebop runs on "Rush Hour." I don't know how she managed that. It's not a totally new idea; Ellington did it. Some of my classical pieces have singers who sit right in the orchestra and sing wordless things.

**JL:** The voice humanizes the sound.

**BB:** *"Lament For M," Gunther's tribute to his late wife, Marjorie, is the most personal piece on a very personal album.*

**JL:** "Lament For M" is a very challenging piece, one of the most challenging I have ever done. I not only had to get into my part, which was very free in terms of allowing me to improvise in and out of the part, but I also had to watch Gunther's every move. Playing with a conductor is a whole other trip for an improviser. We had to imply tempo, and there were moments of contrasting tempo, where he wanted me to play slow while other people were playing fast, so you just can't count off "1-2-3-4" and go. . . . It's also the dynamics of what you play. So many soloists just play at a flat volume in every solo. It's just notes at that point. I'm trying to develop a concept of playing with a deep expression. To play within Gunther's arrangements, every phrase has those elements. I had to go so far beyond the mere notes, to shape and be as intimate as the lead violinist.

**BB:** *How does music of this type gain a life beyond the recording session?*

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**GS:** That's the big question, whether it can or will. I don't see that much interest in taking risks and programming challenging music, and the relatively large instrumentations make it prohibitive just from a financial point of view. I like to think that some of these pieces represent a step forward, some things jazz needs to do more of—because jazz is now capable of it, technically. I hope these pieces can inspire other musicians to do similar things, because in a certain way, certain things that we thought would be developed in the early '60s when Ornette, Eric, and Coltrane came on the scene haven't happened, except in individual cases like Mingus. I'm just putting my foot in the water again and saying here are some possibilities.

**JL:** I'm just proud that I was able to organize, produce, and put this session together. It's an outgrowth of my life in the music, not a departure from where I've been.

**GS:** I could say the same thing, that this does not indicate a departure. I've been doing things like this my whole life. This is just the latest version of those ideas, and I'd sure love to do more; but there aren't too many Joe Lovanos around. **DB**

#### EQUIPMENT

Joe Lovano reports, "For this session, I played my Selmer Balanced Action tenor with a handmade wooden mouthpiece by Francois Louis and a #4 Prestini reed. The soprano sax is a Selmer Super Action series III, with a handmade silver mouthpiece also by Francois and a #4 Hemke reed. My bass clarinet is a Buffet, with a Vandoren B46 mouthpiece and a Vandoren medium-hard reed.

"The drum set is one I've had for years—Ludwig drums, a combination of K and A. Zildjian cymbals, a Paiste dark-ride cymbal, and Jack DeJohnette hi-hats." Lovano also uses Shure clip-on condenser microphones.

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

##### Joe Lovano

(See **DB** March '93 for additional listings.)

*RUSH HOUR*—Blue Note 29269 (Gunter Schuller)

*TENOR LEGACY*—Blue Note 27014

with various others

*DANILO PEREZ*—Novus 63148

*EXCURSIONS*—Arabesque 106 (Ray Drummond)

*AVENUE 'U'*—enja 6046 (Peter O'Mara)

*UPSWING*—Chesky 103 (Tom Harrell)

*LOOKIN' UP FROM DOWN BELOW*—GM 3013 (George Schuller)

*DAZZLING DAYS*—Verve 521 303 (Yosuke Yamashita)

*TRIOISM*—JMT 314 514 012 (Paul Motian)

*THE EARTH WANTS YOU*—Blue Note 27640 (Mose Allison)

*NO WORDS*—Blue Note 89680 (Tim Hagans)

*REAL BOOK*—XTRAWATT/7 (Steve Swallow)

*LIFE CYCLE*—GM 3001 (Tom McKinley, Ed Schuller)

##### Gunter Schuller

(with various others)

*BEAUTY IS A RARE THING: THE COMPLETE ATLANTIC RECORDINGS*—Rhino/Atlantic 71410 (Ornette Coleman)

*JUMPIN' IN THE FUTURE*—GM 3010 (Orange Then Blue)

*VINTAGE DOLPHY*—GM 3005 (Eric Dolphy)

*THE MODERN JAZZ QUARTET AND ORCHESTRA*—Atlantic SD-1359 (out of print)

*JAZZ JOURNEY*—Columbia CS2247 (Orchestra U.S.A., out of print)

*MODERN JAZZ CONCERT*—Columbia WL 127 (out of print)

*THIRD STREAM MUSIC*—Atlantic SD-1345 (Modern Jazz Quartet, out of print)

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# The End of Three Vocal Eras

*Farewell to Cab Calloway, Antonio Carlos Jobim, and Carmen McRae*

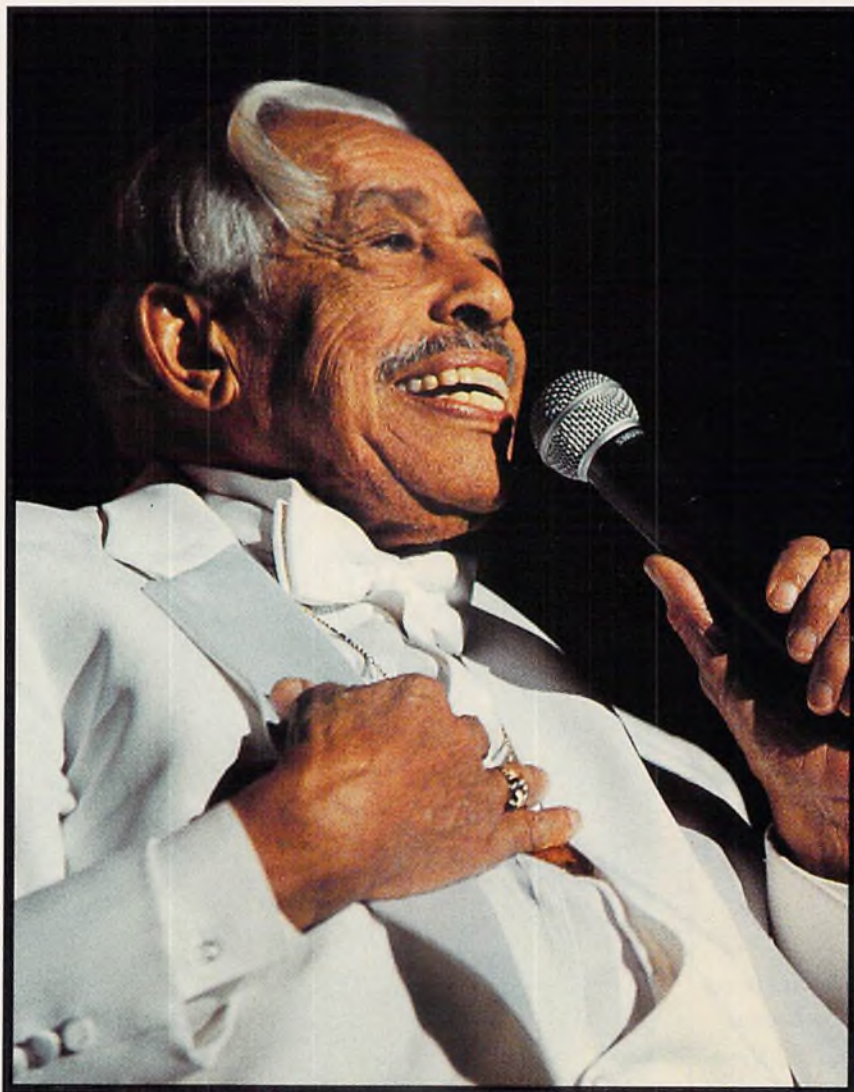
By Dave Helland

**T**he link between entertainer Cab Calloway, songwriter Antonio Carlos Jobim, and vocalist Carmen McRae—all of whom died last fall (see "Final Bar" Feb. '95)—is jazz and the popular song. Their careers illustrate the resiliency of that combination, which was the basis of their radically different styles.

Calloway was the archetype of the hepcat—the look, the lingo, the moves—that has been the basis of a stock character in American culture from *Porgy And Bess* to *The Mask*. What is overlooked in face of his novelty vocals and gyrations is that he did it to a backdrop of big-band jazz played by some of the finest soloists of the swing era.

Jobim once claimed to have learned the melodies for his pop tunes from the birds of the Brazilian forests. Combined with the rhythms of the samba and cool jazz, they became the bossa nova. In the United States these tunes were made popular—made into a craze—by jazz musicians.

As much as any other pianist, McRae improvised on the American popular song. But unlike many jazz singers, she remained true to the lyricist's intent. She found the balance between improvisation and arrangement that is the foundation of



Cab Calloway

swinging jazz.

These three were each one-of-a-kind. If their passing represents the end of an era, it is in the same sense as that there will never be another Magellan, another Lindbergh, another Hillary—at least not on this earth—while people continue to circle the globe, fly the Atlantic, scale Mt. Everest. Singers will still sing, and audiences won't stop enjoying the antics of a crazy-legged boy, but the path finders are gone.

dancing." Calloway had three costume changes a night. While dancers, a comedian, or the hot combo called the Cab Drivers did their turn in the revue, Calloway's valet (there were two more for the band) would change him from all-white tux, shirt, tie, shoes, and socks to powder-blue. Later, he would switch to all-tan tux, shirt, shoes, etc.

Jones remained until Cab disbanded in the early '50s. "I stayed with him for 11

**I**n a career that stretched from Betty Boop cartoons to Janet Jackson videos, Cab Calloway played the hepcat with the glide in his stride and a rap all his own. For 60 years, Calloway was the crazy-legged boy in a zoot suit singing the praises of the hustling life. He is the model for Harry the Hipster Gibson and Kid Creole. *The Mask*, with its star Jim Carrey dressed in a tasteful canary yellow suit singing "Cuban Pete," owes its look and music to Cab Calloway.

"I've never seen nobody do what he did on stage, how he would break the house up," remembers trumpeter Jonah Jones, who joined Calloway's big band in 1941 after stints with Fletcher Henderson, Benny Carter, and Stuff Smith. "Everybody was watching him whether they were sitting in a theater or on the floor

BY ANDREW LEPPLEY

years," says Jones, "and I never got tired of looking at him."

"Cab was an entertainer and dancer," explains bassist Milt Hinton, who recounted his experiences in the band. "He had to have musicians that read music and played well enough so that it would be the same every night. Cab ran a very disciplined band."

Hinton adds: "His ego made him believe that since he was so successful, he was a musician. Sometimes with all these fine musicians in his band, he'd say, 'Give me that part. Let me see what that looks like.' We knew damn well he didn't read music. He was trying to irritate us."

All but forgotten is that as a vocalist, Cab Calloway was "the most unusually and broadly gifted male singer of the '30s," so notes Gunther Schuller in his epic *The Swing Era* (Oxford), and "a true jazz musician and as such surrounded himself with a real jazz orchestra, something no other band-leading vocalist cared (or managed) to do." Schuller makes the case that Calloway led not just one of the most popular big bands of the era, but also one of the best jazz recording bands in the style of Fletcher Henderson, with a roster that included saxophonists Chu Berry, Illinois Jacquet, and Eddie Barefield, Hinton, trumpeters Jones and Doc Cheatham, drummers Cozy Cole and J.C. Heard, as well as the youthful Dizzy Gillespie. Recordings of even the most outrageous novelty tunes had inventive arrangements that offered solo space interspersed throughout as well as obligatos to play behind Calloway's vocals. The repertoire included popular ballads and sentimental songs, not just the ditties about Minnie and her reefer-smokin' friends for which he is best remembered.

"They were good swing arrangements, a lot of fun to play," remembers Cheatham, who left McKinney's Cotton Pickers for the Cotton Club in 1933. Two years earlier Calloway had replaced Duke Ellington, who made his reputation at the Harlem nightclub, long famous for its elaborate shows. But the music for these shows was something else entirely, offering a swinging but strictly programmed backdrop to Calloway's antics. "The music was built around his actions. Every step he made, there was a note played," says Cheatham.

A "professional disciplinarian" is how Hinton describes Calloway, who nonetheless kept his best sidemen for years. Here's how he kept them happy: He sent them to his tailor, picking up the tab for their uniforms as well as for a theatrical trunk with their name



Antonio Carlos Jobim

embossed on it (Jones still has his). Calloway had a private baggage car that trailed his private Pullman Car—half for himself and half for the band.

When they arrived in town, the two cars would be sidetracked while band members headed for the best lodging available to colored musicians. Pay was \$100 week when Hinton joined in 1936 and roughly tripled over the next 15 years. Calloway wouldn't work for anyone on his Christmas-Day birthday, so about the 23rd of December each man got his week's pay, a Christmas bonus, and train tickets home and from their individual homes to Chicago, where Cab had a longstanding New Year's Eve booking. The band took the month of August off with two to four weeks' pay, depending on tenure.

Calloway's film career began in the '30s and included *Stormy Weather* with Lena Horn, another Cotton Club alum. She credited him with coaching her before the filming of her big number, the title tune. In the mid-'60s, he had a straight-acting role in *Cincinnati Kid* starring Steve McQueen. In 1980's *The Blues Brothers*, Calloway played the janitor in the orphanage where Jake and Elwood were raised. For Calloway's number "Minnie The Moocher," film director John Landis wanted to recapture the original. Calloway wanted to cut it as a disco number and was not happy when he arrived—dressed in a velour jump suit and big gold medallion—to record his vocal over the band tracks.

"He wouldn't have it; he was very put out," remembers Landis. "I remember the litany. He had done it as a swing number, as boogie-boogie, as dixieland, as a rhumba. He thought we were incredibly old-fashioned."

Certain music opens a door into time and space—it's practically Proustian. Hear good dixieland jazz and you're in Chicago during Prohibition. Gershwin is a cab ride to Manhattan in the '30s. Can Can music is the railway to Paris during the Second Empire in the mid-'19th century, while Mahler takes you to Vienna at the turn of the century. The bossa nova is a flight to Rio in the '50s when the metropolis was poised to become the New York City of the Southern Hemisphere.

This key to Brazil when it was happy was crafted by Antonio Carlos Jobim, who died Dec. 8 of heart failure in Manhattan at age 67. In the late '40s, the inspiration of Duke Ellington and other jazz musicians who performed in Rio led Jobim from a career as an architect to one in music. Living in a bohemian section of Rio called Ipanema, he composed, and the poets who frequented the same cafes wrote lyrics to his songs. In 1958, as music director of Odeon Records, Jobim produced a record of his own songs sung by Jaao Gilberto. The 1959 movie *Black Orpheus*, with a soundtrack by Jobim, was a worldwide hit and won an Oscar. The stage was set for the most fertile crossbreeding between jazz and the American popular song since the '30s.

The bossa nova was no surprise to certain jazz musicians, who had heard these songs on trips to Rio, learned a few in jam sessions, and brought tapes back to the States. Among these was guitarist Charlie Byrd, who also heard Gilberto on Washington, D.C.-disc jockey Felix Grant's jazz show.

Byrd had made some attempts to record Jobim's songs, but he couldn't interest a producer. Listening to Stan

Getz one night in a D.C. jazz club, Byrd's wife suggested that since Getz was a very lyrical player, he'd be perfect for the recording. Getz agreed after he'd heard the tunes, and they recorded *Jazz Samba* (Verve). "Desafinado" subsequently won a Grammy in 1962.

What made Jobim's tunes so popular among jazz musicians? "Who the hell knows what a good tune is?" replies Byrd. "Jobim knew; so did Irving Berlin. Also, he was a fine craftsman. His tunes are all carefully put together, and that is appealing to musicians. Finally, he himself had made some of the amalgamation between Brazilian and [North] American music. His tunes have more of an American form and get into the kind of harmony jazz composers like Jimmy Van Heusen were using."

"The main reason that we were attracted to this music is that it is so good to improvise on," explains flutist Herbie Mann, who went to Brazil after he heard *Jazz Samba* and was the first to record with local musicians there. "At that point, I had an Afro-Cuban band playing on two chords, and it was driving me insane. What do you do with those two chords? I went down to Brazil, and I said, 'This is my salvation.' This was the way for me to play rhythms that are very

exciting but at the same time play beautiful melodies and harmony."

In Rio, Mann recorded *Do The Bossa Nova*, which included "Blues Walk" with Sergio Mendes' Bossa Nova Rio Group. He also recorded Jobim's "One Note Samba" with Jobim playing the piano and singing. Both are found on *The Evolution Of Mann* (Rhino/Atlantic).

Stan Getz's recording of "The Girl From Ipanema," sung by Astrud Gilberto, was a million-selling, quadruple Grammy winner, firmly establishing the bossa nova in American music. Jobim's "Desafinado," "How Insensitive," "Wave," and "No More Blues" became part of the jazz repertoire, and Eydie Gormé climbed the pop charts with "Blame It On The Bossa Nova." Mann has recently recorded *Black Orpheus* (Kokopelli), Byrd is awaiting the release of a set of Jobim tunes recorded at the Concord Jazz Festival, and Joe Henderson as well as Peggy Stern and Lee Konitz have Jobim albums.

"Jobim had a real sense of what it takes to make his tunes popular, starting with good English lyrics," concludes Byrd, who says a medley of Jobim tunes is sure to bring the audience at a European jazz festival to its feet. "It's a show stopper, sure fire."

Telling a story is as much the jazz singer's art as improvising. But some singers gets tied up emulating the musicians, while others act out the song in front of a jazz backdrop, not conversing with the musicians. Carmen McRae bridged that gap by shaping what she sang like a true improviser while putting the song over with great drama.

McRae was born April 8, 1920, according to her manager, Larry Clothier, not in 1922 as even the most authoritative references state. Her career began in the '40s, singing in the bands of Benny Carter, Count Basie, and Mercer Ellington and playing intermission piano at Minton's Playhouse. In 1954, McRae made her first recordings as a leader and was named "New Star" in *Down Beat's* Critics Poll.

Vocalist Carol Sloane first heard Carmen McRae in the '50s when jazz singers rubbed vinyl shoulders with pop singers Vic Damone, Tony Bennett, Rosemary Clooney, and Patti Page on the radio. They all sang popular songs, just that Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, and McRae sang them differently. "Carmen to me sounded more human, if you will," Sloane says during a call to her home outside Boston. "I understood Carmen from the moment I heard her. Ella's

Branford Marsalis



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ability to scat effortlessly and musically astonished me. Sarah's great majestic voice, I worshipped. Carmen had a great voice and an understanding of the song she was singing. She really moved me as a young girl."

As a young singer whose debut for Columbia was released in 1961, Sloane looked to McRae the way McRae had looked to Billie Holiday. But Sloane's day job for three years was singing on Arthur Godfrey's radio program. About the time of Sloane's debut, McRae was looking for a pianist, and her bassist, Bob Cranshaw, recommended Norman Simmons, who was in Eddie Lockjaw Davis' band. "Lockjaw said we'd make the perfect pair," remembers Simmons. He was right—Simmons accompanied the woman he calls "The Great Enunciator" for a decade. "One of the main things about a jazz singer is their comfort with time and changes," explains Simmons. "They must have a freedom in music where they can communicate. A lot of singers just sing on jazz, whereas Carmen looked for input from [her band] and reacted to that."

"She was a musician, she played piano," says Sloane. "She came to each new piece of material with an instinct the rest of us are not blessed with."



Carmen McRae

In the '80s, Sloane became McRae's friend during a weeklong engagement at a Chapel Hill supper club. On the day of this interview, she had just sat down with her favorite songs of Carmen's (in the form of albums, tapes, and sheet music) to prepare for a performance at Fat Tuesday's in March and a subsequent recording for Concord Jazz.

Simmons, who was a judge at last fall's Thelonious Monk International Jazz Vocals Competition, noted that none of the finalists received a recording contract. Is this a bad time for jazz singers? "You said it right there: this is bad time for jazz singers because they all want to cross over to the musicians' territory. They think that jazz consists of scatting, that jazz consists of total creativity. Consequently, some of them can't sing a song because they're so busy singing jazz."

"Billie, Ella, Sarah, Carmen—they dominated the jazz singing world and they did it for long time," says Sloane. "We revered them as the chief exponents of the art of jazz singing, and some of us are determined to preserve the lesson songs they taught us—which are quite simple, but seem difficult for some young singers to understand."

McRae's lessons were? "Diction, intonation, swing, and lyric-reading are really important," says Sloane. "If you are to sing popular music, you have to be understood, you have to have clear diction, you have to sing in tune, please, if you don't mind. It would be really nice if you have a sense of swing. If you have that—I'm not sure swing can be taught—you are double blessed."

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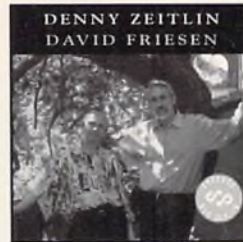
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## Miles Davis: Miles And The Fifties

By Leonard Feather

*The following "Classic Interview" with Miles Davis is reprinted from our July 2, 1964 issue.*

**A** problem arises in the nomination of any individual as symbolic of jazz in the 1950s. This decade, because of greater public acceptance, and greater opportunities for learning on the part of the musicians, produced a broader assortment of new talents than the three previous decades combined.

Miles Davis is a particularly suitable symbol because his contribution straddles three decades. He was a direct product of the bebop of the 1940s. He was a progenitor of several phases in the 1950s: cool jazz; the new modern orchestral style and the Spanish influence, both represented by his

collaboration with Gil Evans; and the trend toward modal concepts, in some of the later combo performances. Through the latter, and through his launching of a series of important sidemen, Davis was also a pacemaker for the 1960s. In other words, he provides an all-purpose link from Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker to Bill Evans and John Coltrane.

His importance as a cynosure for musicians seeking new avenues can be gauged from a glance at the personnels of the groups with which he recorded for Capitol in 1949 and 1950. John Lewis, who was to become the most important new combo leader of the middle '50s, and later a leading standard bearer for symphonic concert jazz, was a pianist and arranger on two of the three dates. Gunther Schuller gained some of his first exposure to jazz as a french horn-playing sideman on the third session. Gerry Mulligan, a key figure of the 1950s as composer and combo leader, played on all three sessions.

As an instrumentalist, Davis was a pacesetter in leading the way to the increased use of flugelhorn in place of trumpet in recent years. Davis adopted flugelhorn in 1957, and it was soon taken up on a part- or

full-time basis by Art Farmer, Shorty Rogers, Clark Terry, and others. His improvisational style and sound seem to have had a direct influence on Farmer, Kenny Dorham, Donald Byrd, and possibly even on Terry, who was Davis' own original influence.

**T**hough there was little musical interest shown in Miles' generation of the Davis family, his personal enthusiasm for buying records was tolerated by his mother and encouraged by his father, who gave him a trumpet for his 13th birthday. Miles played in the high school band and was working professionally with a local group, Eddie Randolph's Blue Devils, by the time he was 16. He had an offer to go on the road with the Tiny Bradshaw Orchestra, but his mother insisted he stay home and complete high school.

The next step for a youngster with financially comfortable parents was a college education. His mother wanted him to attend Fisk University, but Miles opposed the plan. His determination to stay with music was strengthened by an experience with the Billy Eckstine Band when it played in the area. A member of the trumpet section was sick, and Miles was drafted into the band for a couple of weeks. Since the personnel then included both Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, the experience afforded him a foretaste of a top-grade professional life in jazz. He persuaded his father to let him continue his studies not at Fisk but at Juilliard, where he could take harmony and theory. He arrived in New York in 1945, immediately sought out Parker and became his good friend and protégé, as well as a disciple of Gillespie.

The prevailing new-music trend was bebop, with Gillespie and Parker as equal bellwethers. Because their partnership developed in Manhattan, and because of a somewhat distorted legend that has grown around Minton's, it has often been assumed that the new music of the 1940s evolved exclusively in New York City. The fact is that Davis' musical thinking had begun to take substantial shape long before he hit New York. A few details were brought out in the following exchange:

**LEONARD FEATHER:** Surely you must have heard some important people before 1945 and developed your style before you came to New York. I don't think everything happened in New York. A lot of accounts place everything at Minton's, but it wasn't that specific, do you think?

**MILES DAVIS:** No, because I heard Clark Terry in St. Louis. He used to play like that. Real fast, like Buck Clayton sounds.

**LF:** Did he play the new kind of changes and ideas?

**MD:** I think so. . . . We were going around with a piano player in St. Louis who played like Bud Powell. Name was Duke Brooks.

He made a record with Red Callender, and then he died. Duke couldn't read or write any music. We used to have a trio together in St. Louis. We played like the Benny Goodman Sextet. He was always showing me things Charlie Christian played.

**LF:** *Maybe Charlie Christian was an influence around there.*

**MD:** I think bop branched off from Charlie Christian. There was a trumpet player named Buddy Anderson from Kansas City. He was with Billy Eckstine, and he used to play like Charlie. He got TB, and later I

**"I always wanted to play with a light sound, because I could think better when I played that way."**

heard he was in Oklahoma, playing guitar. He used to be real fast and light. And there was a boy from Oklahoma used to play with Buddy and with us. His name was Miles Pruitt. He used to play like Monk. There was another boy who played with us who played Kansas City blues and that kind of thing, but he had worked with Pruitt and he sounded like Charlie Parker. His name was Charlie Young. We all used to work together.

**LF:** *There are a lot of people who were probably playing flatted fifths, and other things Diz and Bird were identified with, even before Diz and Bird became famous.*

**MD:** Certain clichés and half-steps they used to play—from the sixth to the flatted fifth.

**LF:** *Wouldn't you say musicians in general were looking for something new to do?*

**MD:** No, I think it just happened.

**LF:** *You probably didn't play any style but your own, did you? You didn't start out playing like Roy [Eldridge], did you?*

**MD:** I started out playing like anybody I could play like, but Clark Terry was my main influence. I used to follow him around.

**LF:** *Terry was modern all along, wasn't he?*

**MD:** Yes, he always played like that ever since I heard him.

**LF:** *Then when you arrived on 52nd Street you probably didn't hear anything completely different from what you'd heard before.*

**MD:** I couldn't find anything I liked but Vic Coulson and Diz. I tried to play like Vic because I couldn't play like Diz; he was too high for me. I would get the chords from Monk—written in a hurry on matchbook covers, you know—and from Benny Harris.

But those guys in K.C. and St. Louis and Texas. . . . I knew a guy named Clyde Hicks, I think he was. He was a hell of an alto player, and he used to show me how to write. He used to play in Bird's style—that running style with changes. I also knew a guy named Ray something—played trumpet. He came to St. Louis and he'd play with us, and he was playing. . . . We were playing with Eddie Randall and a boy named William Goodson. Everybody wanted Ray—Billy Eckstine wanted him.

**LF:** *I guess these modern ideas were developing all over the place then. How did it reach the point where the whole bop thing became a fad? How and where did you decide to go from there?*

**MD:** It's just like clothes. All of a sudden you decide you don't have to wear spats and a flower up here, you know? You wear the flower and leave off the spats, and then pretty soon you leave off both of them. After a while, what was happening around New York became sickening, because everybody was playing the clichés that people had played five years before, and they thought that made them "mod-ren" musicians. I really couldn't stand to hear most of those guys.

In other words, by the late 1940s, bop, represented by the sartorial elaborations in Davis' figure of speech, had begun to grow stale. In order to revive it and recapture it from the cliché merchants who were all wearing the spats and the boutonnières, all destroying it through indiscriminate, uninspired usage, it was necessary to step a few paces back and get a better perspective.

Some of the beboppers gradually learned that the revolution had been won and some of the conquered territory needed recultivation. It was this kind of thinking that led Davis, Gil Evans, and a coterie of others in New York to resolve that new approaches must be fashioned out of the clichés of bop. Following are some of Davis' recollections of this phase, in which the "hot" jazz of bop evolved into the "cool" of 1949-50 and the Capitol nine-piece band.

**LF:** *How did the cool era begin?*

**MD:** Well, for one thing, I always wanted to play with a light sound, because I could think better when I played that way.

**LF:** *Why were so many of Claude Thornhill's players involved in that at first—was it because of Gil Evans?*

**MD:** I wanted Sonny Stitt with those nine pieces, but Sonny was working someplace, and Gerry [Mulligan] said get Lee [Konitz] because he has a light sound, too. And Gerry was playing his baritone—in fact, I didn't expect him to play. I didn't know Gerry until I went down to Gil's house and he was there.

We wanted John Simmons because we wanted everything to be light, but Gil said Joe Shulman could play real light. I liked Al



McKibbon at that time, too, but he was busy. But that whole thing started out as an experiment.

**LF:** *Did Tristano have any effect on you then?*

**MD:** Well, I loved to hear him play by himself, but Billy Bauer couldn't follow him.

**LF:** *I think he was one of the few white musicians who had harmonic originality.*

**MD:** Yes, he did, but he had to play by himself, because the others didn't know what to do. They would clash. Like Art Tatum—I didn't know anybody that could work with him.

Asked if he could distinguish between his style in the bop years and his later approach, Davis said, "A lot of things that I didn't do, or just didn't know about, I do now. Harmonically and technically. I wasn't phrasing as definite and pronounced as I do now. If you don't add something to a note, it dies, you know. Certain notes and melodies and the rhythm. If you don't cut into a rhythm section, it dies, too. You play behind the beat, the rhythm drops. But never play ahead of a beat unless you're superimposing

some phrase *against* the beat."

"Do you think that what people meant by cool jazz involved mainly a solo style or an ensemble?" I asked. "Were they thinking of the Capitol record dates, or of you as an individual or leader?"

"I think what they really meant was a soft sound," Davis replied. "Not penetrating too much. To play soft you have to relax . . . you don't delay the beat, but you might play a quarter triplet against four beats, and that sounds delayed."

Despite the seven-year gap between the last Capitol session and the first Davis-Gil Evans Columbia LP (*Miles Ahead*, 1957), the expansion of Miles' setting from a nine- to a 19-piece orchestra seemed a logical-though-long-delayed outgrowth of the original concept. The trumpeter through the years had developed a style based largely on some aspects of his 1949-50 work. It involved a more frequent employment of mutes, substitution for the fuller-sounding flugelhorn for trumpet, a wispy and ethereal tone, sensitive use of pauses, and a generally lyrical sound and underplayed approach. The characteristic

phrases of bebop, though never totally rejected, were dispensed with in many of the solos.

Davis rounded out the decade with two more superb Evans collaborations. *Porgy And Bess* was released in 1959 and *Sketches Of Spain* in the summer of 1960. For the most part, he spent the second half of the 1950s leading a series of quintets or sextets that served as a very loose, even sloppy backdrop, though they offered a procession of prodigious solo talents.

There will be no analysis here of the Miles Davis temperament. Too much has already been written, at the expense of discussions of musical facts and factors. Davis, in short, represents restlessness and querulous doubt rather than riot and open rebellion, just as the lyricism of his solos, whether against a multitextured Gil Evans carpet of sounds or a quietly responsive rhythm section, is transmitted through a muted ball of fire more often than by an open horn.

Both as a human being and as a musician, Miles in many ways was the symbol of the '50s, the decade of our discontent. **DB**

## Miles Davis Live At The Plugged Nickel: 1965

**T**he club only held about 100 people; there were only about 10 tables. The bandstand was a narrow little place." That's legendary Miles Davis producer Teo Macero,



talking about what was Chicago's Plugged Nickel, a small jazz room located on Wells Street. According to Macero, who produced the December 1965 Miles Davis Quintet sessions at the club, "The engineers were coddled in a little corner of the room, one of them had to stand up. Microphones were planted all over the place. I had to do that deliberately to catch Miles. We didn't record the first night—Tony [Williams, Miles' drummer] didn't want the first night recorded. Miles called about 2 that morning, saying, 'You didn't record? You should have recorded anyway!'"

All of this, and more, has entered the pantheon of jazz folklore concerning the material most recently known as *Complete Live At Plugged Nickel*, a seven-CD edition released in 1992 by Sony Japan (see **DB** "CD Reviews" Oct. '92). Over the years, begin-

ning in 1976, various partials of the seven sets recorded over two nights of the three-night engagement have been released. Says Macero, "At the time this material was recorded, CBS didn't want to put it out."

Times have changed, however, and the '60s Davis Quintet—which also included tenor saxophonist Wayne Shorter, pianist Herbie Hancock, and bassist Ron Carter—has become more popular than ever. The soon-to-be-released U.S. version, constructed from what appear to be the original three-track tapes made by Macero, is a sonic improvement on the previous boxed set, with a stereo mix that's closer to the true sound of a club recording. (The Japanese version came from a two-track stereo copy that offered a somewhat extreme stereo pan.) English liner notes and new photos accompany the music, further distinguishing it from the earlier boxed set.

Why all the fuss? As Macero sees it, "It was a very aggressive band, they had a lot of power. They were very young, and Miles liked to record live." Macero adds, "Miles loved to play small clubs; he loved the intimacy." In fact, you can hear a cash register, the tinkling of glasses, the occasional drunk. Says the intrepid producer, "I wanted to record Miles everywhere he went. It was just before Christmas; and being in Chicago, I knew promotion people there. And Chicago, where Miles had family, was a great place to

play jazz. I liked those funky places!"

Steve Berkowitz, senior director of A&R/Marketing at Columbia, has been working with Mosaic Records' Michael Cuscuna on the new project. Their work has essentially become a discovery mission through Columbia's vaults. "Originally, we were going to remaster from the analog two-track master tapes we had," Berkowitz states. Then a surprise 25 boxes of three-track tapes labeled "Live At The Plugged Nickel" surfaced at Sony Studios on 54th Street in New York. At presstime, it was uncertain as to whether or not unedited originals would become the source material for the new boxed set (thus giving listeners even more music than the earlier, edited Japanese boxed set). As for the sound quality, Cuscuna notes, "The sound on previous releases was thin, and lacking in lower mid-range, the piano and bass in particular; also there didn't seem to be any center. We'll be working to improve on that." Mosaic, barring any additional music found, will issue a 10-LP, 180-gram vinyl version of the same material.

The club is long gone. But the music—a delicious, reconstructed mix of standards and band staples—lives on. And the new, improved, Stateside release of *Miles Davis Live At The Plugged Nickel* is bound to be smokin' in every respect. What could top this? Hey, how 'bout a CD-ROM version?

—John Ephland

By Bill Milkowski

# IS Nicholas Payton

## The Next Great New Orleans Trumpeter?

**H**e has been closely scrutinized by fellow musicians, club owners, critics, and talent scouts alike since the ripe old age of 16, hyped by some as the next big noise to come out of New Orleans, the next link in the city's rich trumpet legacy continuing from Buddy Bolden to Louis Armstrong to Wynton Marsalis and beyond. The husky young man could always get around on his horn alright, but his striking physical resemblance to a member of trumpet royalty gave Nicholas Payton an edge over other highly competent players his age. As a noticeably startled Doc Cheatham put it to an audience after encountering him onstage during a trumpet summit at the 1991 JVC Jazz Festival in New York: "My, oh my, how that young man favors Joe Oliver!"

Cheatham seems particularly fond of this rising new star from the Crescent City. Last year, the two had a chance to record some material together for volume two of Doc's *Swinging Down In New Orleans* (due out later this spring on Jazzology). During the session they got to know each other personally as well as musically. "He's frightening," says the 89-year-old trumpet legend. "He's gonna scare all the trumpet players. As a person, I think he's a wonderful young man. He's very respectful, has no big head, no big ego or nothing. And as a player I think he's the best out there. He's the greatest of the New Orleans-style trumpet players that I've ever heard. He's pure, he's not fooling around. And every time I hear him he sounds better and better. I haven't heard anybody like him since Louis Armstrong."

Now a very poised and mature 21, Payton



JAMES MARCH

stands ready to transcend all the hype and make a name for himself as a first-rate player and composer with *From This Moment*, his Verve debut. A diverse set of music that runs the gamut from modern burn ("Beginning Of The End") to sublime ballads ("Fair Weather," "Little Re-Re"), earthy blues ("Young Payton's Blues"), swinging standards ("From This Moment

On"), and charming swing-era fare ("Taking A Chance On Love"), it highlights the trumpeter's pure tone and clarity of ideas, along with his natural penchant for melody.

"My whole thing when I write is to come up with a singable melody that would be easily discernible to listeners and that would stick with them," says Payton. "Regardless of what I might be trying to do harmonically in my music, I always try to think of that first. That's the kind of tunes I like, where the melody leads where the tune is going rather than just having some hip chord changes and some kind of melody scattered on top of it almost like an afterthought."

Accompanied by a core rhythm section of pianist Mulgrew Miller, bassist Reginald Veal, and drummer Lewis Nash, along with special guests Monte Croft on vibes and Mark Whitfield on guitar, Payton shows great promise on this first outing as a leader. Miller is another who was won over by Payton's considerable talents. "He has all the makings and attributes of being a great trumpet player," Miller says. "First and foremost, there's the talent. And not only is he a good trumpet player, but he gets around very well on the drums and upright bass and piano. He has knowledge about all the different instruments involved in playing jazz."

Payton believes the seasoning he shows on *From This Moment* is the result of his decision to pursue a working apprenticeship rather than jumping on the "young lions" bandwagon. "My goal was to develop a foundation, to play with masters like Clark Terry and Doc Cheatham and Elvin Jones," Payton says. "Luckily, I've had the

experience of playing with them numerous times, and I felt that was important. I didn't just want to come out on this young lions thing and get a record deal as soon as possible before I had anything to say."

Payton has gained confidence in his playing yet is too humbled by the music to swagger. And perhaps the most noticeable development in his repertoire has been his ballad playing. He demonstrated his strengths in that area last summer at a "Trumpets & Tenors Battle" at Lincoln Center as part of the JVC Jazz Festival in New York, nearly bringing down the house with a stirring, heartfelt rendition of "When I Fall In Love."

"The big thing about being young and being able to play ballads is being able to have the control and the patience to play a ballad and deliver the melody clearly without being busy," says Payton. "When I was 14 or 15, all I wanted to play was high-energy type of stuff. I didn't have the type of understanding about those kind of feelings that a ballad may be about. But the more you live, the more information and experiences you have to draw from when you play, and the better interpretation that you can give a certain piece. You know, your ears open up to a lot of different things as you grow older."

Born in 1973 in the Broadmoor section of New Orleans, Payton grew up in Tremé, the neighborhood adjacent to Armstrong Park that has been fertile ground for the city's burgeoning brass-band scene. His father, New Orleans bassist Walter Payton, got him a pocket trumpet at age four and began teaching Nicholas to read music by the third grade. "My dad was always rehearsing his band around the house," he recalls. "So I was exposed at an early age to cats like [trumpeters] Clyde Kerr Jr., Wendell Brunious, Leroy Jones, and [saxophonist] Earl Turbinton, all great players and improvisers. And sometimes I'd sit in with them as a little kid."

Kerr recalls those formative years in Payton's career. "We used to rehearse with his dad, and Nicholas used to come sit on the sofa next to me and try to play my part when he was 10 years old. And he was always serious about it. I think a lot of musicians around town knew even then that he was something special."

Kerr, who taught Payton at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (NOCCA), has watched Payton's development over the past 11 years. "Just seeing that kid's growth has been a big inspiration to me," he says. "At NOCCA, all I was trying to do was make him aware of his gift and treat it with respect. He just has a natural, innate ability. It almost seems like reincarnation, in a sense. I mean, for a youngster to know that much music, from traditional to modern, is staggering."

After his stint at NOCCA, Payton did one semester at the University of New Orleans,

where he came under the tutelage of Harold Battiste and saxophonist Victor Goines. "The great thing about UNO was I got a chance to play with a combo every Tuesday and Thursday," says Payton. "And these were great young players like [pianist] Peter Martin, [bassist] Chris Thomas, and [drummer] Brian Blade. So I kept bringing in music that I was working on, and it was guaranteed that I was going to be able to hear it. A lot of times, you write music and it's hard to get people just to come over and play it. It's hard to get your music heard. So I was in a good situation at UNO for that, and it really helped me develop as a writer."

By that time, Payton had been gigging steadily around New Orleans. His playing

**"He's frightening.  
He's gonna scare all  
the trumpet players.  
. . . I haven't heard  
anybody like him since  
Louis Armstrong."**

**-Doc Cheatham**

had already been documented on record as a sideman with Goines and on one memorable live recording at Snug Harbor when he sat in (at age 15) with pianist Ellis Marsalis and special guest Art Blakey. It was Wynton Marsalis who recommended Nicholas to pianist Marcus Roberts, and in early 1990 the 16-year-old trumpeter came to New York City to play a gig with Roberts at the Bottom Line.

In September 1991, Payton appeared on Teresa Brewer's all-star tribute to Louis Armstrong (*Memories Of Louis*) that included trumpeters Clark Terry, Red Rodney, Dizzy Gillespie, Terence Blanchard, Ruby Braff, Harry "Sweets" Edison, and Freddie Hubbard. And at that point, he also began working in drummer Carl Allen's Manhattan Projects band, appearing on a series of albums for various Japanese labels.

In early 1992, Wynton recommended Payton for another gig when a trumpet spot opened up in Elvin Jones' band. "I did a gig with him in March of that year at the Blue Note in New York, and after the first set he said I was in the band," Payton recalls. "And I stayed with him for two years. That was one of the greatest musical situations I ever had."

When Payton joined Jones' Jazz Machine, the band included Ravi Coltrane and Sonny Fortune on saxes, Chip Jackson on bass, and Willie Pickens on piano. Javon Jackson later replaced Fortune, then flutist Kent Jordan and saxophonist Craig Tardy came in when Coltrane left the band. Payton was eventually appointed musical director, but he deferred to Jones' authority on the bandstand. "Basically, [Jones] was the musical director. I just picked out the set and rehearsed the band."

Clearly, playing with such a legendary force in jazz was an educational experience for the young trumpeter, the benefits of which he is only now beginning to realize. "Just to work with someone on that level of musicality every night was unbelievable, and it's something you never get over," he says. "First of all, I never played with a drummer who played with so much power. It's totally different. You always have to play with Elvin. You can't coast, you can't lay back. So if you're feeling kind of lazy or tired one night, it doesn't matter: He's always on. Every night he comes to play, so you have to rise to the occasion, or get run over."

Since then, Payton has split his time between playing with Carl Allen's group, the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, George Wein's Newport Jazz Festival All-Stars, and various freelance projects. He appears on saxophonist Jesse Davis' CD *High Standards* and on guitarist Mark Whitfield's *True Blue*. With the late-February release of *From This Moment*, Payton is ready to go on the road with his own group and accept the responsibilities that come with being a bandleader. "Being a sideman," he says, "all you have to do is make sure you know the music, show up on time for the bus and on time for the gigs. You don't have the other worries. So having my own group is going to be a new experience for me."

A busy young man taking care of business.

"Well . . . can't complain about working," he laughs. "It's better than being at home and not working." **DB**

#### EQUIPMENT

Nicholas Payton plays a Monette Raja trumpet with a B2 mouthpiece.

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

*FROM THIS MOMENT*—Verve 314 527 073

with Elvin Jones

*YOUNG BLOOD*—enja 7051

*IT DON'T MEAN A THING . . .*—enja 8066

*GOING HOME*—enja 7095

with various others

*TRUE BLUE*—Verve 314 523 591 (Mark Whitfield)

*MEMORIES OF LOUIS*—Red Baron 48629 (Teresa Brewer)

*THEY CAME TO SWING*—Columbia 66379 (Jazz At Lincoln Center)

*HIGH STANDARDS*—Concord Jazz 4624 (Jesse Davis)

*NEW ORLEANS COLLECTIVE*—Evidence 22105

<b>KEY</b>	Excellent	★★★★★
	Very Good	★★★★
	Good	★★★
	Fair	★★
	Poor	★



**Pharoah Sanders**  
**Crescent With Love**  
 Evidence 22099

★★★★

**Maleem Mahmoud  
 Ghania/Pharoah  
 Sanders**

**The Trance Of Seven Colors**  
 Axiom 314-524 047

★★★ 1/2

**P**haroah Sanders' *Crescent With Love* looks back across 30 years to John Coltrane's pivotal, often-overlooked *Crescent* album. Coltrane homages are nothing new, especially for Pharoah, but this satisfying two-CD set draws on Trane's compositions and performances during an important transitional period, one predating Sanders' own participation. Five Coltrane compositions, including three from *Crescent*, form the emotional center, and the spirituality and solemnity of Coltrane's "Wise One" and "Lonnie's Lament" are supplemented and tempered by the lighter moods of Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood" and Erroll Garner's "Misty."

Sanders sublimates and harnesses his characteristic energy, investigating these tunes with restraint, dignity, and yearning consistent with Coltrane's approach of the time. If not quite *The Gentle Side Of Pharoah Sanders*, this set demonstrates a sensitivity in Pharoah's interpretations that isn't often displayed, and rebuts anyone who questions his ability to play inside. Viewed as a portrait of Coltrane circa 1964, *Crescent With Love* captures Trane's drive and melancholy swing, but might say even more about Sanders.

The music of the African continent has inspired him for decades, and the notion of recording Sanders among African musicians seems so natural that you wonder why it happens so rarely. *The Trance Of Seven Colors* documents the saxophonist's passage to Essaouira, Morocco, as organized by producer Bill Laswell.

The album is properly credited first to Maleem Mahmoud Ghania, the Gnawi musician who leads his family-based ensemble with vocals and guimbri, an instrument made, according to the liner notes, with goat's guts and camel's skin,

having a function and deep sound roughly akin to a bass. Backed with tbel drums and the clacking of krkaba steel castanets, the Gnawa sound less Moroccan than West African, as their forebears were brought north as slaves. Their hypnotic music has strongly influenced jazz musicians like Sanders and Randy Weston.

Sanders' challenge is to find common ground with the traditional, ceremonial music of the Gnawa, and his interactions with Ghania and company generate mixed results. Solo tenor saxophone introduces "La Allah Dayim Moule-nah" with a moving invocation, and "Peace In Essaouira" is a remarkably serene, Trane-ish threnody for the late guitarist Sonny Sharrock. At times, Sanders sounds out of place, struggling to incorporate his most explosive, emotional outpourings without disrupting the trance-inducing rhythms established by Ghania's insistent guimbri. Then you wonder, "Why is this man screaming?"

Anyone fascinated by Laswell's excellent 1990 recording *Gnawa Music Of Marrakesh—Night Spirit Masters* will be seduced by *Trance Of Seven Colors*, and the moments of true convergence will reward Pharoah's followers as well.

—Jon Andrews

**Crescent With Love**—Lonnie's Lament; Misty; In A Sentimental Mood; Softly For Shyla; Wise One; Too Young To Go Steady; Body And Soul; Naima; Feelin' Good; Light At The Edge Of The World; Crescent; After The Rain. (43:48/44:56)  
**Personnel**—Sanders, tenor saxophone; William Henderson, piano; Charles Fambrough, bass; Sherman Ferguson, drums.

**The Trance Of Seven Colors**—La Allah Dayim Moulénah; Bala Moussaka; Hamdouchi; Peace In Essaouira (For Sonny Sharrock); Boulandi Samawi; Moussa Berkiyo/Koubaly Beriah La'Foh; Salat Anbi; Casa Casa Atougra; Mahraba. (71:05)

**Personnel**—Ghania, guimbri, lead vocals, tbel; Sanders, tenor saxophone (1,3-6,9); Maleem Bouker Ghania, guimbri (6); tbel; Maleem Mahmoud Ahkaraz, tbel (8); Hamadcha of Essaouira ensemble (3); with a supporting group of percussionists and vocalists.



**Jacky Terrasson**  
**Jacky Terrasson**  
 Blue Note 79863

★★★★

**S**ome artists struggle a lifetime to capture a distinctive, yet rewarding sound. Jacky Terrasson has accomplished this portion of his quest with relative ease, but the young pianist still

has room to grow and mature. His unique way of slowly tapering a tune, reshaping its harmonic contours, and offering sudden, rhythmic bursts is what most distinguishes his style. And this attenuated approach, the recasting of a melody, is clearly evident on "I Love Paris," the opening tune.

A spacious interlude is set against an infectious backbeat that has all the flair and saunter of a B-Boy bounce down the Champs-Élysées. Terrasson is by turns loud and percussive then soft and tentative, tossing off an array of spiraling chromatic runs before settling again into a subdued, contemplative mode. A straight-ahead bebop romp in the right hand is overtaken by a classical resolution in the left. To all of this Terrasson adds a dash of blues, which is quickly smothered by his tendency to go for baroque. Even so, it is a winning and impressive formula.

He displays a similar elan and freshness on the Styne/Cahn standard "Time After Time" and Stevie Wonder's "For Once In My Life." But the former has a tender edge that would make Chet Baker seem hard, while the voicings on the latter are precisely drawn, especially when embellished by Leon Parker's tasteful trappings. Notice, too, the comfortable bottom Ugonna Okegwo supplies on "Time After Time" when Terrasson spins a Tatumesque line and asks "What Am I Here For?"

This is a remarkable U.S. recording debut for a pianist who walked away with the Thelonious Monk competition in 1993.

—Herb Boyd

**Jacky Terrasson**—I Love Paris; Just A Blues; My Funny Valentine; Hommage A Lili Boulanger; Bye Bye Blackbird; He Goes On A Trip; I Fall In Love Too Easily; Time After Time; For Once In My Life; What A Difference A Day Made; Cumbá's Dance. (55:00)  
**Personnel**—Terrasson, piano; Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Leon Parker, drums.



**Elvin Jones**  
**It Don't Mean A Thing . . .**  
 enja 80662

★★★★

**E**lvin Jones is a finer drummer today than he was in the 1960s, when he swept his sticks across the skins and rims with the force of a raging firestorm aside John Coltrane's saxophone tempest. The master of rhythm, closing in on his 70th birthday, retains large-than-life excitement in his heavy strokes while making the blitzkriegs of accents, phrases, and triplets sound more exact and more poised than ever before. Behind his trap

set at this October 1993 session, Jones finds numerous swinging epiphanies in a well-paced program drawn from the following sources: Ellington, Strayhorn, Monk, Japanese traditional music, his wife Keiko, r&b/gospel great Sam Cooke, and up-and-coming jazz singer Kevin Mahogany.

While Jones' exploding sticks and empathic brushwork are the center of attention, several of his supporting players do make their presence known. Sonny Fortune—a longtime associate and arguably his most focused reedman since Joe Farrell 20-plus years back—uses his tenor to pour out his soul on "A Change Is Gonna Come"; he picks up the flute to capably stir the melodies of "Itsugo Village" and Keiko's ennobled homage to her father, "Zenzo's Spirit." Pianist Willie Pickens holds his own with brush-rustler Jones and superlative bassist Cecil McBee on their seamless, stirring coupling of "A Flower Is A Lovable Thing" and "Ask Me Now." Enlisted specially for the session by producer Matthias Winkelmann, Mahogany scats with assurance on his tune "Bopsy" and sets down the lyric to evergreen "Lush Life" in a caring fashion totally free of artificiality.

—Frank John Hadley

**It Don't Mean A Thing . . .** —Green Chimneys: A Lullaby Of Itsugo Village; It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing; Lush Life; Zenzo's Spirit; A Flower Is A Lovable Thing/Ask Me Now; Bopsy; Fatima's Waltz; A Change Is Gonna Come. (58:06)

**Personnel**—Jones, drums; Nicholas Payton, trumpet; Del-leyo Marsalis, trombone; Sonny Fortune, flute, tenor saxophone; Willie Pickens, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Kevin Mahogany, vocals (4:7).



**Jack DeJohnette**  
**Extra Special Edition**  
 Blue Note 30494

★½

**T**his is mostly world-music noodling, a *Son Of Bitches Brew* for the elimination of musical categories.

The collaboration between Jack DeJohnette, who produced the album, and Bobby McFerrin,

the "extra" in Special Edition, the drummer's current band, can't save it. True, McFerrin remains the amazing vocal chameleon (e.g., his turn as bass fiddle on "Elmer Wudd," Jewish cantor on "Then There Was Light," and Chet Baker, boy vocalist, on "Inside The Kaleidoscope"). But who is DeJohnette? Let's have more of the jazz drummer, the drummer we hear on "Summertime," "Seventh D," and "Rituals Of Spring" (the last two composed by DeJohnette). And forget the would-be ethnic percussionist of the remainder.

World music per se isn't inferior to jazz. But dull world music like "Numoessence," "Liquid," and "Memories Of Sedona" is.

Most of the tracks were collectively improvised. Except for McFerrin, and the three jazz tracks on which he is absent, a certain timidity prevails. The gang tiptoes in, thrashes about quietly, and fades. As for the band, Gary Thomas suggests an M-BASE version of Wayne Shorter, making the most of the connection on "Seventh D" and "Summertime." Marvin Sewell, with a cloudy-blue electric tone like John McLaughlin's on Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*, has roots in Jim Hall's intervals and Gil Evans' orchestrations ("Summertime"). Michael Cain's twiddling phrases play Herbie Hancock to Thomas' Shorter, with occasional sprinkles of Paul Bley and squalls of Cecil Taylor. Throughout, Lonnie Plaxico is a solid groovemaster.

Despite empathic snippets from the band, this

# Giants at play.

*La Voz.*

**Benny Golson**  
*La Voz tenor hard*

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

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

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

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

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

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

**rico royal**

**Buddy Collette**  
*Rico Royal tenor #2 ½*  
*Rico Royal alto #2 ½*

**Scott Page**  
*Rico Royal tenor #3 ½*

**Sonny Rollins**  
*Rico Royal tenor #2 ½*

**Stanley Turrentine**  
*Rico Royal tenor #3 ½*

*Frederick L. Hemke*

**Kenny G**  
*Hemke soprano #2 ½*  
*Hemke tenor #3*  
*Hemke alto #3*

**Kenny Garrett**  
*Hemke alto #3, #3 ½*

**Jeff Kashiwa**  
*Hemke tenor #2 ½*

**Stanley Turrentine**  
*Hemke tenor #3 ½*

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## CD REVIEWS

album is not what it could have been. It represents a misguided direction. —Owen Cordle

**Extra Special Edition**—*Nuancesse*; Elmer Wudd; *Then There Was Light*; *You Can't Get There*; *Inside The Kaleidoscope*; *Ha Chik Kah*; *Seventh D*; *Rituals Of Spring*; *Liquid*; *Speaking In Tongues*; *Summertime*; *Memories Of Sedona*. (70:17)

**Personnel**—DeJohnette, drums, triangle, ocarina; Bobby McFerrin, vocals (1-6, 10); Gary Thomas, tenor saxophone, alto flute (1, 4-8, 10, 11); Marvin Sewell, guitar (1, 4-8, 10, 11); Michael Cain, piano (2-4, 6-8, 10-12); Lonnie Plaxico, bass (1, 4-8, 10-12); Paul Grassi, percussion (1, 4-6, 8, 10).



### Buddy Rich/ Gene Krupa

**Krupa And Rich**  
Verve 314 521 643-2

★★★★

### Buddy Rich

**Live At Ronnie Scott's**  
DRG 91427

★★

Some regard Buddy Rich as the greatest jazz drummer of all time, others as a machine-gunning showboat who, in the words of Art Blakey, "couldn't swing by nothin' but a rope." A pair of reissues provide ammunition for both camps: Rich plays brilliantly behind an all-star JATP combo in a lopsided 1955 battle with fellow-trappist Gene Krupa, but on a 1980 club date with his own big band, he keeps time like an overwound watch.

*Krupa And Rich* combines the original LP by that title with another, *The Wailing Buddy Rich*, recorded without Krupa the same year. The two drummers play together (in sequence, actually) on only one track, "Bernie's Tune," a masterpiece of percussive invention as well as group interaction that also features exciting duels between tenorists Phillips and Jacquet and trumpeters Eldridge and Gillespie. The horn players are much more closely matched than the drummers, and—as on their respective solo vehicles, "Buddy's Blues" and "Gene's Blues"—Rich mops the floor with his rival, whose chugging, swing-era style is simply anachronistic. Ben Webster and Oscar Peterson shine on the two, long *Wailing* tracks, which conclude with an incredible juggernaut of a drum solo, where Rich winds out to warp speed without ever dropping a beat or losing sight

of the chord structure.

A domineering player even in the company of his fellow masters, Rich is in dictatorial control of his own youthful band on *Live At Ronnie Scott's*, with the musicians reduced to virtual anonymity on a set of facelessly funky charts. Eschewing extensive solos, he maintains a constant presence with drumming so crisp, it almost snaps. Baritonist Bob Mintzer delivers one of the album's few impressive solos on "Saturday Night," but here, as elsewhere, the tempo is rushed, and the music itself is badly dated by gimmicky attempts at sounding contemporary. —Larry Birnbaum

**Krupa And Rich**—*Buddy's Blues*; *Bernie's Tune*; *Gene's Blues*; *Sweethearts On Parade*; *I Never Knew*; *Sunday*; *The Monster*. (71:59)

**Personnel**—Rich (1, 2, 4, 6, 7), Krupa (2, 3, 5), drums; Dizzy Gillespie (1-5), Roy Eldridge (1-5), Thad Jones (6, 7), Joe Newman (6, 7), trumpet; Illinois Jacquet (1-5), Flip Phillips (1-5), Ben Webster (6, 7), Frank Wess (6, 7), tenor sax; Herb Ellis (1-5), Freddie Green (6, 7), guitar; Oscar Peterson, piano; Ray Brown, bass.

**Live At Ronnie Scott's**—*Beulah Witch*; *Grand Concourse*; *Blues A La 88*; *Saturday Night*; *Slow Funk*; *Good News*. (44:37)

**Personnel**—Rich, drums; Ernie Vantrease, piano; Wayne Pedziwiatr, bass; Andy Fusco, Jack Leibowitz, alto saxophone; Steve Marcus, tenor and soprano saxes; Kenny Hitchcock, tenor saxophone; Bob Mintzer, baritone saxophone; Bob Coassin, Simo Salimen, Bob Doll, Mike Plumleigh, trumpet; Roger Homefield, Glenn Franke, trombone; Pete Beltran, bass trombone.



### Quartette Indigo

**Quartette Indigo**  
Landmark 1536

★★★★

The concept of a jazz string quartet doesn't fit any music-industry pigeonhole, and though Quartette Indigo has performed sporadically for over 20 years, the group, surprisingly, has only now made its record debut. Unlike previous third-stream and chamber-jazz ensembles, which fused jazz and classical sounds on the common ground of avant-garde dissonance, Indigo looks back to earlier intersections of European and African-American traditions, opening with a delightfully deadpan version of Scott Joplin's "Rag Time Dance" and closing with an earnest rendition of the early civil rights anthem "Lift Every Voice And Sing."

In between, the material is more modern, ranging from a gorgeously languid arrangement of Duke Ellington's "Come Sunday" to a hauntingly voiced take on Wayne Shorter's "Foot-

prints" to the neo-romantic abstractions of Steve Turre's "Andromeda." The album is permeated with blues and spiritual feeling, without a whiff of bebop, as improvisation and swing take a back seat to ensemble texture and color. Even violinist John Blake, the quartet's most experienced soloist, seems stiff on Monk's "Ruby My Dear," and cellist Akua Dixon Turre, the group's leader, plays a note-for-note transcription of John Coltrane's original saxophone solo on his "Naima."

But though the group leans toward classical techniques, the recombination of familiar elements sounds utterly fresh, and the instrumentation succeeds as more than just a novelty.

—Larry Birnbaum

**Quartette Indigo**—*Rag Time Dance; Naima; Andromeda; Footprints; Eflua; A Saturday Night On Beale Street; Come Sunday; The Ladies Blues; Ruby, My Dear; Lift Every Voice And Sing.* (54:01)

**Personnel**—Akua Dixon Turre, cello; Gayle Dixon, John Blake, violin; Ron Lawrence, viola.

*In Other Words; Our Struggle.* (66:28)

**Personnel**—Avery, tenor, soprano saxophones; Roy Hargrove, trumpet (1,5), flugelhorn (9); Charles Craig, piano; Reuben Rogers, bass; Mark Simmons, drums.



## Gräwe/Reijseger/ Hemingway

### Zwei Nachte In Berlin

Sound Aspects 049

★★★★ 1/2

### The View From Points West

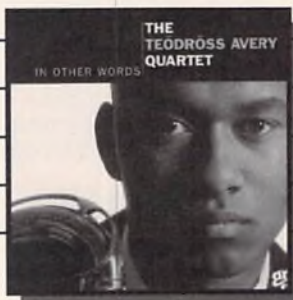
Music & Arts 820

★★★★ 1/2

Anyone working under the misconception that all free piano must sound something like Cecil Taylor, lend an ear to German pianist Georg Gräwe (pronounced *Gray-vuh*). Forceful and deliberate, he recalls Lennie Tristano's linear fluidity and Bill Evans' harmonic delicacy, filtered through the 12-toned, tone-colored lens of Anton Webern.

The trio with Hemingway and Reijseger has been around since 1989, and these two live discs offer a glimpse of the free-improvising threesome as it develops its singular identity. *Zwei Nachte In Berlin*, recorded over two nights at the Total Music Meeting in '90, is the more animated and directly interactive of the two. It's also a sharper recording, with Hemingway's bright metals and Reijseger's cello mixed to the foreground. Listen, about six minutes into the half-hour-long opener, "Muss Music Nun Erklungen?" as the trio simultaneously grazes a static patch, Gräwe riding a damped note, Reijseger performing some arco alchemy, and Hemingway summoning shimmering harmonics by rubbing his cymbals. Reijseger alone is astounding, practically turning his instrument inside-out, using it as a percussion box, guitar, miniature bass, and sometimes sounding as cellistic as Pablo Casals. As the track pulls to a close, Hemingway's swinging hard, Reijseger's speed walking, and Gräwe's doing his best Lennie-Bird.

*The View From Points West* documents a transcendent evening seven months later at the du Maurier Jazz Fest in Vancouver. Working in a limited dynamic mid-range—they never raise too raucous a ruckus and rarely dip down into hushville—the trio manages to generate tension, movement, drama, and points of devastating intensity. Like *Zwei Nachte*, this disc begins with a



## Teodross Avery

### In Other Words

GRP 9788

★★★

Berklee scholarship recipient, student of Joe Henderson's, and exponent of a '90s version of the Blue Note sound, Avery represents today's brightest jazz youth (see p. 14). His debut at 20 shows solid credentials: supple instrumental technique, an awareness of jazz heritage, and the leadership of a primed young band. But he hasn't shaken all the student clichés in his playing yet. Neither is he strong enough as a composer to carry almost an entire album. (Nine of the tunes on *In Other Words* are his.)

His tenor influences include elders Henderson and Dexter Gordon (e.g., Bob Haggart's "What's New") and new star Joshua Redman. One hears in his rhythm section reminders of McCoy Tyner, Paul Chambers, and Art Blakey.

A couple of Avery's tunes change course: "One To Love," which alternates between a dreamy ballad section and a gospel groove, and "In Other Words," which swings between funk and straight-ahead. The session was produced by Michael Cuscuna and recorded by the legendary (Blue Note and otherwise) Rudy Van Gelder.

—Owen Cordle

**In Other Words**—*High Hopes; Our True Friends; One To Love; An Ancient Civilization; Edda; The Possibilities Are Endless; What's New; Urban Survival; Positive Role Models;*

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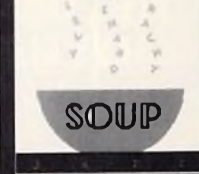
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long, constantly morphing piece, "Lighthouse," followed by a series of shorter excursions. On "Monk-ey-ing," Gräwe drops Thelonious-licks into a scattered field of sound. The ever-welcome ghost of Tristano reappears on the disc's most openly playful track, "Strange Picnic" (fusion-heads, check Reijseger's hot chops!), while on "Dig, Drill, Dump, Fill" the unit turns pointillistic. Hemingway mixing wood blocks, vibes, and kit for maximum color.

—John Corbett

**Zwei Nächte In Berlin**—*Muss Musik Nun Erklingen?; Der Mond Schaut Zitternd Hinein; So Manche Nacht In Alter Zeit; ... Und Sie Hatte Den Czardas Im Blut; Am Lachenden Donaustand.* (63:11)  
**Personnel**—Georg Gräwe, piano; Ernst Reijseger, cello; Gerry Hemingway, drums, percussion.

**The View From Points West**—*Lighthouse; Dig, Drill, Dump, Fill; Sunday; Night Cobbings; Strange Picnic; Balooga; Monk-ey-ing.* (70:29)  
**Personnel**—Gräwe, piano; Reijseger, cello; Hemingway, drums, percussion.



**Nick Brignola**

**Like Old Times**  
 Reservoir 133

★★★★ 1/2

This is one of the finest displays of bebop bari on record. Like the late Serge Chaloff, Brignola blows the house down. There's plenty of intellectual fodder, too; so what we have is a combination of inventive logic and on-the-edge-of-your-seat swing.

The rest of the band is at one with the leader. Roditi has his Clifford Brown running game in perfect order (e.g., Brignola's title tune). Hicks, Mraz, and Berk burn intensely ("The Night Has A Thousand Eyes").

Brignola's soprano on Roditi's "Lambari" dazzles as much as his bari. He's no slouch on clarinet, either, as his DeFranco-inflected version of "More Than You Know" shows.

—Owen Cordle

**Like Old Times**—*Like Old Times; When Lights Are Low; Lambari; More Than You Know; The Night Has A Thousand Eyes; Y's Way; You Go To My Head.* (60:29)  
**Personnel**—Brignola, baritone and soprano saxophones, clarinet; Claudio Roditi, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Hicks, piano; George Mraz, bass; Dick Berk, drums.



**Grayfolded**

**Transitive Axis (Dark Star)**  
 Swell/Artifact S/A 1969-1996

★★★★

What we have here is Toronto producer John Oswald mucking around the Grateful Dead's tape vault selecting pieces of myriad "Dark Star" jams and creatively remixing them, utilizing current high-tech ingenuity. Oswald's work has resulted in a Deadhead's Midsummer Night's Dream, an expansive, extremely

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48 DOWN BEAT MARCH 1995



psychedelic "Dark Star" that, like a sonic time machine, seamlessly traverses various eras of the Dead's multi-decadal career (1968-93).

Although Oswald created his reputation doing a playful satire of Michael Jackson using the same technology, he approaches this project as a purely musical experience. Best moment: "Dark star crashes . . ." stretched out over a wild couple of minutes, is in itself worth the price of the CD. It sent me and my wife scurrying to the back of the freezer in search of any Day-Glo fungi that might still be waiting there for us, patiently hiding behind Ben and Jerry. —Robert Winters

**Transitive Axis (Dark Star)**—*Novature (Formless Nights Fall); Pouring Velvet; In Revolving Ash Light; Clouds Cast Through; Fault Forces; The Phil Zone; La Estrella Oscura; Recedes (While We Can).* (59:59)  
**Personnel**—John Oswald, producer; Jerry Garcia, guitar, vocals; Phil Lesh, bass; Bob Weir, rhythm guitar; Bill Kreutzmann, drums; Mickey Hart, drums; Robert Hunter, lyrics; various keyboardists.



**Joni Mitchell**  
**Turbulent Indigo**  
 Reprise 9 45786-2

★★★★

While the self-portrait cover painting is stylistically derivative of the brilliant Dutch artist Van Gogh, the songs Mitchell elegantly delivers on *Turbulent Indigo* are distinctively and inimitably her own. Mitchell's acoustic guitar is central to these songs, many of which are reminiscent of her *Blue* period.

No stranger to jazz musicians (most notably Charles Mingus and Jaco Pastorius), Mitchell re-enlists soprano saxophonist Wayne Shorter to embellish half the tunes with clipped phrases, delicate lines, and wafting trills. Given a supporting role for most of the album, Shorter stretches out on Mitchell's compelling retelling of Job's song, "The Sire Of Sorrow," where his soaring flights amplify the song's deep longing and anguish. —Dan Ouellette

**Turbulent Indigo**—*Sunny Sunday; Sex Kills; How Do You Stop; Turbulent Indigo; Last Cance Lost; The Magdalene Laundries; Not To Blame; Borderline; Yvette In English; The Sire Of Sorrow (Job's Sad Song).* (43:07)

**Personnel**—Mitchell, guitars, keyboard, percussion, vocals; Larry Klein, basses, percussion, keyboards; Wayne Shorter, soprano saxophone (1, 4, 7, 9, 10); Jim Keltner, Carlos Vega, drums; Michael Landau, electric guitar (2, 3); Greg Leisz, pedal steel guitar (6, 7); Bill Dillon, guitar/organ (9); Stewart Smith, orchestral electric guitar, electric guitar (3, 10); Seal, vocals (3); Charles Valentino, Kris Kello, backing vocals (9).

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## CD REVIEWS

### Unearthed Gems

by Robert Santelli

A "rarities" album can be a risky investment; more times than not the material included on it was never meant to leave record company vaults. Inferior songs, shoddy performances, and second-rate renditions of better-known numbers are usually what you pay good money for. Happily, that's not the case with the recent MCA/Chess release of two-disc rarity sets taken from the Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf catalogs.



Muddy Waters (seen here with the Rolling Stones in 1978): a new, sweeping panorama

As blues historian Mary Katherine Aldin points out in her engaging, informative liner notes that accompany *One More Mile* (MCA/Chess CHD2-9348; 58:57/70:18: ★★★★★), when it came to Muddy Waters, it was presumed that no such rarities existed. That's why collectors must have jumped for joy when MCA announced the release of this compilation, the debut volume in the new Chess "collectibles" series. On it, Waters' fans are treated to 17 previously unreleased tracks to go with alternate takes, remixed numbers, and the other rare songs, some of which had been available only in Europe. In all, there are 41 tracks here; together, they give a new, sweeping musical panorama of this legendary bluesman's long career.

The oldest tracks on *One More Mile*, namely, "Hard Days" and "Muddy Jumps One," go all the way back to 1948. The latter tune, a romping groove number, is one of the very few instrumentals Waters recorded for Chess. The rest of the set's material unfolds in chronological order, giving the fan a chance to listen in as Muddy's career takes shape, makes detours, and rises to greatness.

Of course, you could also get the same Waters' overview by spending time with the Muddy Waters Chess box set issued by MCA a few years ago. The real value of *One More Mile*, however, lies in the final 11 tracks on disc two. Taken from a 1972 Swiss radio broadcast never before released, Waters—with help from Louis Myers on acoustic guitar and Mojo Buford on harp—uses a toned-down electric guitar to re-interpret band classics like "Hoochie Coochie Man," "Baby Please Don't Go," and "Rollin' And Tumblin'" in striking fashion. It's the main reason why, if you're a Muddy Waters fan, you need to go the extra mile to get *One More Mile*.

The second Chess rarities package, this one

from Howlin' Wolf, fares almost as well as the Muddy Waters collection. Call *Ain't Gonna Be Your Dog* (MCA/Chess CHD2-9349; 62:02/59:46: ★★★★★) an excellent complement to the 1991 Chess box set that artfully summarized Wolf's career. There are 42 tracks on this new two-disc collection, seven of which were never released. Included is an acoustic fragment of "Rollin' And Tumblin'"; an interview clip of the Wolf discussing his "sound"; a stark, primitive version of "Ain't Going Down That Dirt Road" that'll make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up; alternate takes of "Poor Boy," "My Baby Told Me," and "Tail

Dragger"; and virtually everything else from Wolf's Chess years not included on the Chess box set. *Ain't Gonna Be Your Dog* doesn't shed new light on Wolf's career the way the Waters' package does, but it does fill in gaps and give us a good reason for rediscovering the genius of this blues great all over again.

A more mandatory listen is Little Milton's *Welcome To The Club: The Essential Chess Recordings* (MCA/Chess CHD2-9350; 64:30/64:15: ★★★★★). For far too long, Little Milton has been stuck in the shadow of B.B. King and Bobby "Blue" Bland, both of whom use horns with the same smart touch that Milton does in celebrating the blues. But as this delightful collection so convincingly proves, Milton is an artist of equal talent and is fully deserving of the same acclaim. Work your way through this 48-track set and you'll hear Little Milton move effortlessly from basic blues to romping rhythm & blues, and then into stirring soul blues with remarkable clarity and conviction. Milton's soaring, gospel-inspired vocals complement his gorgeous guitar solos that sting one moment and soothe the next. Taken together, they're the reason why Milton is a must for serious students of the blues and why *Welcome To The Club* ought to be your guide to getting to know him better.

Rolling Stones fans will find *Stone Rock Blues* (MCA/Chess CHD-9347: ★★★) interesting because the compilation contains the original versions of songs (and their creators) the band recorded during its formative, early '60s period. Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and Bo Diddley are the main Chess artists represented. To understand the conceptual relevancy of *Stone Rock Blues*, play the disc before you listen to your early Stones CDs, and compare what the Stones stole, er, borrowed, and what they simply used for inspiration.

DB

## Mulgrew Miller

by Larry Birnbaum

**G**rowing up in blues-drenched Greenwood, Mississippi, Mulgrew Miller played piano in church from age eight and took up r&b at 11. After jazz studies at Memphis State, he became the first pianist in Mercer Ellington's orchestra, "replacing" Duke himself (1977), then succeeded John Hicks in Betty Carter's trio ('80), eventually joining Art Blakey's Messengers ('83) and Tony Williams ('86). Too old for young-lionhood, Miller's become one of the most in-demand sidemen in jazz; since 1980, he's appeared on nearly 200 albums. As a leader, he's recorded eight discs—six for Landmark, two for Novus—usually in trio format.

At 39, Miller continues to tour and record with artists like Bob Mintzer and Joe Lovano, as well as his own trio and the Contemporary Piano Ensemble. His latest release, *With Our Own Eyes* (Novus), features drummer Tony Reedus and bassist Richard Goods. This was Miller's first Blindfold Test.

## Jacky Terrasson

"I Love Paris" (from Jacky Terrasson, *Blue Note*) Terrasson, piano; Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Leon Parker, drums.

It's a pianist who has a penchant for drama, or dramatic effects. It could be Cyrus Chestnut—that's who comes to mind immediately. Also, some of the things he did reminded me of things I've heard Gonzalo Rubalcaba do. From the perspective of vocabulary and conception, I didn't hear anything that I could identify as someone I know very well. 3½ stars.

## Art Tatum

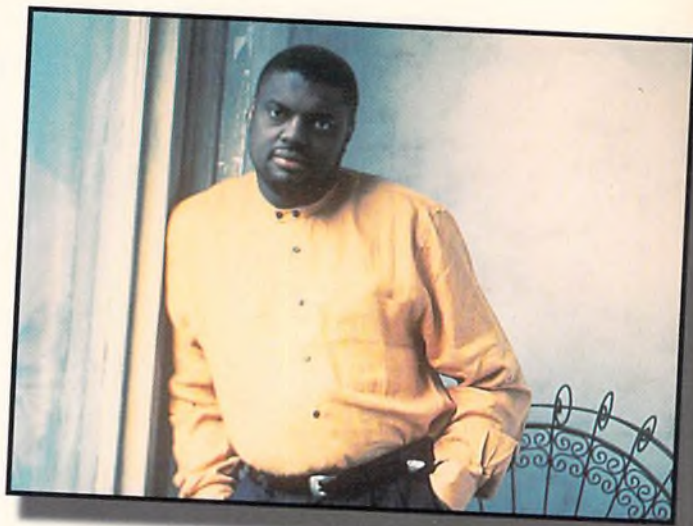
"Deep Purple" (from *A Piano Anthology*, Decca/GRP) Tatum, piano.

Definitely Art Tatum. All the stars in the universe. I think Art Tatum was one of the greatest artists we've seen in this century. I've spent many hours, many years, listening to Tatum, from the very beginning of my jazz career. He's been inspiring to probably every pianist who's traveled the jazz path. I can't say enough about Art Tatum. His sense of harmony seems to transcend any kind of formula or concept. It sounds like it's almost intuitive sometimes. I hear more similarities between Tatum and Monk than I do between Tatum and a lot of other pianists who are often compared to him, simply because of the way that they hear harmony—not necessarily their touch.

## Monty Alexander

"Three Little Birds" (from *Caribbean Circle*, Chesky) Alexander, piano; Slide Hampton, trombone; Jon Faddis, trumpet; Frank Foster, tenor sax; Dave Glasser, alto sax; Othello Molineaux, steel drums; Ira Coleman, bass; Herlin Riley, drums.

I think it's Monty Alexander. You hear the strong Jamaican roots on that tune, but also I know Monty's style—that happy, joyous thing in his playing—and I recognize the way he plays time. Monty is rooted in the jazz-trio tradition, but he's very expansive beyond that; so it's sometimes like listening to sort of a modern-day Oscar Peterson or Ahmad Jamal crossed with some of the more contemporary players—Wynton Kelly or even further beyond—because of the way he deals with chord substitutions and things like that. I don't recognize the tune, but I presume it's one of his originals. I wouldn't give anything less than 5 stars for Monty, because he's an artist who is able to deliver what he intends to deliver with a certain kind of integrity.



## Bud Powell

"Star Eyes" (from *The Best Of Bud Powell On Verve*, Verve) Powell, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Art Taylor, drums.

That sounded more like Bud Powell than anyone who was influenced by him, so I would say it's Bud Powell. I don't really know this recording, but it sounded like Max Roach on drums, and the tune was "Star Eyes." Needless to say, I think Bud's one of the greatest melodists of all time. We were just listening to pure genius. Bud's approach to playing trio was not really so much about orchestration and arrangements as it is pure improvising. I can't think of enough stars for Bud—more than I can count.

## Horace Silver

"Let It All Hang Out" (from *Pencil Packin' Papa*, Columbia) Silver, piano; Oscar Brashear, Ron Stout, Jeff Bernell, trumpet; George Bohanon, Maurice Spears, trombone; Suzette Moriarty, French horn; Red Holloway, Rickey Woodard, tenor sax; Bob Maize, bass; Carl Burnette, drums; O.C. Smith, vocal.

The sound reminded me of early '60s r&b. The pianist reminded me very much of Horace Silver. I'm not certain of the vocalist, but he reminded me of Kevin Mahogany. I've heard more gratifying Horace Silver. I would give 3 stars for the performance, 5 stars and more to Horace, inasmuch as I would give a rating. I think Horace Silver is a fantastic pianist. In my rediscovery of Horace, I found him to be extremely innovative. Even back in those early recordings, Horace was doing some very innovative things on the piano. I love Horace Silver, but you can't evaluate the contribution of someone like Horace in terms of star ratings. Just giving an evaluation to the performance here, I'm glad that this is not the only recording I've ever heard of Horace Silver.

## Ahmad Jamal

"Ahmad's Blues" (from *Ahmad's Blues*, Chess/GRP) Jamal, piano; Israel Crosby, bass; Vernel Fournier, drums.

That was one of the greatest trios of all time, the Ahmad Jamal Trio, with Israel Crosby and Vernel Fournier. "Ahmad's Blues," I believe, was the tune, and that's a very classic recording. Ahmad was one of my first idols, along with Oscar Peterson, so it's very difficult to find enough superlatives to comment on Ahmad Jamal. He's just a fantastic artist. I don't think to say that he's "ever-evolving" aptly describes him, because that sort of indicates that he's evolving through time. But Ahmad was always sort of timeless. And what a cohesive unit, and what a conception of playing together. Genius. Beyond 5 stars.