



HALL OF FAME



ARTIST OF THE YEAR



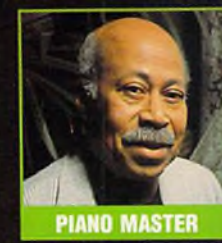
BLUES CHAMP



RISING STAR



DRUM KING



PIANO MASTER

DOWNBEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

August 1995, \$2.95 U.K. £2.50 Can. \$3.75

Bird STILL Lives!

Winners!
43rd Annual
International
Critics Poll

Leon Parker &
Graham Haynes

Tal Farlow

"Smitty" Smith
Blindfolded



16 Charlie Parker

Reflections Of Bird

If alto giant Charlie Parker were alive today, he'd turn 75 this month! A host of Bird contemporaries and collaborators celebrate the bebop great through shared stories and thoughtful reminiscence.

By Ira Gitler

Cover photograph of Charlie Parker by Herman Leonard.

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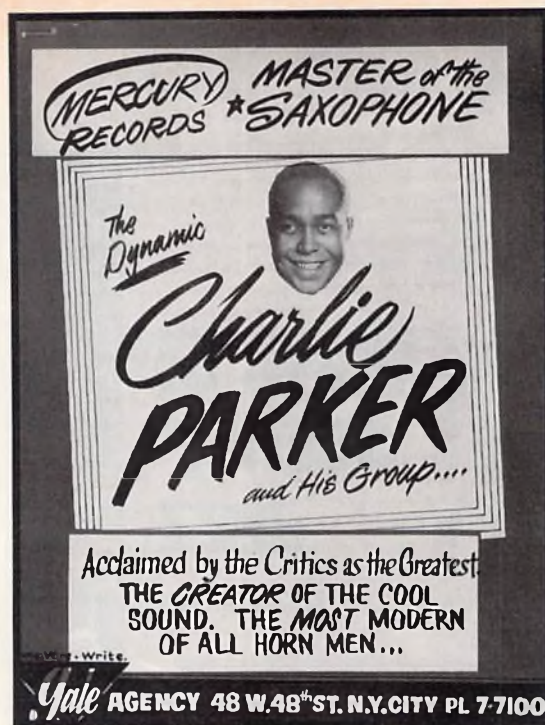
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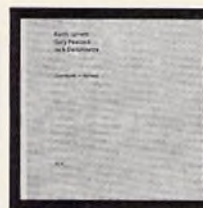


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Reflections of

On the 75th anniversary of his birth, Charlie Parker's legacy burns strong

By Ira Gitler

Seventy-five years after his birth and 40 since his death, Charlie Parker's star burns brighter than ever. The "BIRD LIVES" graffiti that seemed to instantly appear on New York City walls and sidewalks after he died on March 12, 1955, were prophetic in a manner far beyond the strongly reactive feelings of the chalkers. Today, not only are his surviving colleagues perpetuating his legacy in a variety of ways, but new generations of musicians are reiterating that the esthetic brought about in great part by Parker is indeed the *lingua franca* of jazz.

In Parker's 75th anniversary year (birthday August 29, 1920) it is time to reflect on the life of this 20th-century genius. As Eddie Jefferson sings in his version of "Now's The Time": "Reminisce with me and think about the Bird."

Max Roach, Parker's drummer in the halcyon years of the mid- and late 1940s, once said: "Bird was kind of like the sun giving off the energy we drew from him. He had a way of playing that affected every instrument on the bandstand."

That force of personality burned itself indelibly through our ears into our minds, hearts and souls. The alto saxophonist changed lives grandly, almost imperceptibly and in all manner of degrees in between. Having become a disciple of Dizzy Gillespie's after several listenings, the first of which had left me with decidedly mixed feelings, I heard Dizzy's recording of "Groovin' High," discovered Charlie Parker for the first time and was completely taken with his sound and style. I've talked to innumerable musicians over the years and so many remember when and where they initially heard Bird. For Jimmy Rowles, it was on Red Norvo's "Congo Blues" in a Salt Lake City music store when Jimmy was in the Army.

Trumpeter Idrees Sulieman was with the Carolina Cotton Pickers in 1941 when he encountered Parker in Kansas City at the Kentucky Club's after-hours sessions. The guys in the band thought their own Porter Kilbert was the man on alto. After the two locked horns, the Pickers said, "We're still with Porter. Porter don't have nothing to worry about."

But Kilbert explained, "Yeah, but he threw in something different, man."

His bandmates countered with, "It's different, yeah, but you played everything he played."

Porter rejoindered, "Yeah, but he thought of it first."

"When we left Kansas City," explains Sulieman, "we went to someplace in South Carolina, and after the job we went



f Bird

someplace to eat, and there was this nickelodeon. Every time they put a nickel in they'd play Jay McShann's [sings *Bird's* solo from 'Sepian Bounce']. So Porter said, 'That's him!' So we said, 'Who?' And he answered, 'That's the alto player.' So we kept listening, and by the time we left that night, we *knew*. When Porter got home he played the solo, too, and we made him play it over and over. That was the first time I really understood Bird."

Tenor saxophonist Jimmy Heath had a similar experience while on the road with Nat Towles' band. "We were in Savannah," recalls Heath, "and I heard this record on a juke box. It was either 'Hootie Blues' or 'Sepian Bounce,' and I called to Billy Mitchell and some of the other guys to come over and listen. We kept putting one nickel after the other into that juke box. We didn't know who the saxophonist was."

It was McShann's "Hootie Blues" that got Johnny Griffin during a teenage rite of passage in his native Chicago. "I was at a house party in 1943 with my cousin who was older than me. We were dancing with these girls and I heard this McShann record with Walter Brown singing 'Hootie Blues.' I said, 'What is that? Wait a minute!' It was Bird. I wore that record out. Almost broke up the party."

What was it about Parker that had touched him so directly? "It was not so much harmonically," he says. "I got that later in Joe Morris' band from Elmo Hope. It was the flexibility and the rhythmic dynamics. He didn't know what he was going to play. He'd get himself into a maze but he'd find the right doors in the maze, the secret passageways that no one else had explored. Kenny Clarke used to say that Bird was really an arranger, the way he phrased."

Heath was still playing alto and in his native Philadelphia in 1947 when, as he tells it, "Bird came to town to play at the Downbeat with Miles, Duke Jordan, Tommy Potter and Max Roach. He didn't have a horn, and said to me, 'B [undoubtedly aware that Jimmy's nickname at the time was 'Little Bird'], can I borrow your horn?'"

"So every night, I'd bring it to the club, stay there all night and take it home with me. Bird was commuting and would go back to New York every night. So I had the horn with his mouthpiece on it in my cellar, and I'd play it every day. I figured that whatever he put into the horn might come out when I played it. I'd look in the horn to see if it was in there."

"On the weekend, my big band was playing a benefit during the day, and I asked Bird if he would come over and play, which he did. Max came and played, too. Trane [John Coltrane] was in my band then. It was a special day for all of us."

Bassist Percy Heath, another member of the illustrious musical Heaths of Philadelphia, says of his brother's horn-lending service: "Jimmy didn't mind giving Bird his horn. He would have been there every night anyway, and that was his ticket."

"You know, when musicians came to play in Philly," he explains, "my mother used to invite them to eat dinner with us. Bird wouldn't come if he was high. He'd call and say, 'P, tell her anything, but I'm not coming in this condition.' He respected her house. That's the kind of man he was."

Parker was called by some "the most famous junkie in jazz." And yet, he publicly stated, "Any musician who says he is

(clockwise) Billy Bauer, Eddie Safranski, Charlie Parker, Lennie Tristano, RCA Recording Studios, New York, January 1949, at a recording session for the Metronome All Stars

playing better on tea, the needle or when he is juiced, is a plain, straight liar."

Despite these words, many musicians were drawn to heroin because Bird was using and they felt it would bring them closer to his level. His attempt to discourage baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan went beyond verbiage. "At the time I went back to Philadelphia after [Gene] Krupa's band," says Mulligan. "I used to come to New York a lot and visit with Bird, and stay with him at a place up at 148th Street, a dreadful little room in the top floor of a place. . . . And you know, for the longest time he kept the junk scene away from me. He didn't even want me to know that. And he'd excuse himself and go into the other room, turn on and come back. But finally—and he did it as a warning to me, he said, 'This is ugly. Keep away from it.' One time, he turned on in front of me. And he did it in the most horrendous way possible, with blood all over the place; it just was dreadful. So he made his point. I never even thought about turning on, at that period."

To hear two of his foremost alto disciples talk about him is to further refute the false portrait of the bumbling, drunkenman-boy Clint Eastwood painted in his film *Bird*. Jackie McLean—who shared angry feelings with me as we left a screening of *Bird* at an Italian jazz festival a few years ago—talked about Bird, the human being, with love a few months ago. "He was at my first record date," Jackie related, referring to the October 1951 session under Miles Davis' name. "I was surprised and a little nervous, but he was supportive. Of course, over the years, I heard him play many, many times. But to talk to him away from the bandstand, I think that was only 10 or 15 times.

"One day I saw him on Broadway in front of the Paramount Theater [on 43rd Street]. We stopped and chatted. He asked me where I was going, and I told him I was just walking around. We got on an A train up to 145th Street to the funeral home where Hot Lips Page was layed out. I was impressed just to see him pay that respect to another musician. He was looking at Lips in the coffin, and I was standing back there looking at him, in awe of *him*.

"Then we walked 20 blocks down to the Apollo Theater. On the way we passed a fish market. Bird looked in the window and asked me if I saw the colors on the fish. I didn't know what he meant until the sunlight hit the scales of the fish. A little later we were standing on a corner waiting for the light to change, and a plane went overhead. He said, 'I wonder where that plane is going. I don't know, but I wish I was on it.'"

Hooked on heroin by a "family friend" at 16, Charlie Parker endured a lot of physical and mental pain, but he made beautiful music out of it. If he couldn't shake the blues, he could sure bake them and supply a lot of balm for wounded souls. McLean talked of his warmth. "One of my favorite photographs of Bird," he told me, "is where he's holding a little puppy against his cheek."

Phil Woods recounted the time he was working at a Greenwich Village strip in the '50s, a time when Parker was ubiquitous in that Bohemian section of Manhattan. "I was playing at the Nut Club," Phil remembered, "and someone came in and said Bird is over at Arthur's Tavern. So I rushed over, and there he was playing Larry Rivers' baritone backed by a snare drum and an old upright piano. I looked up at him and he was the whole bandstand, like the way you look to your kids when they're small.

"I was going through a thing with my horn, dissatisfied with the reed, the mouthpiece, everything. But I said to Bird, 'Perhaps you'd like to play my alto?' When Bird said yes, I rushed back across Sheridan Square and came back with the horn. He played 'Long Ago And Far Away,' and I said to myself, 'Hmmm, the horn seems to be okay.' Then he said, 'Now you play.' There I was in the kiln, the New York fire. But he said it

with love, paternally."

When Woods raced back to his gig to play "Harlem Nocturne" for the strippers, as he put it, "the 800th time," his horn seemed to soar.

The many times I saw Bird in person were all special because I knew I was in the presence of a man who comes along once in a lifetime. Some of the most memorable were the Sunday late-afternoon-into-the-evening sessions at the Open Door in the Village in 1953. Bird always played beautifully, but sometimes his demeanor was a bit odd. Once he and tenorman Brew Moore walked around the dance floor that served as the bandstand, playing at each other until they simultaneously serenaded what appeared to be a large spot of dried, hardened chewing gum on the floor. Another time, after a solo, he sat on a chair in the middle of the floor, covered his face with a large handkerchief and went into a sleep from which he couldn't be awakened for a long time. On a third occasion, during an intermission, he brought on two corny singers to do a quasi-country version of "Route 66." It had the desired effect. People began to leave, which allowed those lined up outside the previously packed room a chance to get in, thereby creating more paying customers.

Percy Heath recalls: "One time I played with him at one of Bob Reisner's Sunday afternoon sessions at the Open Door. The place was jammed. Bird was late as usual, but nobody left. Bird came and played and everybody was knocked out. Then Reisner said he was going to dock Bird. I got angry. I told him, 'Dock Bird? Did you have to give anybody their money back?'"

When I was working for Prestige Records in the early '50s, owner Bob Weinstock wanted to record Bird. Plans were worked out to have Bird record with Miles Davis, who was under contract to Prestige. Bird, at the time, was with Verve, so it was decided to have him play tenor. I rented a King for him and he showed up for the rehearsal a week before the actual recording, but Miles failed to appear. No rehearsal.

Incidentally, the story you may have read about Bird giving his last quarter to a blind saxophonist on Broadway is not true. I was there. Bird had come over to the Prestige office to get an advance on his money for the recording. He was issued a check for \$75, but there was no place to cash it. So Billie Wallington (wife of pianist George Wallington), who was then a secretary at Prestige, and I accompanied Bird over to the Colony Record Shop on Broadway, where they cashed the check. On the way there we had passed the blind saxophonist who was playing "All The Things You Are." After leaving the record store we passed him again. That's when Bird told him, "Nice changes," and dropped the quarter in his cup.

As for the record date, it took place on Jan. 30, 1953. Sonny Rollins was the other tenorman and I was the producer. Miles wrote about it in his autobiography, but his account contains many mistakes. The group was a sextet, and I had gotten a fifth of gin and 12 bottles of beer for everyone, including myself, to share. The session was late in getting underway because Miles did not show for quite a while. Bird took this time lapse as an opportunity to get into the gin, and in a couple of giant swigs, consumed most of it. When we finally did get going he drifted off to dreamland in the middle of a take. In his autobiography, Miles says that he and Bird had words and that he got mad and "started fucking up" after their verbal exchange.

As I recall, Miles was having trouble with his lip and takes were breaking down. He didn't seem particularly inspired, and when I left the control room and told him that he "wasn't playing shit," in a calculated ploy to jolt him out of his lethargy, he used it as an excuse to get out of the date. "Cat says I'm not playing shit," he muttered as he began packing his horn. When I realized that my tactic was backfiring, and my job could be in jeopardy, I pleaded with him to stay, explaining that I didn't mean what I had said and was just trying to get him going. He

relented and went back to the microphone.

Bird rallied to play some deep-voiced, rolling tenor. He also found time to counsel Rollins with some "do as I say, don't do as I do" philosophy, which Sonny eventually took to heart. It was at the end of a very long afternoon that Miles and Bird had an exchange. Miles chastised Bird for drinking and nodding off. "I never did that to you on your dates," he complained. Bird, now in an expansive mood, replied in his most stentorian, mock-serious tone. He called him Lily Pons, the famed operatic soprano, as a way of saying "prima donna," and offered the platitudes, "To produce beauty, you must suffer pain. From the oyster comes the pearl."

The last years of Parker's life were not easy. Impresario Norman Granz had tried to popularize him, and certainly the sessions with strings broadened his audience while producing one of his many masterpieces, "Just Friends." There were also instances of spontaneous genius in settings that ranged from Chico O'Farrill's *Afro-Cuban Jazz Suite* to Neal Hefti's "Repetition." And you should listen to the surreal, remixed version of "In The Still Of The Night," a collaboration with Gil Evans and the Dave Lambert Singers, not forgetting his last great quartet session with a version of the lapidarian "Confirmation." Percy Heath was the bassist. Does he remember anything about that 1953 date?

"Anytime I played with Bird," he states humbly, "I felt unnecessary. I'd say to myself, 'Just don't get in the way.' Whenever he played, he lifted the whole bandstand. All you had to do was hang on."

Too often, however, Bird was an itinerant, picking up local rhythm sections as he went; a man at the mercy of "my judges," as he described his booking agency. James Moody remembers having a Chinese dinner with Parker in Detroit during this time. "It was the last time I saw him," says Moody. "When we came out of the restaurant, I took him home. I couldn't stay in those downtown hotels, but that's where Bird was staying. He got out of my station wagon in his Bermuda shorts, a funky white t-shirt, black dress socks and black shoes. I wonder how he got in there, but I think he said the New York boys wanted him in there."

Bird's "judges" probably figured they could keep an eye on him more easily this way.

The last great performance of Bird's that I witnessed was the Town Hall concert of October 30, 1954. He played beautifully and thrilled the large crowd. Unfortunately, the concert did not begin on time, and when the stagehands rang down the curtain on a Bird who was in full flight the entire audience was left with a great sense of disappointment.

Bird was not a well man. His stomach had troubled him ever since the ulcer attack he had in 1951 after returning from a European trip. His heart and liver were not in good shape. On the night of March 4, 1995, I went down to Birdland, the club that had been named for him when it opened in 1949. Bird had been hired to play a special, two-night engagement with Kenny Dorham, Bud Powell, Charles Mingus and Art Blakey. I got there early and encountered Bird at the bar. He was wearing bedroom slippers (probably as a reaction to swollen ankles), and was popping little white pills, which I later figured must have been codeine. As bad as he must have been feeling, he said to me, "How have *you* been?" I had been going through a period of not much happening and feeling down. I don't know how he knew. Maybe he didn't, but the way he looked at me and emphasized the "you" made me feel he had some intuition.

The evening turned out to be a disaster. Powell was in no shape to play, and Bird, after having words with him, left the stand. When Bud did likewise a bit later, Bird went back to the stand and intoned Powell's name repeatedly into the microphone. Dorham tried to hold the set together, but it was to little avail. Mingus went to the mic and said he didn't want to



be associated with this and that these people—meaning Bird and Bud—were killing jazz. I didn't stay around to see the evening's end. It was a sad night, and the last time I saw Bird alive.

When Bird died, I was shocked and filled with not only a great sadness but a terrible emptiness. This feeling was very much with me on the day of his funeral. It was a battleship-gray day filled with rain. On my way from the subway to the Abyssinian Baptist Church for the service, the heavens opened and wept copiously for him. I was soaked, but it didn't make me feel any worse than I already did.

Experiencing Parker was a mixture of the bitter and the sweet, as Max Roach attests. "In the late '40s, Miles and I were working with Bird along with Duke Jordan and Tommy Potter," he begins. "Everything with Bird was imaginative, creative and dramatic. We were making \$25 a night and Miles was married and living in Brooklyn with two kids, and it was really difficult for him to make it.

"We were in Cleveland or someplace. Miles and I roomed together, and we went to Bird's room to get paid. The door was ajar, so we walked in, and there was Bird sitting on his bed in a stocking-cap, counting a pile of money. When he saw us, he started pushing the money under the covers and putting us down for not knocking. Miles told Bird he needed more money, and Bird responded by telling Miles he didn't like his hair, his nose, his chin, etc., until he had worked his way down his whole person. And he wasn't using polite language. As he went, he built to a crescendo. It was like a solo, and he finished with, 'And furthermore, you're fired.'

"There were empty bottles in the room. Miles grabbed one, broke it on the side of the dresser and moved toward Bird. Bird looked at him with that smile of his and said to me, 'Max, I think he's mad at me.' He stopped him with that smile. We each got a \$10 raise. 'Just don't tell Duke and Tommy about it,' he said.

"In those days you worked very hard, six or seven sets from 9 to 4. There usually was an empty club for the early show, maybe a drunk or two. Bird would have us play the fastest, most difficult tempos—upstairs. He used them to warm up. They reduced everyone in the band to nothing. Miles was sputtering. I was straining to keep up. Then the rest of the night it would be more relaxed.

"When Bird died, Miles and I were commiserating about this great friend and teacher who, when we asked him about his harmonic concepts, would break it down to the simplest ingredients for us. But Miles, with his cryptic humor, thinking back to those opening numbers, said, 'He died before we could get even with him.'"

Bird died before his time. But if then was his time, so is now. His music is for the ages because it is bedrock and sophistication combined in a rare blend. Its appeal to the current crop of musicians is verbalized by Michael Weiss as clearly and incisively as he articulates at the piano in tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffin's quartet. "Bird had the most profound influence on my concept of improvisation," he began. "The infinite warmth of his ideas and his melodic integrity—the way he shaped his melodic ideas. His logic. One idea was a perfect complement for the one before. His phrases. How they told a story. The commas, the periods. His overall organization of musical ideas."

Weiss took a breath. "And that's only one part. There was his strong sense of rhythm. You can block out the rhythm section and just listen to Bird, and you'll still be snapping your fingers."

Michael paused again but without missing a beat, added: "His freedom to draw on any idea. On a ballad he could veer off from the melody and yet come back to the melody at the right time. Split-second timing. And his ability to start a phrase in any place—the weak part of a cadence or anywhere."

Peter Delano, one of the brightest of the really young

pianists, listened to Bird early on. His father, a saxophonist, played records for him in his pre-teen years. "The first Charlie Parker song I heard was 'My Little Suede Shoes' with Walter Bishop Jr., Teddy Kotick, Roy Haynes, Jose Mangual and Luis Miranda," says Delano. "After hearing Parker's innovative, melodious lines over the changes, I delved into more of his originals such as 'Au Privave' and 'Confirmation.' These tunes, as well as Parker's extraordinary renditions of standards like 'Lover Man' or 'Just Friends,' helped greatly to shape my compositional and improvisational styles. If Charlie Parker had never existed, current-day jazz would be immensely different. Not only did Bird create an entirely new form of the music, but his legacy has affected how musicians and listeners have approached jazz throughout the past 50 years."

Jesse Davis, one of the most consistently swinging, *vox humana* young altoists in the Parker tradition, sums it up: "One of the main reasons I dig Bird is because his style encompasses everyone's; his stuff was so vast." **DB**

CHARLIE PARKER—AN ESSENTIAL DISCOGRAPHY

Perhaps no artist in music, let alone jazz, has a discography that's as hotly contested, bootlegged or rearranged as Charlie Parker's. And to think his recording career covered a relatively few short years (1940-54), included a recording ban and was completed years before stereo was introduced on a mass scale.

The following titles, while certainly not an exhaustive offering, cover the most recent releases along with essentials that have been out for a number of years. All are listed as currently available and are with notables from Parker's career. In most cases, sidemen and reissue dates are listed in parentheses. Because there is so much great music to choose from, so-called best-of and greatest-hits packages, which usually skim and simply give overviews, are not included. And, while cassette and LP versions may be available, only CD versions are listed.

Many labels have been involved in Parker's catalogue, but the vast bulk are covered by four: Stash, Savoy, Dial and Verve. Verve, Stash and Mosaic have combined material in boxed sets.

—John Ephland

AT STORYVILLE—Blue Note 85108
AT THE 1946 JATP CONCERT—
 Verve 314-513756 (Lester Young,
 Dizzy Gillespie, Coleman Hawkins, et
 al.; 8-92)
**THE COMPLETE BIRTH OF
 BEBOP**—Stash 535 (some of his first
 recordings as a leader; recorded 1943;
 5-91)
BIRD AT THE HI-HAT—Blue Note
 99787 (Sonny Rollins, Jimmy Woode;
 rec. '53-'54; 3-93)
BIRD AT ST. NICK'S—Fantasy/OJC-041
 (Red Rodney, Al Haig, Tommy Potter,
 Roy Haynes; rec. 1950; 11-92)
BIRD ON 52ND STREET—Fantasy/
 OJC-114 (Miles Davis, Duke Jordan,
 Potter, Max Roach; rec. 1948; 9-94)
THE BIRD RETURNS—Savoy Jazz
 0155 (Davis, Kenny Dorham, Haig,
 Potter, Roach, Lucky Thompson,
 Milt Jackson)
THE BIRD YOU NEVER HEARD—
 Stash 280 (contains previously
 unreleased recordings; rec. 1950-54;
 11-88)
THE CHARLIE PARKER STORY—
 Savoy Jazz 0105 (Gillespie, Davis,
 Sadik Hakim, Curly Russell, Roach)
**THE GENIUS OF CHARLIE
 PARKER**—Savoy Jazz 0104
 (Davis, Jordan, Clyde Hart, Slim
 Gaillard, et al.)
THE IMMORTAL CHARLIE PARKER—
 Savoy Jazz 0102 (Davis, Bud Powell,
 John Lewis, Potter, Russell, Roach, et al.)
JAZZ AT MASSEY HALL—
 Fantasy/OJC 044 (originally issued on
 Charlie Mingus' Debut label, and
 previously issued on Prestige as *The
 Greatest Jazz Concert Ever*, this
 Toronto concert from 1953 includes

Gillespie, Roach, Mingus and
 Powell; 2-89)
JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC—
 Verve 314-519803 (9-93)
**THE LEGENDARY DIAL MASTERS,
 VOL. 1**—Stash 23 (first volume of
 complete set listed under "boxed sets"
 below; Davis, Potter, Jordan, Roach,
 J.J. Johnson, et al.)
**THE LEGENDARY DIAL MASTERS,
 VOL. 2**—Stash 25 (the remaining
 material from the Dial sessions listed
 below)
NEWLY DISCOVERED SIDES—
 Savoy Jazz 0156 (Davis, Haig, Potter,
 Roach, et al.; 6-93)
NOW'S THE TIME—Verve 825671
 (Roach, Haig, Percy Heath)
WITH STRINGS—Verve 831553

co-led with Dizzy Gillespie
BIRD AND DIZ—Verve 831133
 (Thelonious Monk, Buddy Rich, Russell;
 rec. June 6, 1950; contains three
 previously unreleased tracks)

boxed sets

**BIRD: THE COMPLETE CHARLIE
 PARKER ON VERVE**—Verve 10-
 837141 (10-CD set covering the years
 1946-54, including previously
 unreleased material; 2-89)
THE COMPLETE DIAL SESSIONS—
 Stash 567-70 (two-CD set covering
 Bird's Dial years, 1946-48, features
 classic performances with Gillespie,
 Davis, Johnson and Roach, 6-93)
**THE COMPLETE DEAN BENEDETTI
 RECORDINGS OF CHARLIE
 PARKER**—Mosaic 129 (basically, a
 collection of live Bird solos, recorded in
 '47 and '48, this seven-CD set released
 mid-'90)

A Widening Jazz

by John Ephland

Two names jump from this year's Critics Poll: Joe Lovano and James Carter. They both play saxophones with aplomb, one excelling in his collaborative efforts, the other by sheer force of his youthful, inside-out, multi-instrumental ways. For veteran Lovano, DB critics offer two of the Poll's most coveted awards: Jazz Artist of the Year and Jazz Album of the Year (see p. 26). His album, *Rush Hour*, was performed with an extended ensemble under the expert direction of Gunther Schuller.

As for Carter, the critics voted him a three-time winner in the Talent Deserving Wider Recognition category: for Jazz Artist of the Year, Tenor Saxophone and Baritone Saxophone! Carter might have won for Jazz Album of the Year if he hadn't released *three* eligible CDs. His *J.C. On The Set* placed third in the voting. (*Jurassic Classics* and *The Real Quietstorm* also received votes.) The net effect has created a critical groundswell. According to Larry Birnbaum, "He's a consolidator in that he's bringing in past styles, only it's a

broader range: he's going further back and further forward." Similarly, Jim Macnie sees Carter "as a bridge-builder, because his dedication to rhythm always gives a context to the farthest 'out' regions traveled by his horn(s)." Needless to say, the 26-year-old Carter has avoided being pigeonholed.



The Blues & The Funk

The past year also saw "the virtual disappearance of electric instruments," according to Birnbaum. "When Spyro Gyra goes (mostly) acoustic, it's a sign of the times." The "unplugged times," so to speak. It even carried over to blues. We saw the reemergence of country blues as a big-time phenomenon. The successful Robert Johnson boxed set the year before started things off. Notables like Joe Louis Walker and Eric Clapton (who had his own *Unplugged* good fortune) picked up their acoustic guitars to sing the praises of the Mississippi Delta. But even unknown legends (albeit playing their electric guitars) were celebrated alongside the big names. R.L. Burnside (who won TDWR for Blues Artist of the Year), Junior Kimbrough

and CeDell Davis all had strong, well-received albums. Successful young upstarts like Keb' Mo' were recording country blues for labels like the revitalized, major-label affiliated Okeh. And Birnbaum noticed that "samples of Son House and Howlin' Wolf were recorded on an album called *The Wolf That House Built* by a group named Little Axe," thus amplifying the mainstreaming of older blues styles.

Jazz was part of the mix as well. Frank John Hadley noted a "blurring of the dividing line between jazz and blues. Dewey Redman was collaborating with the Holmes Brothers, Randy Weston was doing likewise with Johnny Copeland." Not unlike these moves, Hadley mentioned another development: the return of the organ. Most visible were the bands of John Scofield (featuring Larry Goldings), John McLaughlin (Joey DeFrancesco) and John Abercrombie (Dan Wall). And, of course, there were celebrated "returns" of such legends as Jimmy Smith and Lonnie Smith. A footnote: the new album from drummer Carl Allen features pianist Cyrus Chestnut on organ. In all cases, the emphasis was on feeling, through some kind of funkiness and the blues, if not religion.



Jazz Bandwidth

A Recombined, Reanimated Music

In a related vein, Ira Gitler observed a combination of other musics with jazz. Chief examples cited were Randy Weston, whose work with African musicians continued with the Gwana singers of Morocco and the Splendid Master Musicians of Marrakech. Weston represented jazz going out to the world. Gitler also noticed oudist Rabih Abou-Khalil as an example of the world coming to jazz, as artists such as Steve Swallow, Kenny Wheeler and Howard Levy joined forces with the Middle Eastern master.

Gitler noted another positive development: "The climate is friendlier, less scrutinizing for women in jazz. With their increasing role in the music, it's getting past that point of, 'Oh, it's a woman playing jazz.'" Who's the most notable example? Maria Schneider, TDWR winner in the Arranger category.

For Michael Bourne, "A precious handful of musicians are left that remember the beginning. But the continuity is there." He offers this illustration: "Having just returned from Kansas City [where a historical movie using jazz musicians is being filmed—

see p. 12], it was curious to see all stripes of the music represented. You heard Fletcher Henderson, Basie, Ellington. It was a summing up and a flashing forward—David Murray and Don Byron were playing next to Joshua Redman and Cyrus Chestnut. The roots are deep, and there are plenty more flowers to come."

Right, Left & Center

The tradition continued through repertory groups like the ones at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. Also heard were lush, romantic recordings of standards and ballads by jazz legends such as J.J. Johnson and Harold Land—even David Sanborn released one. And young neotrad players like TDWR Trumpet winner Nicholas Payton seemed to impress everybody, gathering 105 votes.

But for those seeking out the wild and the wooly in jazz, the past year showcased the most left-of-center musical activity the music's seen and heard since the '60s. In fact, there was so much of it that certain writers were led to call the term "avant garde" a misleading, inaccurate one. How could one lump Henry Threadgill, fresh from his major-label deal with Columbia, with the tenor madness of Charles Gayle or David S. Ware? To list Medeski, Martin & Wood (TDWR winner for Electric Jazz Group) with Ornette Coleman's Prime Time band under the avant-garde banner is just plain sloppy.

Other so-called avant gardists included the veteran altoist Sonny Simmons. In a celebrated comeback, Simmons rode a wave with his *Ancient Ritual* CD, helping him to win TDWR in the Alto Saxophone category. And Big Band TDWR winners Either/Orchestra, repeat Clarinet winner Don Byron, drum experimenter/TDWR

winner Leon Parker and Chicagoan Kahil El'Zabar (TDWR winner for Percussion) all offered exciting music. Speaking of Chicago, one of the brightest stars to watch was the busy reedist/bandleader Ken Vandermark, who could be heard on a variety of recordings in different contexts. Vandermark's music, which includes everything from electric guitars and radio operators to solo sax excursions, puts critics in a bind because of its variety: Is it New Wave? Free-jazz?



ALAN HANCOCK



KEN FRANKLING

Noise-oriented rock? Just plain Outside? Alternative Punk? You get the idea. Here's hoping this time next year he's *somewhere* on the Poll.

One final notice: Bucking the conservative trend of the critics over the past many years (Frank Zappa excluded), the late saxophonist/composer/arranger Julius Hemphill won entry into the Hall of Fame (see p. 24). Maybe we *are* all one big family.

In sum, we saw and heard a widening jazz bandwidth with greater appreciation for the more adventurous stuff alongside repertory, classic and traditional approaches to jazz. Healthy developments, indeed. **DB**

Pictured across: Betty Carter, Herbie Hancock, John McLaughlin, James Carter

Julius Hemphill

HALL OF FAME

HALL OF FAME

- 45 Julius Hemphill
- 39 Muhal Richard Abrams
- 33 Milt Jackson
- 33 J.J. Johnson
- 28 Antonio Carlos Jobim
- 27 Carmen McRae
- 26 Artie Shaw
- 22 Betty Carter
- 22 Don Pullen
- 17 John Lewis

By John Corbett

IF last year's induction of Frank Zappa into the Down Beat Hall of Fame proved that death could prompt protectionist jazz critics to cross sacred genre boundaries, this year's surprise winner—alto and soprano saxophonist/flautist/composer Julius Arthur Hemphill—further confirms the power of passing away. Hemphill, who died at age 57 in April after a long battle with illness, seems a most unlikely candidate for the often conservative Hall—a defiant restructuralist and post-free jazz reedman, fluent in the vocabularies of Ornette Coleman and Eric Dolphy; a forward-looking, omnivorous and adventurous composer who came up in the creative music diaspora of the 1970s alongside other controversial composer/performers such as Anthony Braxton, Roscoe Mitchell, George Lewis and Henry Threadgill (see "Riffs" DB July '95).

Hemphill is the first member of his generation to receive the honor; his closest counterpart is John Carter (nine years his senior), whose induction into the Hall in 1991 followed quickly after his untimely death. In fact, clarinetist/composer Carter was one of Hemphill's very first teachers back in Fort Worth, Texas, a city that served as a point of departure for a long line of great hornmen from Arnett Cobb to Ornette Coleman.



MITCHELL SEIDEL

Hemphill's early professional career found him playing in r&b and blues bands with Big Joe Turner, Ike Turner and eventually Kool & the Gang. With the latter, he appeared on a legendary 1973 record by proto-rapper Lightnin' Rod, *Hustlers Convention* (Douglas/United Artists). The blues experience never left Hemphill; even in his most outré moments, his music is imbued with a bluesy, earthy corporeality that betrays grueling road trips and dues gigs on the chitlin' circuit.

After a stint in army bands, Hemphill moved north to St. Louis in 1966, and two years later he joined the Black Artists Group (BAG), that city's equivalent to the Chicago-based Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM). There he made precious few

recordings, including a sidelong take called "The Hard Blues" (issued in 1975 with additional material on *'Coon Bid'ness*). He also recorded the brilliant quartet session *Dogon A.D.*, which was originally released on his own Mbir label, later picked up and more widely distributed, along with *'Coon Bid'ness*, as part of the important Artista-Freedom series (both out of print). With their daring mix of aural architecture, open improvisation and deep blues roots, these critically lauded Artista records established Hemphill as a major new figure, both as a saxophonist and as a writer.

While in St. Louis, he also established longterm partnerships with drummer Philip Wilson, trumpeter Baikida Carroll, cellist Abdul Wadud and fellow saxists Oliver Lake and Hamiet Bluiett. With Wadud, he made numerous records, including *Live In New York* (Red), *Julius Hemphill Trio* (Music & Arts), *Oakland Duets* (Music & Arts) and *Raw Materials And Residuals* (Black Saint), an inspired trio date with percussionist Famoudou Don Moyé. Hemphill's work with Oliver Lake resulted in the great duo record *Buster Bee* (Sackville). These recordings offer the best evidence of Hemphill's

highly personal alto approach, which contained lyricism, grit, grace and always an odd twist. He dug the past, citing Jackie McLean, Paul Desmond, Lee Konitz and, of course, Charlie Parker as influences, but also was a full-fledged member of the out school committed to the extension, distention and reinvention of the jazz line.

After relocating to New York in the mid-'70s, Hemphill became a prime member of the so-called "loft scene." Hemphill, Lake and Bluiett joined Braxton to record a saxophone quartet in 1974. The same group with David Murray in place of Braxton became the World Saxophone Quartet in '76. Hemphill was that group's main composer through its most fertile years; his uniquely voiced and

arranged compositions, skewed blues feeling and inimitable alto sound arguably gave the group much of its identity. The group's key documents under Hemphill's influence include *W.S.Q.*, *Steppin' With The World Saxophone Quartet*, *Revue* (all Black Saint), and the Hemphill-arranged tracks on *Plays Duke Ellington and Rhythm And Blues* (both Nonesuch). In 1989, according to Hemphill, he was "voted" out of the group for non-musical reasons; in any case, he parted on bad terms as WSQ cast off its most important member.

Hemphill inspired and taught many younger musicians, most prominent among them being reed players Marty Ehrlich and Tim Berne. Berne collaborated with his idol and teacher in 1992 on *Diminutive Mysteries (Mostly Hemphill)* (jMT), which fleshed out seven sketches originally written by Hemphill. "The central thing in Julius' thinking and his music," Berne told Howard Mandel in his October '93 *DB* story, "is that he encourages independent investigation and action. In our lessons he didn't offer me one system, but a lot of possibilities, with the emphasis always on ideas and sound."

Ehrlich was a member of Hemphill's post-WSQ reed project, a magnificent sax sextet that grew out of his "saxophone opera" *Long Tongues* and material he wrote

for choreographer/dancer Bill T. Jones' *The Last Supper At Uncle Tom's Cabin*. My own assessment of the Hemphill Sextet's first outing, *Fat Man And The Hard Blues* (Black Saint), was a 5-star review (*DB* Dec. '92). The Sextet's second record, *Five Chord Stud* (Black Saint), continued in the wonderful vein of its predecessor. Dipping back into Hemphill's older songbook for "The Hard Blues," these two records span the expanse of his interests from denser, harsher free interplay to elegant Ellingtonia. In their excellence, they're also as nasty a thank-you note back to WSQ as Hemphill could have composed, the gentle man's bitterness turned into inspiration.

Hemphill himself didn't appear on *Five Chord Stud*. His sickness, from complications related to diabetes that bound him to a wheelchair, completely debilitated him during the period in which it was recorded. This past March, however, I went to see the Hemphill Sextet at the Knitting Factory, and lo and behold, the indefatigable Texan was up on stage, blowing alto wind and sounding like no one else. His caring, sly smile, supportive nods and tart tone lifted the bandstand, inspiring the group—unaware that they would soon lose their leader—to create an evening of radiant and unforgettable music. On National Public

Radio's *Fresh Air*, critic Kevin Whitehead recalled one of Hemphill's final gigs: "He still had that searing Texas blues thing that could always grab you, even if you didn't know he was one of the greatest writers for saxophones that jazz ever had."

Julius Hemphill adds something new to the *DB* Hall of Fame: he represents a generation of composerly improvisers or improvisational composers—the vast majority of whom are still alive and working—that have made indelible contributions to the music. Perhaps, he opens the door for other people—Braxton, Threadgill, Muh' Richard Abrams. Or at least, perhaps, he makes it conceivable that they'll someday receive the status due them; one hopes they don't have to die first. What's interesting about Hemphill is that he sits as comfortably on the roster of Famers alongside older folks such as Johnny Hodges (whose alto Hemphill's, in its more pliable moments, may recall), Billy Strayhorn and Jelly Roll Morton as he does revolutionary luminaries like Coleman, Dolphy, Cecil Taylor and Albert Ayler.

Like many of his '70s compatriots, Hemphill embraced the full jazz spectrum; his achievement was a celebration of the entire trajectory—past, present and future—of the music, an attempt to forge something new out of the tapestry of tradition. **DB**

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Joe Lovano

JAZZ ARTIST & JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR

JAZZ ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 97 Joe Lovano
- 63 Wynton Marsalis
- 51 Joe Henderson
- 44 Charlie Haden
- 38 Randy Weston
- 36 Ornette Coleman
- 28 Benny Carter
- 28 David Murray
- 20 Joshua Redman

TDWR

- 57 James Carter
- 45 Cassandra Wilson
- 36 Christian McBride
- 25 Fred Anderson
- 24 Bill Frisell
- 21 Cyrus Chestnut
- 21 Joshua Redman



RONALD HEARD

JAZZ ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 46 Joe Lovano & Gunther Schuller, *Rush Hour* (Blue Note)
- 36 Joe Henderson, *Double Rainbow* (Verve)
- 25 James Carter, *J.C. On The Set* (DIW/Columbia)
- 23 Betty Carter, *Feed The Fire* (Verve)
- 20 Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra, *Desert Lady-Fantasy* (Columbia)
- 19 Benny Carter, *Elegy In Blue* (MusicMasters)
- 17 Stan Getz, *Nobody Else But Me* (Verve)
- 15 Sonny Simmons, *Ancient Ritual* (Qwest/Warner Bros.)
- 14 Joshua Redman, *Mood Swing* (Warner Bros.)
- 13 Ginger Baker, *Going Back Home* (Atlantic)



Earning *Down Beat's* Jazz Artist of the Year and Jazz Album of the Year honors must make saxman Joe Lovano proud. But it is just another postseason honor, if you will, to what any youngish veteran would have to consider a "career year."

This year's recognition is based in part on the release of Lovano's collaboration with composer/conductor Gunther Schuller (see *DB* March '95): the Jazz-Album-of-the-Year *Rush Hour* (see "CD Reviews" May '95). Lovano's stock was further elevated by his articulate tenor exchanges with Joshua Redman on Lovano's Grammy-nominated *Tenor Legacy*.

While Lovano's growth and dazzling output caused critics' votes to pile up, his musical year-in-review is notable for more than just its cumulative effect. The sheer breadth and ambition of Lovano's artistic endeavors reflect a consistent level of achievement, one that transcends any stats page. Like all great players (tenor saxophonists or centerfielders or point guards), Lovano raises the level of the game—and of those around him.

One need look no further than the schedule of New York's Village Vanguard and its intersections with Lovano's own itinerary over the past year for illustration

of his versatility and all-around play. In four separate weeks, Lovano brought in four distinct ensembles, each of which reflected a different facet of his brilliant conception: There was a piano-less quartet featuring trumpeter Tom Harrell, bassist Anthony Cox and drummer Billy Hart; another quartet with pianist Mulgrew Miller, bassist Christian McBride and drummer Lewis Nash; a trio with Al Foster and Cecil McBee; and Lovano's Universal Language group, which includes pianist Kenny Werner and vocalist/wife Judi Silvano.

"Jazz is about improvising and being creative within an ensemble setting," Lovano says. "Over the years, this music has, in many cases, gotten a little sterile—you play *this*, you play *that*, I'll take a solo. There are a lot of young leaders today, guys with enormous talent, who are limited in their scope of experience and contexts." Lovano's path has been anything *but* limited. "I've been fortunate," he says, "to be in situations that challenge me and free me to play differently each time. I hardly repeated a tune throughout those four weeks at the Vanguard."

When Blue Note Records' Bruce Lundvall heard Lovano's quartet with

Mulgrew Miller at the Vanguard, he was moved to record them live, for release together with a recording of the pianoless quartet recorded some months earlier. (The

album is slated for release this fall.) "I was going to play the music from my *Tenor Legacy* album that week," says Lovano, "but since we were recording, I put together a whole new program for the band, and it worked out even better."

Lovano continues to explore and refine; in his recent week at the Vanguard with Foster and McBee, he pared the material on *Rush Hour* down to a trio core. "When you take away all the instrumentation, that's what the music really was—a trio concept."

For Lovano, the successful marriage of adventurousness and audience appeal is no novelty; it's something that comes naturally. "It's inbred with me," he says. "I'm involved in jazz. My dad [Cleveland hero Tony 'Big T' Lovano] played the saxophone. He didn't just have a horn, he played the shit out of that horn. And he was an entertainer. It wasn't about what you played, it was how you played it. When I went to the gig with him, I walked the bar with him. You know what I mean."

—Larry Blumenfeld

REISSUE OF THE YEAR

- 74 **Bud Powell, *The Complete Bud Powell On Verve* (Verve)**
- 55 Louis Armstrong, *Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man* (Columbia)
- 53 Bud Powell, *The Complete Blue Note And Roost Recordings* (Blue Note)
- 34 Various Artists, *The Jazz Scene* (Verve)
- 25 Herbie Hancock, *Mwandishi—The Complete Warner Bros. Recordings* (Warner Bros.)
- 25 Thelonious Monk, *The Complete Blue Note Recordings* (Blue Note)
- 18 Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, *The Complete Solid State Recordings* (Mosaic)
- 18 Thelonious Monk, *Big Band And Quartet In Concert* (Columbia)
- 17 Charlie Parker, *With Strings* (Verve)
- 16 Joe Henderson, *The Milestone Years* (Milestone)



Joshua Redman

ENZO ANGILERI

ARRANGER

- 90 **Toshiko Akiyoshi**
- 72 Carla Bley
- 46 Bob Belden
- 45 Gunther Schuller
- 42 Melba Liston
- 37 Benny Carter
- 27 Jimmy Heath
- 26 Frank Foster

TDWR

- 79 **Maria Schneider**
- 47 Don Sickler
- 35 Slide Hampton
- 33 Bob Belden
- 26 George Gruntz
- 23 Jim McNeely

PRODUCER

- 108 **Michael Cuscuna**
- 50 Giovanni Bonandrini
- 46 Orrin Keepnews
- 45 John Snyder
- 44 Bill Laswell
- 40 Manfred Eicher
- 35 Delfeayo Marsalis
- 35 Richard Seidel

TDWR

- 35 **Delfeayo Marsalis**
- 33 Hal Willner
- 31 Werner X. Uehlinger
- 24 John Snyder
- 17 Nils Winther

BIG BAND

- 96 **McCoy Tyner Big Band**
- 90 Akiyoshi/Tabackin
- 69 Mingus Big Band
- 54 Count Basie
- 38 Charlie Haden Liberation Music Orchestra
- 27 Either/Orchestra
- 23 Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra
- 22 Willem Breuker Kollektief
- 20 George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band
- 20 Maria Schneider

TDWR

- 64 **Either/Orchestra**
- 59 Maria Schneider
- 46 George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band
- 21 Willem Breuker Kollektief
- 21 Barrett Deems
- 20 Gerald Wilson



Henry Threadgill

TERI BLOOM

ACOUSTIC JAZZ GROUP

- 94 **Charlie Haden's Quartet West**
- 79 Wynton Marsalis
- 52 Modern Jazz Quartet
- 43 Phil Woods
- 28 8 Bold Souls
- 26 Art Ensemble of Chicago
- 25 Bobby Watson
- 23 Keith Jarrett's Standards Trio
- 20 Ornette Coleman
- 20 Steve Lacy

TDWR

- 50 **Joshua Redman**
- 40 8 Bold Souls
- 32 Ernest Dawkins' New Horizons
- 26 Joe Lovano
- 24 Roy Hargrove
- 19 Steve Lacy

ELECTRIC JAZZ GROUP

- 105 **John Scofield**
- 85 Pat Metheny
- 75 Henry Threadgill's Very Circus
- 68 Bill Frisell
- 40 Ornette Coleman's Prime Time
- 28 Chick Corea Elektric Band
- 20 Steve Coleman
- 17 Yellowjackets



Medeski, Martin & Wood

MARTIN GALL/FALCKES

TDWR

- 45 **Medeski Martin & Wood**
- 31 Steve Coleman
- 31 Bela Fleck & The Flecktones
- 29 Charlie Hunter
- 28 John Zorn's Naked City
- 25 Yellowjackets

VOCAL JAZZ GROUP

- 109 **Take 6**
- 107 Hendricks Family
- 75 Manhattan Transfer
- 38 Jackie & Roy
- 33 New York Voices
- 25 Sweet Honey In The Rock

TDWR

- 44 **Zap Mama**
- 39 Sweet Honey In The Rock
- 36 New York Voices
- 27 Straight Ahead



Nicholas Payton

KEN FRANKLING

TRUMPET

- 147 **Wynton Marsalis**
- 79 Roy Hargrove
- 70 Art Farmer
- 69 Tom Harrell
- 69 Clark Terry
- 66 Lester Bowie
- 35 Arturo Sandoval
- 30 Jon Faddis
- 24 Wallace Roney

TDWR

- 105 **Nicholas Payton**
- 54 Dave Douglas
- 50 Claudio Roditi
- 47 Tom Harrell
- 38 Roy Hargrove
- 22 Rex Richardson
- 21 Wallace Roney
- 21 Jack Walrath
- 20 Malachi Thompson

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

- 221 **Steve Lacy**
- 72 Jane Ira Bloom
- 60 Wayne Shorter
- 58 Dave Liebman
- 50 Branford Marsalis
- 44 Bob Wilber
- 32 Jane Bunnett
- 25 Evan Parker

TDWR

- 79 **Jane Bunnett**
- 54 Jane Ira Bloom
- 36 Greg Osby
- 35 Evan Parker
- 31 Marty Ehrlich
- 30 James Carter
- 20 Courtney Pine
- 17 Bob Wilber



James Carter

- TDWR**
70 James Carter
 55 Gary Smulyan
 43 Ronnie Cuber
 41 John Surman
 40 Mwata Bowden
 37 Joe Temperley
 28 Don Byron
 19 Hamiet Bluiett

TROMBONE

- 200 J.J. Johnson**
 141 Steve Turre
 140 Ray Anderson
 31 Slide Hampton
 27 Robin Eubanks
 25 Frank Lacy
 18 Curtis Fuller
 15 Craig Harris
 15 Albert Mangelsdorf

- TDWR**
81 Robin Eubanks
 52 Frank Lacy
 39 George Lewis
 37 Craig Harris
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 27 Dan Barrett
 22 Albert Mangelsdorf

ALTO SAXOPHONE

- 113 Jackie McLean**
 106 Phil Woods
 101 Ornette Coleman
 53 Bobby Watson
 50 Benny Carter
 34 Frank Morgan
 31 Lee Konitz
 27 Gary Bartz

- TDWR**
52 Sonny Simmons
 50 Antonio Hart
 44 Kenny Garrett
 44 Vincent Herring
 36 Wes Anderson
 28 Steve Coleman
 27 Gary Bartz
 26 James Carter

TENOR SAXOPHONE

- 143 Sonny Rollins**
 141 Joe Henderson
 106 Joe Lovano
 63 David Murray
 53 Johnny Griffin
 38 Joshua Redman
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- TDWR**
77 James Carter
 73 David Sanchez
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 26 Charles Gayle
 24 Von Freeman
 24 Ralph Moore
 20 Teodross Avery
 14 Dewey Redman

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- 178 Gerry Mulligan**
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 94 Nick Brignola
 65 Ronnie Cuber
 46 John Surman
 36 Cecil Payne
 25 Gary Smulyan
 22 James Carter



Don Byron

CLARINET

- 162 Don Byron**
 130 Eddie Daniels
 70 Buddy DeFranco
 69 Alvin Batiste
 55 Marty Ehrlich
 50 Kenny Davern
 34 Ken Peplowski
 30 Phil Woods

- TDWR**
83 Ken Peplowski
 52 Marty Ehrlich
 40 Dr. Michael White
 39 Louis Sclavis
 35 Kenny Davern
 30 Michael Moore
 27 Don Byron
 26 Alvin Batiste

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- 175 James Newton**
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 90 James Moody
 74 Fred Wess
 45 Henry Threadgill
 22 Hubert Laws
 18 Dave Valentin
 15 Herbie Mann

- TDWR**
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 50 Jane Bunnett
 35 Sonny Fortune
 35 Ali Ryerson
 29 Dave Valentin
 19 Frank Wess
 18 Lew Tabackin

VIBES

- 231 Mill Jackson**
 157 Bobby Hutcherson
 138 Gary Burton
 44 Steve Nelson
 21 Lionel Hampton
 20 Terry Gibbs
 20 Mike Mainieri

- TDWR**
106 Steve Nelson
 79 Jay Hoggard
 45 Bill Ware
 30 Khan Jamal
 25 Karl Berger
 24 Bobby Hutcherson
 15 Johnny Lyttle
 14 Joe Locke

PIANO

- 83 Tommy Flanagan**
 72 Kenny Barron
 59 McCoy Tyner
 57 Hank Jones
 55 Keith Jarrett
 46 Don Pullen
 45 Cecil Taylor
 41 Gonzalo Rubalcaba

- TDWR**
58 Cyrus Chestnut
 47 Jacky Terrasson
 40 Stephen Scott
 33 Benny Green
 33 Myra Melford
 31 Marilyn Crispell
 29 Geri Allen
 20 Danilo Perez

ORGAN

- 188 Jimmy Smith**
 135 Joey DeFrancesco
 51 Jack McDuff
 48 Don Pullen
 45 Jimmy McGriff
 34 Barbara Dennerlein
 30 Charles Earland
 12 Larry Goldings

- TDWR**
61 Amina Claudine Myers
 58 Barbara Dennerlein
 53 John Medeski
 50 Larry Goldings
 36 Dan Wall
 35 Don Pullen
 26 Charles Earland
 22 Joey DeFrancesco

ELECTRIC KEYBOARD

- 125 Herbie Hancock**
 109 Joe Zawinul
 75 Chick Corea
 51 Lyle Mays
 41 Wayne Horvitz
 13 John Surman

- TDWR**
55 Wayne Horvitz
 50 Lyle Mays
 41 John Surman
 25 Adam Holzman
 24 John Medeski

ACOUSTIC GUITAR

- 130 John McLaughlin**
 125 Jim Hall
 69 Kenny Burrell
 40 Ralph Towner
 30 Howard Alden
 30 Derek Bailey
 23 Joe Pass
 20 Al DiMeola

- TDWR**
68 Howard Alden
 53 Fareed Haque
 32 Frank Vignola
 25 Bereli Lagrene
 20 Kevin Eubanks
 20 Egberto Gismonti
 12 Brandon Ross

ELECTRIC GUITAR

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 143 Bill Frisell
 107 Pat Metheny
 43 Jim Hall
 40 John Abercrombie
 33 Kenny Burrell
 22 Herb Ellis

- TDWR**
52 Mark Whitfield
 41 Mike Stern
 35 David Fiuczynski
 35 Bern Nix
 24 David Torn
 20 Terje Rypdal
 17 Steve Masakowski
 16 Kevin Eubanks



Amina Claudine Myers



Charlie Haden

- 33 Charnett Moffett
- 26 Bob Hurst
- 26 George Mraz
- 22 Fred Hopkins
- 17 Reginald Veal

ELECTRIC BASS

- 182 Steve Swallow
- 63 John Patitucci
- 60 Marcus Miller
- 58 Bob Cranshaw
- 36 Stanley Clarke
- 20 Jack Bruce
- 13 Jamaladeen Tacuma
- 11 Gerald Veasley

TDWR

- 57 Bill Laswell
- 44 Eberhard Weber
- 30 Gerald Veasley
- 20 Fred Frith
- 17 Bob Cranshaw
- 15 Marcus Miller
- 10 Stanley Clarke

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- 187 Stephane Grappelli
- 69 Billy Bang
- 68 Leroy Jenkins

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- 83 Christian McBride
- 61 Ron Carter
- 55 Milt Hinton
- 24 Gary Peacock
- 20 Fred Hopkins

TDWR

- 92 Christian McBride
- 50 Anthony Cox
- 35 William Parker

- 53 John Blake
- 53 Johnny Frigo
- 45 Jean Luc Ponty
- 32 Claude Williams
- 20 Mark Feldman

TDWR

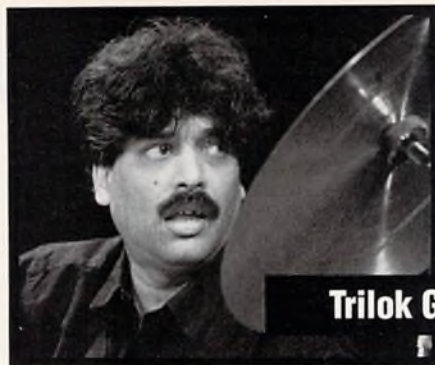
- 54 Mark Feldman
- 51 Regina Carter
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- 26 Svend Asmussen
- 19 Johnny Frigo
- 15 Phil Wochsmann

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- 110 Elvin Jones
- 109 Max Roach
- 96 Roy Haynes
- 79 Billy Higgins
- 70 Jack DeJohnette
- 30 Andrew Cyrille
- 30 Marvin "Smitty" Smith
- 28 Victor Lewis

TDWR

- 60 Leon Parker
- 43 Lewis Nash
- 36 Ralph Peterson
- 37 Joey Baron
- 32 Marvin "Smitty" Smith
- 32 Bill Stewart
- 28 Brian Blade
- 25 Carl Allen



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PERCUSSION

- 109 Trilok Gurtu
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- 59 Jerry Gonzalez
- 58 Airtio Moriera
- 43 Nana Vasconcelos
- 34 Famoudou Don Moya
- 24 Poncho Sanchez
- 20 Don Alias

TDWR

- 54 Kahil El'Zabar
- 30 Marilyn Mazur
- 28 Poncho Sanchez
- 26 Giovanni Hidalgo
- 24 Steve Berrios
- 24 Jerry Gonzalez
- 10 Ignacio Berroa
- 10 Don Alias

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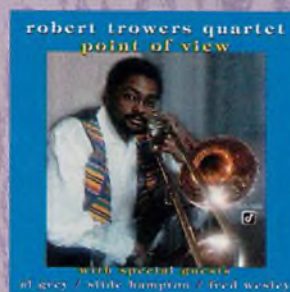
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TDWR

- 38 Howard Johnson (tuba)
- 36 Diedre Murray (cello)
- 32 Don Byron (bass clarinet)
- 29 James Carter (contrabass clarinet)
- 24 Dave Darling (cello)
- 20 Tom Cora (cello)
- 16 Steve Turre (conch shells)
- 15 Aaron Dodd (tuba)

MALE VOCALIST

- 121 Joe Williams
- 101 Mel Tormé
- 70 Bobby McFerrin
- 52 Tony Bennett
- 44 Jimmy Scott
- 41 Kevin Mahogany
- 37 Mark Murphy
- 25 Ray Charles

TDWR

- 90 Kevin Mahogany
- 40 Jimmy Scott
- 29 Kurt Elling
- 26 David Frishberg
- 25 Johnny Adams
- 25 John Pizzarelli
- 23 Mark Murphy
- 11 Milt Grayson

FEMALE VOCALIST

- 164 Betty Carter
- 147 Cassandra Wilson
- 104 Abbey Lincoln
- 60 Shirley Horn
- 56 Sheila Jordan
- 34 Dee Dee Bridgewater
- 16 Carol Sloane
- 15 Ella Fitzgerald

TDWR

- 50 Patricia Barber
- 34 Diana Krall
- 22 Roseanna Vitro
- 21 Sheila Jordan
- 21 Vanessa Rubin
- 21 Cassandra Wilson
- 21 Ann Dyer
- 16 Kitty Margolis

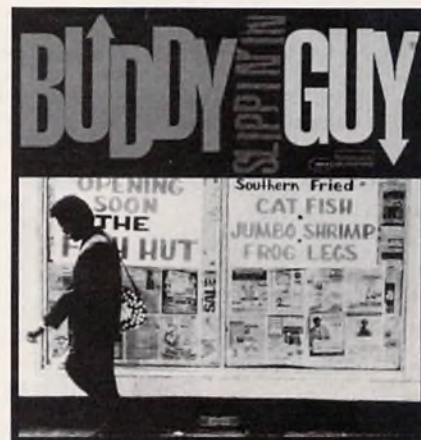
BLUES WINNERS

BLUES ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- 93 Buddy Guy
- 78 B. B. King
- 66 Charles Brown
- 38 John Lee Hooker
- 31 Otis Rush
- 18 Gatemouth Brown
- 16 Junior Wells
- 15 Charlie Musslewhite

TDWR

- 35 R. L. Burnside
- 28 Keb' Mo'
- 26 Lucky Peterson
- 24 Joe Louis Walker
- 23 Charles Brown
- 22 Son Seals
- 17 Tab Benoit



MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUMENT

143 Toots Thielemans (harmonica)

- 106 Steve Turre (conch shells)
- 71 David Murray (bass clarinet)
- 38 Bela Fleck (banjo)
- 38 Howard Johnson (tuba)
- 28 Richard Galliano (accordion)
- 27 Don Byron (bass clarinet)
- 21 Howard Levy (harmonica)

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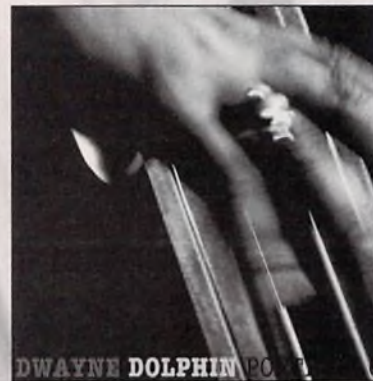
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BEYOND WINNERS

BLUES ALBUM OF THE YEAR

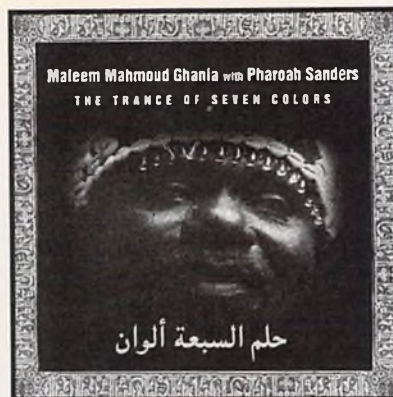
- 74 Buddy Guy, *Slippin' In* (Silvertone)
 33 Charles Brown, *These Blues* (Verve)
 30 Gatemouth Brown, *The Man* (Verve)
 19 R.L. Burnside, *Too Bad Jim* (Fat Possum/Capricorn)
 19 Junior Wells, *Everybody's Gettin' Some* (Telarc)
 18 Eric Clapton, *From The Cradle* (Reprise)
 18 Otis Rush, *Ain't Enough Comin' In* (Mercury)
 17 Diane Schuur & B.B. King, *Heart To Heart* (GRP)



Eddie Palmieri

TDWR

- 29 Steve Tibbetts
 27 Maleem Mahmoud Ghania
 23 John Prine
 20 Ali Farka Toure
 17 Salif Keita



BLUES GROUP

- 90 B. B. King
 46 Buddy Guy
 39 Charles Brown
 25 Saffire The Uppity Blues Women
 24 Otis Rush
 17 Robert Cray
 16 Robben Ford

BEYOND ARTIST OF THE YEAR

TDWR

- 38 Lucky Peterson
 30 Johnny Copeland
 29 Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials
 25 Robben Ford
 22 Chris Duarte
 18 Roomful of Blues
 17 Holmes Brothers

- 33 Eddie Palmieri
 31 Joni Mitchell
 28 Elvis Costello
 28 Dr. John
 23 Bonnie Raitt
 19 Israel "Cachao" Lopez
 17 Milton Nascimento

BEYOND ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 37 Maleem Mahmoud Ghania & Pharoah Sanders, *The Trance Of Seven Colors* (Axiom)
 27 The Beatles, *Live At The BBC* (Capitol)
 27 Jan Garbarek & The Hilliard Ensemble, *Officium* (ECM)
 23 Israel "Cachao" Lopez, *Master Sessions, Volume 1* (Epic)
 22 Eddie Palmieri, *Palmas* (Elektra)
 20 Neil Young & Crazy Horse, *Sleeps With Angels* (Reprise)
 16 Buckshot LeFonque, *Buckshot LeFonque* (Columbia)

BEYOND GROUP

- 38 Jerry Gonzalez Fort Apache Band
 35 Lyle Lovett
 31 Neville Brothers
 29 R.E.M.
 20 Kronos Quartet
 20 Greg Osby
 10 Buckshot LeFonque

TDWR

- 38 Wayne Horvitz's Pigen
 29 Zap Mama
 22 Marley Family
 20 Morphine
 18 War

DB

THE CRITICS

Following is a list of critics who voted in **DB's** 43rd annual International Critics Poll. A total of 80 critics voted this year, distributing 10 points among up to three choices (no more than five votes per choice) in each of two categories: Established Talent and Talent Deserving Wider Recognition (TDWR). The participants were:

Don Albert: **DB**.
Frank Alkyer: editorial director, **DB**.
Jon Andrews: **DB**.
Robert Baranello: **DB**; music editor, *NY Nightlife*.
Peter Bastian: jazz critic/photographer; Radio SR (Germany).
Larry Birnbaum: **DB**; *Pulse!*
Larry Blumenfeld: **DB**; *Jazziz*.
Phillip Booth: **DB**; *Tampa Tribune; Billboard*.
Fred Bouchard: **DB**; *JazzTimes*; WMBR-FM (Cambridge, Mass.).
Michael Bourne: **DB**; editor, *Hennessy Jazz Notes*; WBGQ-FM (Newark, N.J.).
Herb Boyd: **DB**.
Pawel Brodowski: editor, *Jazz Forum* (Poland).
Kenneth Burgmaier: *Jazz Alley TV*.
Aaron Cohen: **DB**.
Thomas Conrad: **DB**; *CD Review; Stereophile*.
John Corbett: **DB**; *The Wire; Option; Coda; New Art Examiner*; author, *Extended Play: Sounding Off From John Cage To Dr Funkenstein*.
Owen Cordle: **DB**; *JazzTimes; Raleigh News & Observer*.
Joe Cunniff: **DB**; *Hyde Park Herald; Leader & Post; Inside Lincoln Park*.
John Diliberto: **DB**; host/producer, *Echoes* (Public Radio International).
Len Dobbins: *Jazz Report* (Toronto); *Jazz Vine* (Montreal).
José Duarte: Portuguese radio, press, television.
Lofton Emenari: Chicago Citizen Newspaper Group; WHPK-FM.
Gudrun Endress: editor, *Jazz Podium* (Germany); Radio SDR (Stuttgart).
Ed Enright: managing editor, **DB**.
John Ephland: managing editor, **DB**.
J.B. Figl: programming committee/Chicago Jazz Festival.
Jack Fuller: publisher, *Chicago Tribune*.
Gerard J. Futrick: *Coda*.
Alain Gerber: Radio France.
Ira Gitler: **DB**; co-author, *The Encyclopedia Of Jazz In The '70s*.
Linda Gruno: **DB**; *Westword* (Denver).
Elaine Guregian: **DB**; *Akron Beacon Journal*.
Frank-John Hadley: **DB**; *Jazziz; Pulse!; Blues Wire; Boston Phoenix*; author, *The Grove Press Guide To The Blues On CD*.
Dave Helland: **DB**; *Pulse!; Vibe; CD Review; Bass Player; New Country*.
Robert Hicks: **DB**; *Jazziz; The Villager; Guitar Player; Bass Player; Coda*.
Geoffrey Himes: **DB**; *Washington Post; Request*.
Eugene Holley Jr.: **DB**; *JazzTimes*; NY Latino; American Music Center.
Randi Hultin: **DB**; *Jazznytt; Jazz Journal*.
Willard Jenkins: **DB**; jazz editor, Schwann Publications; *JazzTimes*.
Niranjan Jhaveri: Jazz India; Jazz Yatra organizer.
Gene Kalbacher: editor & publisher, *Hot House*; columnist, *CMJ New Music Report*.

Leigh Kamman: *The Jazz Image* (Minnesota Public Radio).
Bob Karlovitz: *The Tribune Review* (Greensburg, Pa.).
Kiyoshi Koyama: former editor, *Swing Journal*.
Peter Kostakis: music critic.
Tom Krehbiel: *CD Review*.
John Litweller: author, *The Freedom Principle, Ornette Coleman: A Harmolodic Life*.
Jaap Lüdeke: **DB**; Euro Jazz Radio (Netherlands).
John McDonough: **DB**; *Wall Street Journal*.
Howard Mandel: **DB**; *Pulse!*; NPR.
Michael G. Nastos: **DB**; *Cadence; Ann Arbor News; WEMU-FM* (Ypsilanti, Mich.).
Stuart Nicholson: author, *Jazz 1980s Resurgence, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday; The Wire; BBC Music Magazine*.
Dan Ouellette: **DB**; *Pulse!; CD Review; East Bay Express*.
Thierry Peremarti: *Jazzman*.
Terry Perkins: **DB**; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch; Riverfront Times*.
Michael Point: **DB**; *Pulse!; Austin American-Statesman*.
John Poulos: *CD Review*.
Bob Protzman: St. Paul Pioneer Press; KBEM-FM (St. Paul).
Becca Pulliam: producer, *JazzSet* (NPR); WBGO-FM.
Doug Ramsey: *JazzTimes; Texas Monthly*; author, *Jazz Matters*.
Howard Reich: **DB**; *Chicago Tribune*.
Mark Ruffin: jazz editor, *Chicago magazine*; WNUA-FM (Chicago).
Robert D. Rusch: editor, *Cadence*.
Ben Sandmel: **DB**.
Phil Schaap: president, Traditions In Swing; WKCR-FM (New York); WNYC-FM (New York).
Mitchell Seidel: **DB**; *Hot House*.
Chris Sheridan: **DB**; author, *Count Basie: A Bio-Discography*.
Joel Simpson: **DB**.
Jack Sohmer: **DB**; *JazzTimes; The Mississippi Rag*.
Yves Sportis: *Jazz Hot*.
David Steinberg: *Albuquerque Journal*.
W. Royal Stokes: editor, *Jazz Notes*; author, *Swing Era New York: The Jazz Photographs Of Charles Peterson and The Jazz Scene: An Informal History From New Orleans To 1990*.
Andrew Sussman: jazz writer.
Ron Sweetman: CKCU-FM (Ottawa, Ontario).
Ron Welburn: *JazzTimes*.
Russell Woessner: **DB**; *Philadelphia City Paper*.
Josef Woodard: **DB**; *Jazziz; Musician; Entertainment Weekly; Los Angeles Times*.
Scott Yanow: *JazzTimes; Jazziz; Cadence; Coda*.
Shoichi Yui: jazz critic.
Mike Zwerin: *International Herald Tribune* (Paris).



The Nonconformists

Leon Parker & Graham Haynes

By Larry Birnbaum

In a world of buttoned-down neo-boppers, drummer Leon Parker and cornetist Graham Haynes stand out like a pair of beatniks at a bankers' convention. Friends who live on the same block in Brooklyn, they share a taste for Latin, funk and Middle Eastern flavors and a disdain for musical conformity and narrow-mindedness. But their styles are utterly distinct. Parker, 30, is a post-bop minimalist whose trap kit consists only of a snare drum, bass drum and ride cymbal; on his debut solo album, *Above & Below*, he sets Monk's "Bemsha Swing" to a jolting hip-hop backbeat and Ellington's "Caravan" to a sinuous salsa rhythm (see "CD Reviews" May '95). Haynes, nearly 35, is a post-fusion impressionist who traces stark, pensive horn lines against vibrant electro-acoustic textures; his latest album, *The Griots Footsteps*, blends psychedelic soul with African and Indian percussion in a throbbing, droning brew of angular lyricism and vivid whole-earth colors (see "CD Reviews" May '95).

In their separate ways, both Haynes (the son of drummer Roy Haynes) and Parker are musical rebels, risk-takers who march to their own beat while reshaping the mainstream. Having met in France three

years ago, the two enjoyed an easy camaraderie as they considered the state of the art.

LARRY BIRNBAUM: *Both of you are playing music that's off the beaten track. How do you feel about the jazz scene today?*

GRAHAM HAYNES: I don't really consider myself a jazz musician. I'm just a jazz musician by virtue of the fact that I play cornet. A lot of what's happening today in jazz doesn't interest me, so I look to other forms of music. There are people who have defined what jazz is and put themselves inside of that, but I'm looking outside of that and trying to break out of the limitations of what jazz is. Some of the things I do might have some jazz influences in them, but I've got a whole bunch of other influences, too.

LEON PARKER: Basically, the industry is taking the same marketing strategies they're using for pop music and applying them to jazz. It used to be that the musicians would go through a process among themselves and then record to document their growth. Nowadays, the industry decides who they want to record, and that becomes the standard. It's disconnected to what's really going on in the jazz scene. I think jazz today is inorganic, because what's being recorded is only a small fraction of what the music is about.

LB: *You're both using Afro-Cuban rhythms and Middle Eastern and Indian influences. Does that come from growing up in New York?*

GH: When you grow up in New York you hear a lot of stuff that you don't hear if you grow up in the Midwest. When I first met Steve Coleman, and he and I were hanging out, I realized that I heard a lot of music that he didn't, because he was from Chicago. In New York, you hear more of what's happening in the whole country and in Europe—more experimental music, rock & roll, world music and other stuff.

LP: The first band I was in was a dance band in Westchester, where we played every form of black music—soul, funk, jazz, everything. I saw that as something to be learned from. If you play a calypso, that's part of the African-American tradition that's coming from the Caribbean.

GH: I've played a lot of Caribbean music—calypso, reggae, cumbia and all that—and I think that has something to do with the music we play now.

LP: As a kid, right next to my parents' jazz records were Mongo Santamaria and Tito Puente. Growing up, there was Earth Wind & Fire and Parliament/Funkadelic and James Brown, and there was WABC rock radio.

GH: I grew up on WABC. The first music

I can remember listening to was the Beatles. My older brother used to buy their records, and I would listen to them. I was maybe six or seven years old.

LB: *You weren't listening to Charlie Parker and John Coltrane?*

GH: No, but my father would listen to that stuff, and my mother would listen to Sarah Vaughan and Miles. But what I was interested in was the Beatles and James Brown and Motown. It wasn't 'till I was 14 and picked up the horn that I got seriously interested in jazz.

LP: One of the problems when you're young is that you've got everybody else telling you what you should do. If you're black and you listen to white music, your friends are like, "Man, what you listening to that for?" So a lot of musicians don't get any support from their peers to incorporate their different influences.

LB: *One difference between your two albums is that on Leon's the drums are prominent throughout the session, but on Graham's the cornet is used sparingly.*

GH: Out of all the jazz musicians who have influenced me, I would say that Miles Davis has influenced me the most. And even though his trumpet was very prominent, it was more important to him to paint a picture with the sound of the

whole band. So I'm trying to paint pictures with music, given all the musicians I've played with and all my influences, which run from Louis to Miles to Hendrix to Brian Eno.

LP: My album has nothing to do with any kind of drummer's slant. It's the total concept. The rendition of "You Don't Know What Love Is" could be on a Kenny G record.

LB: *Another difference is that your album, Leon, is acoustic, while your album, Graham, is electric.*

GH: Today, it really doesn't matter whether it's acoustic or electric, because there's so much technology that goes into recording acoustic instruments that they might as well be electric, anyway. When you go to a recording studio and listen to the snare drum in the booth, you don't just hear the sound of the stick hitting the drum, you hear the stick hitting the drum going through the microphone, going through the compressor, going through equalization, going through the noise gate, going through the reverb. So acoustic music is not acoustic like it was when Louis Armstrong used to play with the Hot Five.

LP: To be honest, I don't know too many artists besides Graham who've really used

electronics in a creative way. There's lots of music out there where they're six months in production, and it's not even music. It's just somebody playing with a bunch of machines.

LB: *You're both trying different combinations of elements—straightahead swing with third-world rhythms, for example.*

LP: Actually, what I'm doing, Dizzy Gillespie did and Fort Apache's doing. The bebop that they're playing today is what's actually different. Bebop in 1995 is almost like a test-tube baby. What I'm doing and what Graham is doing is natural. He's using electronics, because the electronic thing has come along and he's incorporating it. I'm incorporating funk and Afro-Cuban music, but it's not like funk or African rhythms are new. Dizzy was doing that stuff years ago.

GH: It's natural that we're using the sounds that influenced us when we were coming up, as opposed to trying to figure out what works in the market today. We're just going along with our influences and making music; so in that sense, maybe it's a little more organic.

LP: If you listen to Miles, there's an evolution, but if you put on a modern bebop record, it sounds like what they

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were doing 40 years ago. But I haven't heard anything that sounds half as good as *Kind Of Blue*, because when they made that, they were representing what was going on in their time. So I'm trying to represent what's going on in my time. I think Graham's record and my record represent what's going on now.

GH: But you suffer for being different.

LP: Because you're Roy Haynes' son, you could have played that game and said, "Let me just do exactly what Roy was doing, except with my band."

GH: I could have gotten an acoustic band together in 1981, and now I'd probably

have a whole lot of money in the bank. I chose not to do that, and I'm glad I didn't.

LP: I'd be bored to death doing that.

LB: *But you do play standards.*

GH: I play standards, too. I love standards. When I practice, I play standards. But when I get out there and do what I represent, then I'm not playing standards. When I play with my father, I play standards. That's one of the greatest things, to me, because he was there when those standards were being made standards.

LP: I can't understand why anybody 17 or 18 years old today would only want to play

straightahead and be opposed to other types of music. That's like being opposed to MTV. How could you?

GH: You could say that you're opposed to it, but subconsciously all that stuff is going to creep in, because we're living in 1995, and you can't help but be influenced by what's happening.

LP: They're choosing not to be influenced.

GH: They say that, but you can't really deny what you are. Cats might say, "I'm only going to play acoustic jazz," but when they go out in the street, they're going to hear a car playing dancehall, or they're going to hear MTV. They can change the channel, but that music is on the commercials and everything.

LP: If you want to be the king of jazz, that's great, but there's a whole world out there. And you can't say jazz musicians don't know that, because they travel.

GH: They travel, but when you travel as a musician, there's a lot of stuff you don't see. You go all over Europe, South America, Japan or Australia, but you just work, go to a hotel and come home. The reason I went to Paris is because I was interested in African music. I went there specifically to check out music, not because I had gigs set up or because I thought I'd make more money there. I think musicians today should be consuming more music from a lot of different places. The thing that's ridiculous to me is that these musicians are traveling to all these places anyway, and they just do their gig and come back.

LP: I went to Switzerland with Dewey Redman, and we were tired, and I didn't want to hear any music. I went to my room, but I couldn't rest, because Dewey was out in the street playing his musette with six hand-drummers. There's some kind of commitment to music there.

LB: *A lot of the older generation of musicians were self-destructive.*

LP: Why would they want to destroy themselves today? All they have to do is put on a suit and look cute, and somebody says, "We'll make you a star." Where's the inner struggle? There are certain people at the head of jazz right now who are so clean-cut, but you put on their record and tell me: Does it make you think of anything? Does it make you feel anything? If you can just hide who you really are and get over, it's like a game going on. The fact that these guys are clean is not a reflection of their character; it's more a statement about the times. But if you want to explore your mind and explore society around you and deal with life, there's going to be some excess. I'd rather see somebody be nuts but actually be trying to say something with their art than somebody who is a nice guy, who's not threatening to the public, but whose music puts you to sleep. These cats are totally coasting on the dues that people like Graham's father had to pay.

REVIEWS

A HANDFUL OF CLASSIC RECORDINGS

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So you thought the Woodstock nostalgia was confined to aging Baby Boomer rock fans? That "Memphis

Underground" Mann has put together a Woodstock-style reunion of his own! With names like Richard Tee, Chuck Rainey, Buddy Williams, Cornell Dupree... [and] David "Fathead" Newman... [it'll] have you day-dreaming your way back out on onto the floor of your high school gym trying to melt bodies with that someone special...

—Paul B. Matthews, *Cadence*

JIMMY ROWLES - LILAC TIME

KOKOPELLI 1297



Lilac Time is wee-small- hours music fit to turn any room into a dark piano bar... Rowles' roots in Teddy Wilson have long since loosened and spread out into a wry and personal style with an emphasis on the open-ended intrigues of harmony. He toys with chords... assembling the pieces into interesting, occasionally inscrutable shapes... But the light touch and essential mainstream sensibility remain intact throughout.

—John McDonough, *Downbeat*

DAVID "FATHEAD" NEWMAN

MR. GENTLE, MR. COOL

KOKOPELLI 1300

What a combo! The soulful saxophonics of Newman and emerald compositions of Ellington are a heaven-on-earth match whose pleasures promise to endure from here to eternity. The dialogues are intimate and sprightly. The pulses by pianist David Leonhardt, bassist Peter Washington



and drummer Lewis Nash are suppleness. There's the plangent trombone of Jim Pugh and the feisty piccolo bass of Ron Carter.

Newman's singular date is a heart-on-the-sleeve must for Fatophiles and Ellingtonians alike.

—Chuck Berg, *JazzTimes*

HERBIE MANN / OPALESCENCE

KOKOPELLI 1298

Herbie Mann has played everything from bebop to disco to jazz-funk. With *Opalescence*, jazz's best-known flutist once again stresses his passion for Brazilian music, offering mostly sensuous Brazilian pop-jazz... [Includes] a reggae-influence remake of the infectious "Comin' Home Baby."

—Alex Henderson, *CD Review*



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GH: The times have changed. I don't think musicians today have to deal with the same pressures.

LP: But we're not supposed to be coasting. If there's more upward mobility as far as being a black person or an artist, you're supposed to use that and give it back. It's not supposed to be, well, "This is the '90s and life is easier."

GH: Honestly, I think that a lot of the young musicians are doing the best they can. Given what they have, they're doing a good job. You can't create creativity. It's just got to be there.

LP: Part of what made the music so great in the past is the struggles they went through. I'm not talking about their personal problems, because we all have personal problems, but I think the fact that they had to struggle so hard gave their music more integrity. If somebody gives you a record deal based on the fact that you've got a good resumé and you're cute, what's your

impetus? You've got to dig in order to give something.

GH: I have more problems with the industry than I have with the young musicians, because it's really the industry that creates the setting for what's happening now. I remember in the late '70s and early '80s, when free-jazz was the happening thing. It was like you had to be playing in the loft scene and that whole trip. And when the Reagan era came in, all those lofts just disappeared overnight. It's not that the musicians decided all of a sudden that they wanted to stop playing

that music. I think it was the industry that decided that we need a different kind of image.

LP: I think that, in general, people should get past their TVs and the newspapers and even the critics. The critics have been very nice to me, but people should learn to listen with their own sensibilities and try to be exposed to as much as possible. If you make a real commitment, don't just be satisfied with what is being fed to you, because you're actually shortchanging yourself. It's not good for the music at all, and it's not good for the musicians. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

"I play an old Ambassador cornet," says Graham Haynes. "That's a student model horn. And I have a custom-made Monette mouthpiece. Lately, I've been using various electronic effects. I have a Boss SE-70 effects box and a Roland SDE 330 digital delay, and I've been using a [Dunlop] Crybaby wah-wah pedal."

Leon Parker's minimalist drum set includes only a ride cymbal, snare drum and bass drum. "That's my basic kit," he says. "And then I augmented that with a floor tom. I use an 18" hand-hammered Sabian flat-ride cymbal and a 40-year-old Gretsch snare drum. And the other instruments are arbitrary, because I use different bass drums at different times."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Graham Haynes

THE GRIOTS FOOTSTEPS—Antilles 314 523 262
NOCTURNE PARISIAN—Muse 5454
WHAT TIME IT BE!—Muse 5402

with various others

DANCE, WORLD, DANCE—Verve 314 521 937
 (Rodney Kendrick)

THE SECRETS OF RODNEY KENDRICK—
 Verve 314 517 558

MUSIC FOR SIX MUSICIANS—Nonesuch 79354
 (Don Byron)

WHAT IT BE LIKE?—enja 8054 (Ed Blackwell)

WHAT IT IS?—enja 7089 (Ed Blackwell)

ART—Blue Note 27645 (Ralph Peterson)

DAVID MURRAY BIG BAND—DIW/Columbia 48964

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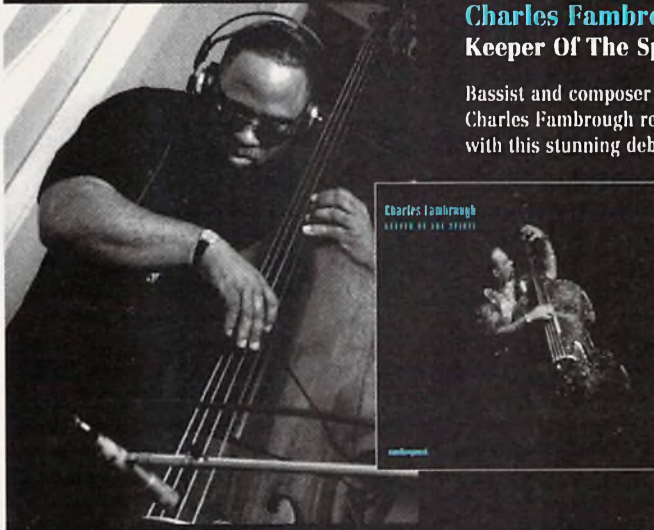
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Jazz Legend, Jazz Recluse

Tal Farlow's weathered-blue bungalow sits unobtrusively on the banks on the Shrewsbury River, just a few minutes from Sandy Hook, the northernmost tip of the New Jersey Shore. On a clear day at the Hook you can see across the lower reach of New York harbor to the skyscrapers of Manhattan's Wall Street district and to Coney Island, some 15 miles away.

Today, like most days, Farlow is sitting in his small living room, hollow-bodied Gibson guitar in hand. Behind him is a reel-to-reel recorder and the small synthesizer he recently purchased.

Farlow adjusts some dials, then pushes the tape recorder's "play" button. Suddenly, the sound of a razor-tight rhythm section spews out of the nearby speakers. Farlow zeroes in on the tempo and uses what he hears from the bass, drums and piano to construct a beautifully articulate solo that reveals Farlow's still-vibrant guitar genius. When he's finished, he smiles rather sheepishly and says, "I do that pretty much all day when I'm home."

Which, shockingly, is all too much. Playing alone with no audience to share his musical gift, Tal Farlow still has the chops that made him one of the premier Charlie Christian-inspired bop guitarists of the modern jazz era, ranking him with Wes Montgomery, Herb Ellis, the late Jimmy Raney, Kenny Burrell and others who helped turn the jazz spotlight on the guitar in the 1950s.

At age 74, Farlow's fingers, long and remarkably rangy, still have the fluidity of a guitarist half his age. The smartly textured chords and single-note solos he creates as he makes his way through a song couple with his well-known harmonic brilliance, making his current guitarwork nearly as vibrant and as rich as it was during the days when he shared stages with Red Norvo, Charles Mingus and other major jazz figures only too happy to have him in their band.

"I feel pretty good about my playing," which is about all you'll get from this soft-spoken legend in terms of self-praise. "I still enjoy playing quite a bit."

So if Tal Farlow is still capable of making great guitar jazz, why isn't he playing clubs and concert halls across America, like many of the other elder statesmen of jazz? Why hasn't he had a recording contract in years? Why isn't he honored the way horn players



Tal Farlow

in their twilight years have been honored?

Farlow shrugs, then laughs. "I don't know. I guess it's not a question I'm able to answer."

Farlow readily admits he hasn't exactly gone searching for the spotlight. Ever since he left New York in 1958 and moved to the tiny beachtown of Sea Bright on the Jersey Shore, Farlow has been something of a jazz recluse. At the time, he was in his prime, routinely playing the Big Apple's best jazz clubs, making trips to the West Coast to gig, and recording for Norman Granz's Norgran and Verve labels. A recently released Farlow compilation—*Jazz Masters 41: Tal Farlow* (Verve 314 527365)—includes many of Farlow's best moments in the recording studio.

"Those were great days," recalls Farlow as he gazes through his livingroom window out onto the river. "But they were hectic, too, you know. And when it got too hectic, I'd find myself wanting to get away from it all."

Farlow found Sea Bright, bought the house that he still lives in, and removed himself from at least the thick of the New York jazz scene. From that point on, music journalists wrote stories on how Farlow had dropped out of jazz.

Farlow shakes his head and smiles. "I didn't quit playing. I just found another place to live, that's all. I liked it here. Still do. It's always been peaceful and quiet. I liked to listen to the water. And when I

wanted to go to New York to play or see friends, I could. Sea Bright isn't very far from New York at all."

Before a Shore restaurant called the Yankee Clipper closed last year, Tal Farlow could be found supplying background music for the Sunday brunch crowd. There was Tal Farlow laying out gorgeous jazz-guitar licks, while waiters clanked dishes and patrons socialized between bites of toast and sips of coffee.

"That never really bothered me," continues Farlow. "The people who came to hear me play listened. The others, well, they just ate."

Farlow gets more respect from jazz audiences in Europe. He usually tours England and the continent four times a year, working a combination of clubs, concerts and festivals. In Italy, he's practically a jazz superstar. "They're particularly fond of jazz in Europe," says Farlow. "I've always been treated very well there. Without the work over there, I'd be pretty much idle."

Surprisingly, Farlow isn't frustrated over his inability to gain more work—and respect—from American jazz fans. "I've never been one to, you know, seek out work," he says as he changes the tape on his recorder. "I don't have a manager. I don't have a need for one. Some things you have to let happen naturally. When I'm asked to play, I play. Otherwise, I'm happy playing for myself." —Robert Santelli

Crossover: A 2-Way Street

Like many youngsters seeking self-expression at any cost, Darrell Grant seeks breadth, not focus. He wants time to explore new avenues and benefit from a perceived trend toward tolerance for diversity.

"What defines me is the fact that I play and actively pursue so many genres," says the classically trained pianist, who leads his own acoustic jazz quartet but has dabbled in hip-hop projects and combined funk and fusion elements with the group Current Events.

Grant, 33, says audiences and critics seem to be outgrowing the bad attitudes toward non-mainstream jazz and non-standard classical interpretations that he encountered frequently during his 20s. Today, he feels more acceptance. "As my generation has grown older, there's more tolerance and more self-expression."

Although Grant played dixieland and became hooked on Nat Cole, Lou Rawls,



Darrell Grant

Wes Montgomery and Horace Silver as a youngster, his obvious talent for piano convinced him to study classical music at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. He dropped jazz to get through the grueling program.

"I knew I wanted to be a jazz musician," he smiles now, "but I persevered with the classical program because I knew it would open more doors to me in the future." The discipline did wonders for Grant's musicality, technique and attention to detail. Working six months on Brahms violin sonatas gave him a feel for evolving interpretations.

From the conservatory, Grant went for a master's degree in music education at the University of Miami, where he also played with drummer Duffy Jackson and multi-instrumentalist Ira Sullivan and started a production company called Sojourn.

Work with demanding leaders—Tony Williams, Betty Carter, Greg Osby, Woody Shaw, Junior Cook, Don Braden—and in duo with Frank Morgan has taught Grant to listen hard. He's also been point-man on crossover gigs: Craig Harris' Parisian rap, Phyllis Hyman's soul, Greg Osby's hip-hop *3-D Lifestyles*.

Recent recordings include *Black Art* (Criss Cross 1087)—Grant's first as a leader, with Wallace Roney, Brian Blade and Christian McBride—and Craig Harris' *F-Stops* (Soul Note 121255). This fall, Criss Cross will release Grant's *The New Bop*, on which the pianist gets assistance from Blade, trumpeter Scott Wendholt, bassist Calvin Jones and tenor saxophonist Seamus Blake.

For Grant, crossover is a two-way street. "Jazz isn't better or more profound than classical or pop," he says. "That's like saying French is nobler than Swedish. What matters is diving in with all the integrity you have." —Fred Bouchard

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Shufflin' In The Spotlight

You've heard his rolling and rippling piano grooves a zillion times on all those old Chuck Berry hits like "Maybelline" and "Johnny B. Goode." But it wasn't until Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards convinced Johnnie Johnson to sing vocals a few years ago that the St. Louis pianist was finally jettisoned into the spotlight. "I've been over all these roads before, but as a sideman," says the affable, 70-year-old Johnson shortly before his headlining gig at New George's in San Rafael, Calif., just north of San Francisco. "Being the man out front is new to me. It all came about as a result of Keith getting me to sing."

Johnson, who recently saw the release of his second solo recording, the blues-drenched *Johnnie Be Back* (MusicMasters 65131), talks about his association with Richards, which began in the late '80s at a filmed concert tribute to Berry, *Hail Hail Rock And Roll*, and continued with session work. While killing time in the studio one day, Johnson sketched a melody on the piano. Richards asked him what it was. Since he was thinking he could use a drink, he named it "Tanqueray."

Nothing more was said until a month later when Richards approached Johnson with lyrics to the tune and asked him to sing it. "I said no way. But Keith kept on me so



Johnnie Johnson

much that I figured if I gave in and sang it he'd leave me alone. It backfired. He loved it so much he wanted me to sing more."

"Tanqueray" appeared as the lead track on Johnson's 1991 debut, the priceless *Johnnie B. Bad*, co-produced by Richards and NRBQ's Terry Adams and released on Elektra Nonesuch's American Explorer series. With Richards, Eric Clapton and the 'Q offering top-notch support, the album finally afforded the all-purpose blues-and-jazz pianist his due.

Ironically, it was Johnson who had hired Berry back in 1952 to fill in for a member of his St. Louis-based band. Berry's self-

described hillbilly licks combined with Johnson's rollicking piano riffs won over crowds and led in 1955 to a contract with Chess Records, where the guitarist garnered top billing on the virtue of his singing/songwriting talent. The rest is rock & roll history. Johnson, whose main influences include Art Tatum, Earl Hines and Oscar Peterson ("he plays like he has 13 fingers on one hand"), downplays being credited as a pioneer of rock piano playing. "I was doing what I had been doing for years, just playing shuffles with a lot of feeling."

While Johnson quit touring with Berry in 1973, he continues to join him for special shows, including Bill Clinton's 1993 presidential inauguration party and most recently this year's New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. In the meantime, Johnson has been keeping a busy schedule of his own thanks to the resurgence of interest in his career. He tours regularly and has contributed bluesy piano grooves to albums by Big Daddy Kinsey, Jimmy Rogers and Buddy Guy.

Guy returns the favor on the tune "Just To Be With You." Other guests on the new album, which features killer covers of the Lieber-Stoller tune "Kansas City" and Little Johnny Taylor's "If You Love Me Like You Say," include Al Kooper, Phoebe Snow, Steve Jordan, John Sebastian and *NBC Late Night* guitarist Jimmy Vivino, who also serves as the producer.

As for the future, Johnson—a soft-spoken, almost shy man who swings with rockin' gusto on the piano keys—says he'll soon be heading into the studio for his third solo album. "I'm not ready to retire, that's for sure. I don't know how it's supposed to feel at 70, but I feel the same as I did 30 years ago." —Dan Ouellette

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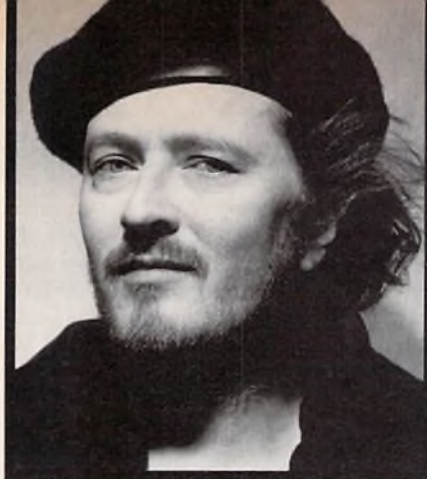
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Øystein Sevåg

CHRISTINA CEFPAS

Breaking The Silence

Composer/keyboardist Øystein Sevåg believes environment makes the biggest influence on his work. Sevåg, whose latest recording is a pastoral, culture-crossing program dubbed *Global House* (Windham Hill 01934 11148), says that his home—a 250-year-old structure perched above Sandefjord, 120 kilometers southwest of Oslo, Norway—provides him with the perfect atmosphere to write the moody, impressionistic pieces that have graced his recordings.

"It's a very, very quiet place," he explains during a recent visit to America. "The most important thing for me as a composer is silence, to be able to listen to what is inside of me and find the notes there."

If that's true, Sevåg's fans should prepare for a mighty change in his direction. "I'm actually planning to move to California," he says, "close to L.A., maybe in the fall. That's the place where everything is going on."

The wish to relocate reflects Sevåg's desire to tour, promote his work and become involved with film and television scoring. He has written background for videos, art programs and TV in Norway. Now he wants to work on a larger stage.

Sevåg has been moving in this direction since the release of his first, self-produced album, *Close Your Eyes And See*, in 1989. The disc spent 17 weeks on *Billboard's* New Age chart and was named the *Gavin Report's* Top Alternative Album of 1991. He followed with *Link* (Windham Hill), an effort recorded in his home studio that caused one reviewer to gush, "... makes me want to fall on my knees and pray."

No doubt moving to Los Angeles will provide Sevåg with a wakeup call—and a loud one at that. "It will be a big change when I move," he admits. "Totally the opposite."
—Bill Kohlhaase

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CD REVIEWS

AUGUST 1995



Kenny Barron

Wanton Spirit

Verve 314 522 364

★★★★

Kenny Barron may be the consummate sideman, playing supportive piano on countless sessions with everyone from Dizzy Gillespie to Perry Robinson. But Barron's also a seasoned leader, as evidenced on his many fine records for Muse. Most of those feature mid-sized groups, but on this sparkingly well-recorded date he chose to show off his stylistic substance more prominently in a traditional piano-trio setting.

No faulting that choice, 'cause Barron is as confident out front as he is backing up. Listen, for instance, to his rhythmic flow on Herbie Hancock's '60s composition "One Finger Snap"—here's Barron comfortably swimming along in the slipstream of swing with Roy Haynes. Indeed, though Barron's approach is sharp and well-defined (a Bud Powell touch surfaces at times) and Charlie Haden turns in one of the best performances I've heard from him in years, it's Haynes that really catches the ear and makes the heart race on *Wanton Spirit*. Made me dig out my fave of his old sessions, *We Three*, from '58, with bassist Paul Chambers and pianist Phineas Newborn. As on that session, Haynes manages to simultaneously make his compadres sound better—lovingly jabbing them with little energy pokes on the snare—as he almost steals the show. His swing on Duke Ellington's "Take The Coltrane" here is just so hard, so right; Barron responds in the middle of his solo with a series of hard hammers on a dissonant interval.

Barron chose a strong program, ranging from the soul-tinged romance of Tom Harrell's "Sail Away" through Billy Strayhorn's brilliant "Passion Flower" and the shifting moods and odd, broken melody of Vic Feldman's "The Loss Of A Moment." Richie Beirach's lyrical cooker "Nightlake" contains some noisy moments that might surprise some, but *Wanton Spirit's* most extrovertedly out tune is "Madman." On this piano/drum duo Barron shakes his mild-mannered persona, and it's a rousing success—he pounds block bass chords

under a right hand full of manic energy. (For his part, Haynes is amazing; it'd be fascinating to hear the nearly 70-year-old match wits and wills with Cecil Taylor.) The bass-solo intro to "Be Bop" is all Haden, full of double stops and step-wise ascending and descending figures that Barron explicitly echoes in his solo. They take the familiar Diz tune slowly, tentatively, giving it a more ambiguous feel further enhanced by Barron's piquant chording. Like the rest of *Wanton Spirit*, it's at once known and new.

—John Corbett

Wanton Spirit—Take The Coltrane; Sail Away; Be Bop; Passion Flower; Madman; Nightlake; The Loss Of A Moment; Wanton Spirit; Melancholia; One Finger Snap. (63:31)

Personnel—Barron, piano. Charlie Haden, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.



Pat Martino

The Maker

Evidence 22121

★★★★

Introduced to Pat Martino in the mid-'70s, I heard a guitarist who seemed caught up in the swirl of Mahavishnu John McLaughlin and his decade-dominating electric rave-ups.

Martino's earlier, straightahead sides were still a mystery. *The Maker*, recorded last year, alludes to another mystery, this one spiritual (sans a name change). After roughly 15 years of illness, "The Maker" has brought the 50-year-old Martino back to life (see "Tradin' Fours" July '95). You can hear it in this all-Martino program that's amazing if only because his eery, "starting from scratch" recovery has given us an imaginative album of composed music that's very lyrical, and boppish without the burn.

To begin, the medium-tempo swinger "Noshufuru" (named after a survivor of the Nagasaki bombing) is cloudy and sunny. Martino's grey, minor-key theme statements countered by pianist James Ridl's bright lines in a satisfying juxtaposition of colors. Martino's pinched guitar notes are perfect for this ominous yet spacious style of musicmaking.

The heart of *The Maker* is the three ballads "You're Welcome To A Prayer," "The Changing Tides" and "Yoshiko," where time seems suspended, and melody and harmony appear to be constantly reinvented with each measure. The theme to "The Changing Tides" is played through dreamy chords, suggestive of George Shearing as Martino and Ridl speak in unison until each solos in double-time. The beat of the bunch, however, is "Yoshiko," with a melody you'd swear you've heard before, all the while played at a nice, easy gait. Producers Martino and Paul Bagin's slight reverb is the perfect complement to this nearly 12-minute excursion. Lovely, mysterious, spiritual and sensual.

Bassist Marc Johnson and drummer Joe Bonadio are a significant presence throughout, the bassist's deep, woody tone supplanted by Bonadio's rolling, driving snare or lustrous, sometimes peppy brush work. Along with the opener, "This Autumn's Ours" showcases the livelier side of the band. Yet, following

KEY

Excellent
Very Good
Good
Fair
Poor

★★★★
★★★★
★★★
★★
★

THE HOT BOX

CDs	CRITICS	John McDonough	John Corbett	Howard Mandel	John Ephland
KENNY BARRON <i>Wanton Spirit</i>		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★
PAT MARTINO <i>The Maker</i>		★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★
JOHN ZORN'S <i>Cobra</i>		1/2	★★★	★★★★ 1/2	★★★ 1/2
RUBY BRAFF <i>Controlled Nonchalance</i> (Vol. 1)		★★★★	★★★ 1/2	★★★★	★★★★

everything that comes before, the sunny, tuneful "Autumn" sounds generic, the solos almost driven to indistinction behind this samba of sorts. Perhaps stating the obvious, Martino's strengths with *The Maker* seem to lie along more wistful lines, not unlike the best of his so-called fusion music of 20 years ago.

—John Ephland

The Maker—Noshufuru; *You're Welcome To A Prayer*; *The Changing Tides*; *Yoshiko*; *This Autumn's Ours*. (51.02)
Personnel—Martino, guitar; James Ridl, piano; Marc Johnson, bass; Joe Bonadio, drums.



John Zorn's Cobra

Live At The Knitting Factory
 Knitting Factory Works 124

★★★★ 1/2

Like all games, Zorn's "Cobra" is best experienced by participating in it—actually "playing" the piece with peers who accept (even to the point of trying to subvert) its structures, which govern relationships among individuals but don't seek to dictate anyone's active vocabulary. Listening to a Cobra can be satisfying, too, rather like listening to sports on the radio. You ought to know something of the rules, and understanding the players' backgrounds is useful in interpreting what's at stake in any given face-off.

Zorn contrived his rules—implemented via hand signals that aren't included in this CD's elaborate design (though they are available on hat ART's live and studio Cobras recorded in '85 and '86)—to maximize every player's willful impact yet guarantee the freedoms of the collective. What often results from the implied dynamic are rapid shifts of contrasting sonic events or textures, though more conventional lyricism sometimes develops. This usually happens when Cobra experts—who grasp the rules, have mastered their tools, have wide-open ears, good memories and psychological insight into their fellows—fall into an empathic groove.

That does occur during the 14 Cobras here performed by a cross section of downtown jazz, "new music" and similarly uncategorizable instrumentalists and vocalists, recorded monthly in 1992 at New York City's Knitting

Factory. For example, the two-minute-14-second "Lampropeltis Doliata Syspila" (all tracks are named for briefly described species of cobras) begins with bell-like tones (from synth? sampler? electric harp?), trilling sax and bowed bass. It opens into something resembling cello and one somber alto joined by another, then evolves with muted, strained trombone over (through) indecipherable sounds and returns to legato figures, ending with a single pluck.

Mistaken track lengths ("Lampropeltis" is claimed to last a minute-30) and near-segues between tracks won't help casual listeners figure out what's going on when or who reacts to whom how. As for "mistakes" in the game itself, they may include system breakdowns and lapses of taste. But Zorn's genius for reorganization has given us a model of an infinitely expansive sonic universe, and the musical community exploring it through play seems equal to the task. Like the deepest



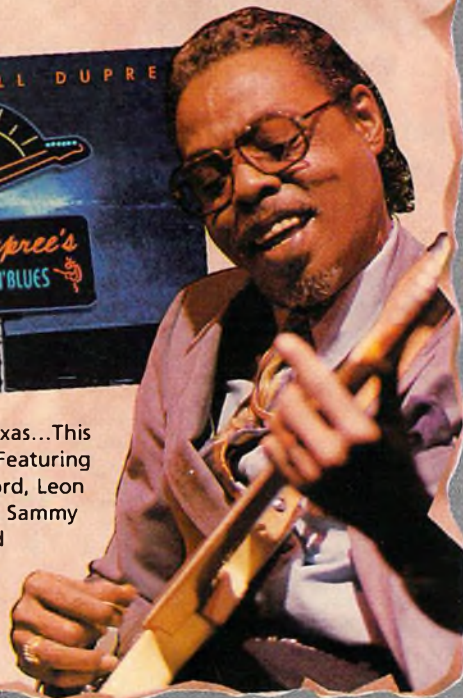
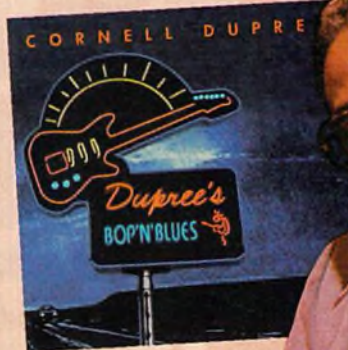
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musical compositions, *Cobra* becomes more meaningful through close and repeated listening. Those who are curious should just join in the fun!
—Howard Mandel

John Zorn's *Cobra*—*Hemachatus Haemachatus; Naja Naja Atra; Many-Banded Krait; Taipan; D. Popylepis; Lampropeltis Doliata Sypspila; Boomslang; Maticora Intestinalis; Acanthopis Antarcticus; Hydrophiidae; Ngu Sam Liem; Ophiophagus Hannah; Boulengerina; Laticauda Laticauda.* (67:37)

Selected personnel—Zorn, composer, alto saxophone; Christine Bard, drums; Steve Bernstein, sampler, trumpet, slide trumpet; Jeff Buckley, M. Doughty, voice (tenor); Allan Chase, soprano, alto saxophones; Anthony Coleman, Mark Degliantoni, David Shea, David Weinstein, sampler; Judy Dunaway, voice (mezzo-soprano), electric guitar, balloons; Curtis Fowlkes, trombone; Evan Gallagher, sampler, trombone, keyboards, cornet; Joe Gallant, string bass, six-string contrabass guitar; Gisburg, voice (soprano), mouth organ, tin whistle; John King, dobro; Michelle Kinney, cello, electronics; David Krakauer, clarinet, bass clarinet; Fred Lonberg-Holm, electric harp, CD players, tape recorders, noisemakers, cornet; Frank London, trumpet, percussion; Myra Melford, synthesizer; Roy Nathanson, soprano, alto, tenor saxophones; Andrea Parkins, accordion; Zeena Parkins, electric harp; Marc Ribot, Adam Rogers, electric guitar; Marcus Rojas, tuba; Walter Thompson, alto, baritone, tenor saxophones, flute; Tronzo, slide guitar; Norman Yamada, prompter.

attack and flirtatious low register may appear more as imperfections of technique to some than the carefully crafted flourishes of a masterful Hancockian signature. But serious musicians would do well to consider these elements, as made manifest on this fine CD.

Braff produces an easy flow of notes without ever trapping himself in a "groove" of 8s. There is both elegance and rhythmic variety in nearly everything he plays here. His method is to enhance a tune through variation, not shrink it to a riff or overstuff it with pomposity. He can push in an Armstrong/Berigan manner when a climax demands a push. But even more moving are his retards, a realm of musical dynamics in which he has no peer. Listen to him back off in the final bridge on his "Love Me Or Leave Me" solo. When one expects a swell of emotion, one gets instead a contraction. He is constantly outsmarting our expectations—the slowish gate of the usually razzle-dazzle "Struttin' With Some Barbecue," for instance—without ever violating the proportions of the material or the moment.

Without being exceptional by Braff's standards, this is a lovely and loving jazz performance from all concerned.

—John McDonough

Controlled Nonchalance (Vol. 1)—*Rosetta; Struttin' With Some Barbecue; Sunday; Love Me Or Leave Me; Mean To Me; What's New; The Lady Is A Tramp; Lester Leaps In.* (62:18)

Personnel—Braff, cornet; Scott Hamilton, tenor saxophone; Dave McKenna, piano; Gray Sargent, guitar; Marshall Wood, bass; Chuck Riggs, drums.

hushed take on Rodgers and Hart's "Little Girl Blue," thus establishing a satisfying tempo ebb and flow for the rest of the concert. Jarrett shines throughout. Ballads such as "Old Folks" and "Dedicated To You" teem with clusters of right-hand lyricism, and upbeat numbers like "I Hear A Rhapsody" burst with shimmering waterfalls of notes. The highlight of the program is the trio's buoyant rendition of the Green/Comden/Styne gem "Just In 'Time," where all three musicians ride the crest of the melody for a full 11 minutes.
—Dan Ouellette

Standards In Norway—*All Of You; Little Girl Blue; Just In Time; Old Folks; Love Is A Many-Splendored Thing; Dedicated To You; I Hear A Rhapsody; How About You?* (73:29)

Personnel—Jarrett, piano; Gary Peacock, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

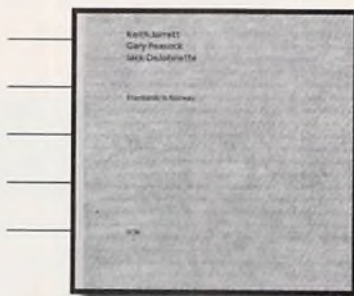


Ruby Braff Controlled Nonchalance At The Regattabar (Vol. 1) Arbors 19134

★★★★

Ruby Braff has been making albums like this for 40 years, and about all that's changed is the personnel on the sleeve. Scott Hamilton for Sam Margolis. Chuck Riggs for Buzzy Drootin, and, well, Dave McKenna for Dave McKenna, who was recording with the cornetist before the rest of the bandmembers were born. Braff and his repertoire are known quantities. Those familiar with the package will take comfort in the familiarity and stability of the idiom, as captured in this protean live set from 1993.

In overstimulated musical climates where audiences grow resistant to heightened strains of intensity, and artists answer by extending the frontier further, players like Braff get lost in the noise level. His juicy lyricism, gentle



Keith Jarrett Trio Standards In Norway ECM 21542

★★★★

This set, recorded live in Oslo, in 1989, finds Jarrett and longtime Standards Trio partners Gary Peacock and Jack DeJohnette (their 12th album together) once again embracing a batch of gorgeous melodies with soulful reverence. The interplay is tantalizing as Peacock and DeJohnette follow Jarrett's relaxed and incandescent lead.

The date opens with a gentle swing through Cole Porter's "All Of You" followed by a



Abbey Lincoln A Turtle's Dream Verve 314 527 382

★★★★

Lincoln has made the most of her straightforward style, maturing into a worldly wise diva who shades disappointment with hope and vice-versa. Five albums into her successful comeback on Verve, she makes a sort of career summation here on a set of mostly original compositions, backed by a shifting cast of journeymen, comers and stars. Her bittersweet singing is lovelier than ever, set off by accompaniment so luscious and creamy that Lincoln herself is nearly overshadowed. But her compositions are burdened with lyrical and melodic clichés, and in the end the music has more surface appeal than depth.

Producer Jean-Philippe Allard buffs the players' high polish to a diamond luster, augmented by strings on two tracks, but beneath the rich patina, the varied mix of musicians makes an uneven impression. Pat Metheny, hovering over Charlie Haden's hearthstone bass, supplies exquisite guitar fills and pungent, bluesy runs on four tracks. Lucky Peterson's sole contribution, on "Hey, Lordy Mama," sounds appropriately crude by comparison. Similarly, Kenny Barron's supple,

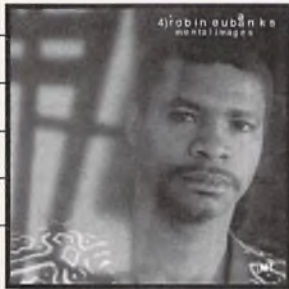
elegant piano voicings on "Down Here Below" and "Being Me" make the album's principal pianist, Rodney Kendrick, seem callow and brittle. On the other hand, Roy Hargrove's muted trumpet complements Julien Lourau's adept if less-accomplished tenor sax on "Storywise" and "Nature Boy."

Lincoln herself sings with a plainness that cuts to the heart of a song. Without scating, emoting or turning bebop cartwheels, she recaptures the passion of loves won and lost, her effortlessly natural phrasing allowing for few melodic liberties. She portrays herself as a triumphant survivor on self-penned songs like "Throw It Away" and "Being Me," but the chord changes often sound borrowed from familiar standards, and the lyrics tend toward moon-June imagery and new-age sentimentality. Consequently, she's most convincing on Léo Ferré's "Avec Le Temps," where she sings in French. —Larry Birnbaum

A Turtle's Dream—*Throw It Away; A Turtle's Dream; Down Here Below; Nature Boy; Avec Le Temps; Should've Been; My Love Is You; Storywise; Hey, Lordy Mama; Not To Worry; Being Me.* (69:10)

Personnel—Lincoln, vocals; Rodney Kendrick (2, 4, 6–10), Kenny Barron (3, 11), piano: Charlie Haden (1–3, 5, 6, 10, 11), Christian McBride (4, 8), Michael Bowie (7, 9), bass; Victor Lewis, drums; Julien Lourau, tenor saxophone (2, 4, 7, 8), soprano saxophone (10); Roy Hargrove, trumpet (4,8); Pat Metheny (1, 5, 6, 11), Lucky

Peterson (9), guitar; Pierre Blanchard (1), Vincent Pagliarini (1), Sandra Billingslea (3), violin; Frédéric Fymard (1), viola; Anne-Gaelle Bisquay (1), Marc Gilet (1), John Robinson (3), cello.



Robin Eubanks

Mental Images

jMT 697 124 051

★★★

The now-scattered M-Base aggregate has been responsible for just as many gaffes as gems. For every *Rhythm People* (Steve Coleman's beaut) there's a *Man-Talk For*

Moderns Vol. X (Greg Osby's miscue). Bonemeister Eubanks isn't the virtuoso that Coleman and Osby are, but on his fourth jMT date he manages to organize his materials into an ever-shifting program that turns meager riffs into themes sturdy enough to support some inspired solos. Oddly, however, the record doesn't stress the autonomy of individual voices. Instead it honors the shared views of a circle juiced by collaboration.

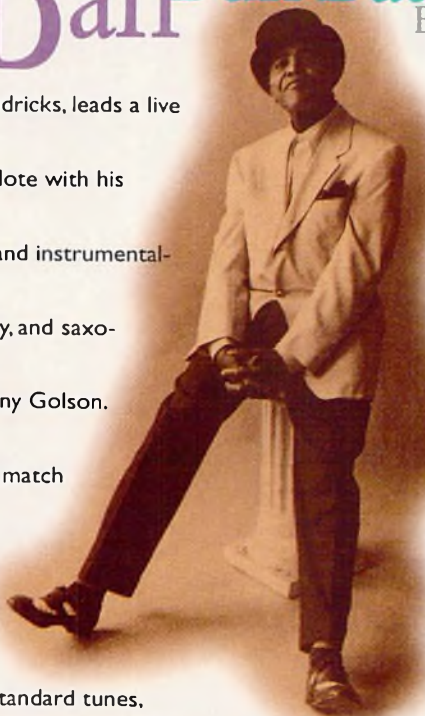
Diversity winds up being the disc's greatest asset. Eubanks' mushy duet with guitarist/brother Kevin is overshadowed by the rickety ramble through the harmonic vines with drummer "Smitty" Smith. Along the way, the pair allude to the Mahavishnu Orchestra's classic, fierce "The Noonward Race." The band sounds dumbest when waxing macho, à la the theme of "X-Base." More impressive is the lithe melodicism of "Egoli," a natural panoply of grooves by Eubanks, Dave Holland and percussionist Kimati Dinizulu. Light but rich, it takes pleasure in its own joyful character, and lets Eubanks sustain the sunniest moment on the disc. —Jim Macnie

Mental Images—*Matatape; Mental Images; Union 2-Brotherly Love; Collage; Skin 'n' Bones; For What Might Have Been; X-Base; Egoli; CP-Time.* (58:46)

Personnel—Eubanks, trombone, voice; Antonio Hart, alto saxophone (1, 2, 4, 7); Kevin Eubanks, guitar (1–3, 6, 7); Michael Cain, piano (1, 2, 4); Kimati Dinizulu, African percussion (1, 4, 8); Gene Jackson, drums (1, 2, 4);

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Kenny Davis, bass (1, 6, 7); Adrian von Ripka, vocals (1); Randy Brecker, trumpet (2, 7); Dave Holland, bass (2, 4, 8); Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums (5).



Roy Hargrove

Family

Verve 314 527 630

★★★★½

If there's anyone out there who still needs a sample of the creative ferment accompanying jazz's commercial renaissance, they should probably start off by listening to

Family, young trumpeter Roy Hargrove's latest release. The album is indeed an all-star session—just like Hargrove's last one. But before skeptics throw up their hands, they should look a bit deeper at its concept. Instead of simply paying off the celeb-of-the-month, for *Family*, Hargrove has staged a reunion, gathering his regular quintet together with some of the outstanding, undervalued musicians who nurtured him during his whirlwind rise to jazz stardom.

The strategy goes hand-in-glove with the air of reminiscence that pervades Hargrove's writing and tune selection. *Family* opens with a loving, 11-minute trilogy named after the trumpeter's mother, father and brother, and by the end piece ("The Trial," premiered two years ago at Lincoln Center), touches on a little of everything.

The 15-piece program is varied but cohesive, reining in, among other things, two flattering waltzes (pianist Ronnie Mathews' "Lament For Love," Paul Arslanian's "Pas de Trois"), a bloodless battle between Hargrove and Wynton Marsalis (Fats Navarro's "Nostalgia"), chestnuts by Hoagy Carmichael and Jimmy Van Heusen, a flugelhorn/bass duet with Walter Booker (Larry Willis' "Ethiopia") and even a Stephen Scott composition with a

hip nod to Joe Henderson's "Recorda Me" ("The Challenge").

As usual, Hargrove plays like boy wonder. He's spirited throughout, but this tone takes on a deeper, richer cast when matched against the more seasoned players, possibly because tunes like "Pas de Trois" (with drummer Jimmy Cobb and pianist John Hicks) and "The Nearness Of You" (with Cobb and reedman David "Fathead" Newman) allow him to take his time. Taken, however, with the quintet's surefootedness on the uptempo pieces, *Family* becomes a testament to the mainstream's most remarkable case of accelerated development.

—K. Leander Williams

Family—Venera; Roy Allan; Brian's Bounce; The Nearness Of You; Lament For Love; Another Level; A Dream Of You; Pas de Trois; Polka Dots And Moonbeams; The Challenge; Ethiopia; Nostalgia; 13th Floor; Firm Roots; The Trial. (77:28)

Personnel—Hargrove, trumpet, flugelhorn (4, 9); Wynton Marsalis, trumpet (12); Ron Blake, tenor saxophone (1–4, 6, 12, 14, 15); soprano saxophone (15); David "Fathead" Newman, tenor saxophone (4), flute (13); Jesse Davis, alto saxophone (9, 15); John Hicks (8); Ronnie Mathews (5); Stephen Scott (1–4, 6, 7, 10, 12–15); Larry Willis (9), piano; Walter Booker (5, 8, 9, 11); Christian McBride (7); Rodney Whitaker (1–4, 6, 10, 12–15); bass; Jimmy Cobb (4, 5, 8, 9, 13); Gregory Hutchinson (1–3, 6, 7, 12, 15); Lewis Nash (14); Karriem Riggins (10), drums.

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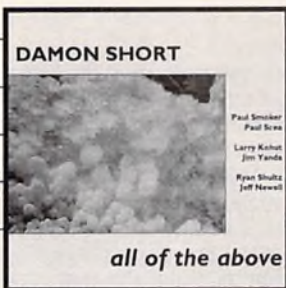
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Damon Short

all of the above
Southport 0028

★★★★

If you don't know Damon Short, you know his influences. The Chicago-based drummer dedicates compositions to Albert Ayler, Steve Lacy, John Cage and Sam Rivers. His uncompromising esthetic may explain why a

compact disc as strong and challenging as Short's *all of the above* waited four years for release. As a percussionist, Short is a colorist more than a timekeeper, often using a light touch recalling Paul Motian. He's rarely the center of attention, but provides running commentary throughout the structured freedom of his music.

Trumpeter Paul Smoker is the marquee name in this ensemble, an under-recognized player whose work can be just as satisfying as that of Lester Bowie or Don Cherry. Smoker employs many voices, wailing, sputtering, conversing, or slurring his tones. Paul Scea also makes a strong impression, adding a grainy sound on tenor sax on the Ayler tribute "Then, As Now," and applying "extended technique" to the flute in the style of Sam Rivers. With luck, we'll hear this band's current work before the end of the century. —Jon Andrews

all of the above—*Then, As Now; Melting Crystals; Refraction; Shards; All Of The Above (medley)*. (72:12)
Personnel—Short, drums, percussion; Paul Smoker, trumpet; Paul Scea, tenor saxophone, flute, bass clarinet; Larry Kohut, bass; Jim Yanda, guitar (1-4); Ryan Shultz, bass trumpet (1, 5); Jeff Newell, alto and soprano saxophones (5).

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Milt Hinton

Laughing At Life
Columbia 66454

★★★½

Milt Hinton gets his name above the title "for the first time on a major label" (there was an album on Famous Door in 1975) with this delightful entry from Columbia's "Legendary Pioneers of Jazz" series. The set begins as if it were his last, with a slow, stoic dirge on "A Child Is Born," featuring Jon Faddis on flugelhorn. But it delivers one of the most self-effacing and patient performances in some moons from the typically choleric player. On "Jon John" he bears an uncanny resemblance to Roy Eldridge that could fool keen ears in a Blindfold Test. He evokes Louis Armstrong nicely on "Old Man Harlem," too.

The album is a mix and match of musicians in various combinations in which Hinton gets plenty of space to summarize his stuff, from the slap bass rhythms of Pops Foster to the kind of solid ensemble bass lines that never

become dated. And if there was any doubt that this is a bass CD, there is "The Judge And The Jury" on which four other top bassists join Hinton with only Terry Clarke on drums.

Pianist Derek Smith looses so much juice on "Sweet Georgia Brown," it doesn't end, it just evaporates. (Fadeouts are copouts.) But drummer Alan Dawson's hands dance with nimble precision on "Georgia" as well as the second half of "How High The Moon." Drummer Ratajczak is equally adroit behind Hinton on "Indiana." Harold Ashby makes a welcome appearance breathing tenor-sax sensuality into four of the slower numbers.

Perhaps, though, Hinton overplays his singing a bit. Notwithstanding the loving good-natured messages of the lyrics, what an audience will take as good fun from a much-beloved musician in a club doesn't necessarily translate on record, where his presence cannot compensate for his pitch. Especially three times.

—John McDonough

Laughing At Life—*A Child Is Born; Sweet Georgia Brown; Laughing At Life; How High The Moon; Prelude To A Kiss; Indiana; Mona's Feeling Lonely; Jon John; Old Man Harlem; Just Friends; The Judge And The Jury.* (54:28)

Personnel—Hinton, bass, vocals; Jon Faddis (1, 3, 8, 9), trumpet, flugelhorn; Harold Ashby (3, 5, 7, 9), tenor saxophone; Lynn Seaton, Brian Torff, Santi Debriano, Rufus Reid, bass, (11); Richard Wyands (1, 3, 6, 8-10), Derek Smith (2, 4, 5, 7), piano; Dave Ratajczak (1, 3, 6, 8-10), Alan Dawson (2, 4, 5, 7), Terry Clarke (11), drums.



Marc Cary

Cary On
enja 9023

★★★★

It's becoming harder and harder to resist these maturing lions. True, many of the records are still not worthy of the attention lavished upon them, but every time you attempt a blanket dismissal, a Roy Hargrove or a James Carter or a Javon Jackson roars back with an album that posits a lot more soul than vibe. Marc Cary, a 28-year-old pianist who has spent time in the finishing schools of Betty Carter and the late Arthur Taylor, not to mention the continuing-ed programs of Hargrove and Abraham Burton, has entered the ranks with *Carry On*, his enja debut.

Cary reaffirms the role of piano-man as tunesmith. Not only does he write engagingly

logical hard-bop tunes ("We Learn As We Go," "The Afterthought"), the pianist can also pick 'em. Contrast his trio rendition of unsung pianist Sonny Clark's buoyant "Melody In C" with the slow, limpid Roy Hargrove cameo, "The Trial," and what you witness is a pianist who's adept at covering all the bases, who well understands the range of emotions. Six of the eight tunes here are Cary's own, and fittingly, two have already appeared on other people's records ("The Vibe," "So Gracefully").

What really makes the pieces work, however, is the assemblage of talent. With the exception

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of the vocal that mars "So Gracefully," the pianist's artistic choices are sound, adding just the right amount of weight to compositions that would be just fine without it. The question-and-answer between the flute/tenor frontline and Cary on "We Learn As We Go" is as relaxed as the trumpet/tenor line on "He Who Hops Around" is blazing. Yet when the horns go, Cary reaches even deeper into his bag of single-note lines and effortless big-beat bop, at one point even handling a ballad ("When I Think Of You") solo, without the responsive rhythm section.

—K. Leander Williams

Cary On—*The Vibe; He Who Hops Around; Melody In C; The Trial; We Learn As We Go (Dreamlike); So Gracefully; When I Think Of You; The Afterthought.* (43:40)

Personnel—Cary, piano; Dwayne Burno, bass; Dion Parson, drums; Roy Hargrove, trumpet (2, 4, 6); Ron Blake, tenor saxophone (2, 5, 6); Yarborough Charles Laws, flute (5, 6); Charlene Fitzpatrick, vocal (6).



Steve Coleman & Five Elements

**Def Trance Beat
(Modalities Of Rhythm)**
Novus 63181

★★★★

Steve Coleman & Metrics

A Tale Of 3 Cities, The EP
Novus 63180

★★

Coleman has spent the better part of his career trying to fuse funk with postmodal jazz, often with awkward results. His latest album with his regular band, Five Elements, may be his most successful stab yet, with acidic sax squalls sliding provocatively over pumped-up, slightly off-center hip-hop beats. But on a simultaneous release, the same core quartet riffs mechanically behind a group of rappers, more or less duplicating the functions of a sampling machine. On both sessions, the most prominent instrumentalist is not Coleman but drummer Gene Lake, whose popping snare

drives rappers and jazzers alike with whip-cracking authority.

Together with Reggie Washington's slap-happy electric bass, Lake's mid-tempo backbeats, modified with displaced accents, give *Def Trance Beat* a pervasive hip-hop feel, even on ballads like "Jeannine's Sizzling." The Latin-tinged "Flint" and the elegiac "Patterns Of Force" ride the pounding pulse with a jerky sort of grace, but the chugging rhythms don't generally lend themselves to lyricism. Instead, Coleman's hard, bright alto, buoyed by Andy Milne's piano, paints abstract textures on

tunes like the brooding "Dogon" or the churning "Pad Thai," using an eclectic palette of post-Ornette Coleman devices to sustain creative tension in the absence of chord changes or a tonal center. Dipping deeper into history, Coleman drops familiar quotes throughout the album, plays classic bop on "Verifiable Pedagogy" and concludes with a supercharged take on "Salt Peanuts," which finally dispenses with the backbeat. It's a virtuoso performance, both technically and conceptually, but tenor saxists Ravi Coltrane and Craig Handy are given short shrift, and

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A stunning new release from the New Orleans guitar master. Seen by thousands in **Dianne Reeve's** band, Masakowski is poised to join jazz guitar legend with this second release on Blue Note.

the African percussionists on "The Khu" are overwhelmed by Lake's crunching traps.

By contrast, *A Tale Of 3 Cities* is a straight-up hip-hop album—short for a CD but too long to qualify as a genuine EP—with real musicians supplying mild jazz colorations reminiscent of Digable Planets. The textures are dense and heavy, with Lake seldom straying from metronomic beats and Coleman playing occasional, relatively conservative fills. The band is mainly relegated to loop-like vamps, with instruments and synthesizers intermittently interjecting interesting sound

effects. A shifting posse of rappers occupies center stage, spouting a highly ambivalent mishmash of civil rights rhetoric, pseudoscience, tributes to jazz, racial and ethnic slurs, sexual braggadocio, threats of violence, condemnations of violence and miscellaneous gutter talk. Stylistically, it's contemporary though hardly cutting-edge. But the production—by Coleman, with Ezra Greer and Duane Sarden—is solid, and at the very least, you can dance to it. —Larry Birnbaum

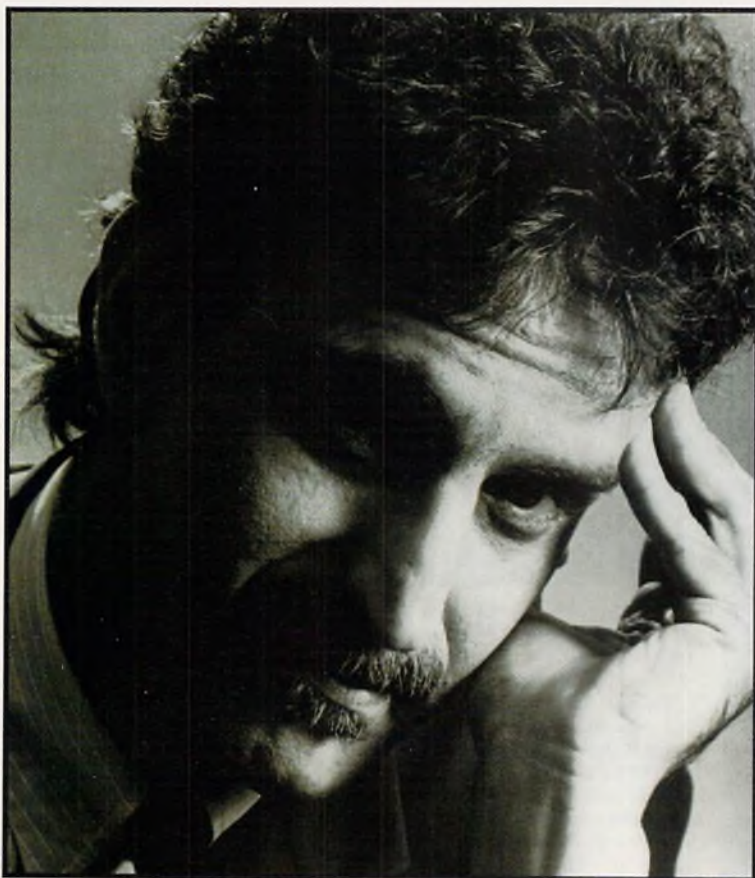
Del Trance Beat (Modalities Of Rhythm)—*Flint; Verifiable Pedagogy (From Pedagogy And Confirmation);*

Dagon; Multiplicity Of Approaches (The Afrikan Way Of Knowing); The Khu (Divine Will); Pad Thai; Jeannine's Sizzling (From Fire Revisited And Jeannine I Dream Of Lilac Time); Patterns Of Force; The Mantra (Intonation Of Power); Salt Peanuts. (68:35)

Personnel—Coleman, alto saxophone; Andy Milne, piano, keyboards; Reggie Washington, Mathew Garrison (5), electric bass; Gene Lake, drums, percussion; Ravi Coltrane (1, 3, 5), Craig Handy (8), tenor saxophone; Michael Wimberly, djembe, cowbell (1, 5); Jalal Sharriff, djun djun (5); Kwe Yao Agyapan, bongo, congas, djun djun, djembe (1, 5); Ronnie Roc, bongo, talking drum (5).

A Tale Of 3 Cities, The EP—*Be Bop; I Am Who I Am; Science; Get Open; Slow Burn; Left To Right. (41:19)*

Personnel—Coleman; alto saxophone; Andy Milne, piano; Reggie Washington, electric bass; Gene Lake, drums; Michael Wimberly, percussion; Ravi Coltrane, tenor saxophone; Ralph Alessi, trumpet; Utasi (1, 3-5), Sub-Zero, Shahliek (2-6), Kokayi (2-6), Black Thought (5), rap vocals; Najma Akhtar, sung vocal (5).



"Everybody in this room is wearing a uniform and don't kid yourselves."

—Frank Zappa

Frank Zappa on Rykodisc

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Lello Molinari

On A Boston Night
 Accurate 4502

★★★★

The opening track reminds you of Ornette Coleman's Golden Circle albums: the ominous bass drone, a ride cymbal hovering free, an alto saxophone plaintively keening, the acoustic space of a small jazz club. But it is Boston, not Stockholm, and it is 30 years down the road of expanding the forms in which jazz can take place.

"There's Snow Place Like Home" is a guitar/alto/soprano battle cry. Guitarist Peckham solos hard first but the horns won't let him alone, interrupting to holler the theme again. Doug Yates cuts in on alto with a six-note summons and then spills his guts in a piercing call to action. Molinari's bass creates suggestive uncertainty by shifting between ostinato (quite like Coleman's Izenzon) and a walking line. The first time through you miss the segue from Yates' alto to Garzone's soprano at 4:20. But only soprano saxophones can shriek that dizzying dervish.

Garzone and Molinari write softer songs, too: sweet, awkward waltzes ("First Dance"), homages that capture the essence and spirit of their subject ("The Mingus I Knew"), even painfully slow misterioso dirges that barely break the silence ("Echoes Of Rome").

The Boston scene is sometimes described as insular. "On a Boston Night" will startle out-

siders. Molinari is a bassist/leader with a concept, and Garzone and Yates command fluency and fire on all four of their reed instruments. (Yates closes out "Nothing Cheap" with a bass clarinet seminar on intervallic leaps.)

This album was recorded live at the Regattabar in Cambridge. The sonic quality is not audiophile (those horns are one blaring flat wall), but it is just right for Molinari's music: in your face, a little raw, fiercely alive.

—Thomas Conrad

On A Boston Night—*There's Snow Place Like Home; First Dance; The Mingus I Knew; Echoes Of Rome; Hey, Open Up!; Nothing Cheap.* (55:52)

Personnel—Molinari, bass; George Garzone, tenor and soprano saxophones; Doug Yates, bass clarinet, alto saxophone; Rick Peckham, guitar; Bob Gulotti, drums, percussion.



Monty Alexander

Steamin'

Concord Jazz 4636

★★★½

Monty Alexander's "comeback" to the trio format on Concord plows no ground not tilled in his many previous records over the years. And the trio format, while ideal for his remarkable talent, is perhaps becoming a bit too "classic" a combination to startle a jazz world seemingly overrun with them. Nevertheless, a tight little trio still has its modest joys, and Alexander seeks them out better than most.

One of them is the ability to browse the back shelves for unexpected repertoire that may be thick with neglect. I'm not familiar with some of his choices here, but if nothing else his version of "I'll Never Stop Loving You" surely wins me over, not to mention his good words for the really neat lady who first sang it, Doris Day. "Make Believe" is hardly forgotten, but by throttling it up to cruising speed, Alexander gives it a fresh character and identity. Even more with "Young At Heart," which becomes a solo stride tour de force at moderate tempo with a maze of modulations. And Jimmy Reed's "Honest I Do" is affectingly percussive and funky.

"Dear Diz" is more Diz than Monty, the composer of record, as it evolves into the second strain of "Woody'n You" after a couple of minutes. And you'll hear just a little bit of the old "Rawhide" theme quoted in "Just A

Little Bit." But then, quoting is one of the indulgences of any trio. And any Alexander trio is a cut above just any trio.

—John McDonough

Steamin'—*Pure Imagination; Just A Little Bit; Dear Diz; 3000 Miles; Lively Up Yourself; Make Believe; I'll Never Stop Loving You; Maybe September; Tucker Avenue Stomp; Theme From The Pawnbroker; Honest I Do; When You Go; Young At Heart.* (62:56)

Personnel—Alexander, piano; Ira Coleman, bass; Dion Parson, drums.



Eddy Louiss/Michel Petrucciani

Conférence de Presse

Dreyfuss Jazz 36568

★☆☆½

Eddy Louiss is a French organ player, virtually unknown in the U.S., who used to sing with the Double Six of Paris. Michel Petrucciani was a teenager when he first heard Louiss play in a trio with Kenny Clarke and René Thomas. *Conférence de Presse* documents a rare occasion in 1994 when the two friends played together at Petit Journal, a hall in Paris.

Both participants sound like they are having fun. They bounce ideas around and juxtapose the disparate sonorities of their instruments. But despite the liner notes' claim to "an extraordinary level of interplay," Louiss and Petrucciani take turns more than they interact. The opening two cuts ("Les Grelots" and "Jean-Philippe Herbien") are mismatched races in which Louiss plays tortoise to Petrucciani's hare.

When the organ is out front, its lumbering heaviness and predictable resolutions make you wish for the piano. When the piano takes over, you want it to fly alone, untethered by the Hammond's background bumping and burping. "So What" works best because Louiss stays out of Petrucciani's way. The piano powers out the classic Miles Davis theme and then takes it through countless right-hand permutations while the organ discreetly imitates a walking bass.

—Thomas Conrad

Conférence de Presse—*Les Grelots; Jean-Philippe Herbien; All The Things You Are; I Wrote You A Song; So What; These Foolish Things; Ameshia; Simply Bop.* (65:00)

Personnel—Louiss, Hammond organ; Petrucciani, piano.

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- 3) Use official ballot only. Please type or print.
- 4) **JAZZ, BLUES/SOUL/R&B AND BEYOND MUSICIANS OF THE YEAR:**
Vote for the artist who, in your opinion, has contributed most to Jazz, Blues & Beyond.
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- 7) **JAZZ, BLUES/SOUL/R&B AND BEYOND ALBUMS OF THE YEAR:**
Select only CDs issued during the last 12 months (Sept. 1, '94-Aug. 31, 1995). Do not vote for 45s or EPs. Include full album title and artist's name. If your choice is part of a series, indicate volume number.
- 8) Only one selection counted in each category.

VOTE TODAY!

JAZZ

Ladies' Blues & Dues

by Fred Bouchard

Diversity among most jazz singers these days is more stylistic than conceptual. Only Ann Dyer and Dianne Reeves among these 13 women vocalists attempt to break into new material, and Dyer and Karrin Allyson with fresh settings of bop classics.

Karrin Allyson: *Azure-Té* (Concord Jazz 4641; 61:40: ★★★) K.C. native Allyson has a tight, tidy instrument, with touches of smoke and nasality as well as snappy vibrato and careful diction. What she lacks in range, she makes up for in personality, putting her merry mark on standards and making brisk work on a scatted "Ornithology," a sambafied "Bernie's Tune."

Carmen Bradford: *With Respect* (Evidence 22115; 53:14: ★★★) Bradford sings hearty with a strong bluesy edge, with a hard, high range, and a healthy vibrato. Saxophone/vibes backdrop adds interesting textures to a speedy "High Wire" and two love songs of blessed relief, "Finally" and "Maybe Now," which tread the gospel line lightly.

Chris Connor: *Lover Come Back To Me* (Evidence 22110; 46:40: ★★★★★½) This live '81 set at Sweet Basil puts forth 15 three-minute beauties with Connor's round, firm tone, a flutter of vibrato, brisk enunciation, precision timing. But she's always warm, convincing, as with sarcastic self-pity into the mirror on "Glad To Be Unhappy." "Lush Life" reaffirms an overdone Strayhorn classic; she effectively revisits her '50s hit, "All About Ronnie."

Ann Dyer: *No Good Time Fairies* (Mr. Brown 896; 44:22: ★★★★★) This date by foot-loose, fancy-free Dyer with Jeff Buenz's electric-guitar trio hits the high-wire right off with a rockish, diatonic "I'll Remember April." Steve Coleman's title tune goes acid as Dyer braves sock-beat and tough lyric. She's gussy but vulnerable, opening "Lonely Woman" solo, but warms up broadly declaiming "A Social Call." Her lyrics to "Walkin'" and pieces by Tyner and Shorter are deliciously realized. For info: (800)368-7403.

Rachelle Ferrell: *First Instrument* (Blue Note 27820; 56:56: ★★½) Fronting a tight trio with guest horns, Ferrell's thrilling contralto emanates from a cavernous voicebox, her Yma Sumac range flaunting crowd-wowling pyrotechnics ("Autumn Leaves") or yodels on most tracks; but the emotional impact is distanced. Her phrasing, r&b- and blues-rooted, packs chills into scat: sexy, fevered moans ("Bye Bye Blackbird") or unearthly, extra-musical dog-



Carmen McRae: exquisite time and cauterizing attack

whistles ("Don't Waste Your Time").

Ruth Naomi Floyd: *Paradigms For Desolate Times* (Contour 0923; 60:25: ★★★) Floyd—a Philadelphia minister's daughter with a rich alto—sings with a deepfelt, swinging slant on themes of salvation and mercy. All are originals (save Wm. Monk's hymn "Abide With Me" and Ellington's "Come Sunday") with bright, hopeful lyrics on straightforward tunes in simplistic settings. Drummer Terri Lyne Carrington, pianist Uri Caine and soprano saxist Craig Handy all provide very able support.

Lena Horne: *An Evening With Lena Horne: Live At The Supper Club* (Blue Note 31877; 54:14: ★★★★★) What if Horne's vibrato's gone wobbly? She sure puts her business across with grace ("Got The World On A String"), humor ("Maybe") and coy appeal ("Squeeze Me," her asides over Donald Harrison's uncredited tenor solos on "Do Nothing 'Til You Hear From Me").

Carmen McRae: *For Lady Day, Volume I* (Novus 63163; 51:17: ★★★★★½) La Carmen calls headspinning' tempos that vacillate between *veery* fast and *veery* slow on this '83 club date. Carmen of the exquisite time and cauterizing attack explores well-trod tales with her trio and majestic sit-ins by Zoot Sims. Fed up, she commands "Good Morning Heartache." Josting the crowd, she emphatically hums a chorus of "Fine And Mellow."

Laird Jackson: *Quiet Flame* (Venus 79058; 58:45: ★★★½) Ms. Jackson in her after-hours debut album, offers jabs of sadness and blues-tinged passion to conquer your heart with respectful readings of 10 standards. Her band? Cyrus Chestnut, Clarence Penn, Chris Thomas, Steve Nelson, Donald Harrison.

Dianne Reeves: *Quiet After The Storm* (Blue Note 29511: ★★★★★½) Reeves'

compelling, flexible voice pours into impassioned live performances here. With spots for young lions (Redman, Hargrove, Terrason) and backup chorale, she ranges from Ellington's "Sentimental Mood" to Joni Mitchell's "Both Sides Now." Producer George Duke's chart for "Comes Love" is "sampled" out of Cannonball Adderley's "Autumn Leaves," and Reeves tributes Cannon with his "Jive Samba" and hip lyrics to "Country Preacher."

Barbara Paris: *Where Butterflies Play* (Perca 001; 49:09: ★★★½) Colorado native Paris' debut homegrown CD is inventive with fine sidemen. Several duos with pianist Joe Bonner, then guitarist Mitchell Long spin out the late Harold Vick's title waltz, Bonner's easy 5/4 "Your Kiss," choice sambas by Jobim and Bonfá, and neglected standards ("Then I'll Be Tired Of You").

Lisa Thorson: *From This Moment On* (Brownstone 942; 68:09: ★★★★★) Thorson sings with superb diction and enunciation in a lilting, candid voice, but there's mischief in her. Beyond her wide range, even control within it, she has a fine scat sense and elfin humor. Her band—saxophonist Cercie Miller, bassist Dave Clark, pianist Tim Ray, drummer George Schuller—whips the novel charts smartly, with stop-on-a-dime twists.

Carla White: *Listen Here* (Evidence 22109; 62:07: ★★★★★½) White rips into "Devil May Care" with a drawing, worldly abandon and pours smoke and smog onto smoldering fires on "Harlem Nocturne." She pursues with an upbeat take on Mancini's "Dreamsville," "It's You Or No One," then Strayhorn's regally woozy waltz "Lotus Blossom," and "Paper Moon" as a scat duo with bass. Lew Tabackin's tenor and alto flute blend well with White's tawny alto. Also on hand: Peter Madsen, piano; Dean Johnson, bass; Lewis Nash, drums. **DB**

BLUES

Blues You Can Use (One More Time)

by Frank-John Hadley

Listening to recent blues reissues is like an archaeologist patiently laboring with pick and shovel to unearth the priceless gifts of the past. Let's draw back the curtains of time and shout with renewed enthusiasm over albums from champions of the old three-chord form who had their moment in blues history before passing into memory or becoming living legends.

Skip James: *Complete Early Recordings* (Yazoo 2009; 53:24: ★★★★★) Gingerly remastered to reduce dissonant sounds without affecting the aural integrity of the original 78s, recorded for the Paramount label in 1931, this haunting collection of 18 sides by the great Bentonia (Miss.) hill country bluesman has the power to catch you by the throat. Using his high, keening voice and refined modal guitar picking, James infuses "rags" and blues (including the famous "Devil Got My Woman" and "I'm So Glad") with an inner-directed melancholy that perfectly fits his lyrics on death, desolation, devilry and the Depression. On a couple songs James plays a chaotic, bewildering piano.

B.B. King: *Completely Well* (MCA 11207; 50:08: ★★★★★) The title serves as a terse comment on the condition of King's commercial health among black and white audiences in 1969, when this album and a certain 45 were issued. He sings the hell out of the *Billboard* chart smash "The Thrill Is Gone," combining heartache and bitterness in potent terms that his guitar Lucille mirrors with deep breaths and scornful rebukes of her own. Eight more tracks, from King's authoritative take on the Hootie McShann classic "Confessin' The Blues" to the spontaneous studio eruption "You're Mean," are almost as rewarding, his pained vocals and single-string wizardry again framed by a strong band and sympathetic producer Bill Szymczyk.

John Mayall: *Blues Breakers With Eric Clapton* (Mobile Fidelity 616; 37:28: ★★★★★½) Spearheading the white blues boom of England in 1965, Mayall and his 20-year-old guitarist nicknamed "Slowhand" set fires under originals and material associated with the likes of Otis Rush, Robert Johnson, Ray Charles, Mose Allison, Freddie King and Little Walter. Clapton displays enough control and buoyant enthusiasm in his playing to justify the scrawling of "Clapton is God" on London walls, though his fiery runs don't yet identify



Skip James in the '60s: by the throat

a style of his own. Blues scholar Mayall, meantime, explores the upper range of his pale voice with urgency and conviction, as he has in the ensuing three decades.

Sonny Rhodes: *Just Blues* (Evidence 26060; 36:22: ★★★★★) An Oakland blues institution with a sizable following in Europe, Rhodes sidestepped record companies and put out this impressive, if obscure, album himself in 1985. Backed by his rhythm section-plus-horns group called the Texas Twisters, he digs down to his gritty soul when singing and playing guitar (sometimes a lap steel) on intelligent originals—"Cigarette Blues," in particular, punches hard—and on archival songs such as Guitar Slim's "Things That I Used To Do" and Percy Mayfield's "Strange Things Happening."

Otis Spann: *Down To Earth* (MCA 11202; 68:26: ★★★★★½) The combining here of two mid-decade ABC-Bluesway feature LPs, *The Blues Is Where It's At* and *Blues At The Bottom*, gives ample proof of how his smooth but tense singing style and his exuberance on the 88 keys produced the precise shadings of emotion vital to first-rate Chicago blues. Among Spann's quick-witted accompanists on these NYC record dates are guitarists Waters and Sammy Lawhorn.

Jack Owens & Bud Spires: *It Must Have Been The Devil* (Testament 5016; 58:34: ★★★★★) The Skip James/Bentonia-style of Mississippi rural blues performed by Owens and his close friend Spires for the tape recorder of David Evans in 1970 is exceedingly special. On brooding numbers drawn from the local blues tradition, Owens' singing voice flares up with an unremitting intensity, sometimes with several notes sung to a single syllable, while his percussive, convoluted guitar picking is charged with tension. Spires plays his harmonica out of tune but complements Owens with an austere lyricism. The CD includes five stirring tracks not on the 1971 LP. **DB**

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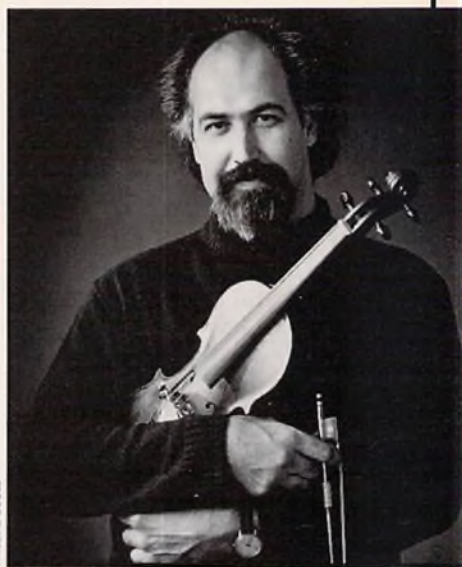
by Dan Ouellette

Thanks to the CD explosion, endangered, regionally based roots forms like Cajun-zydeco and Tex-Mex have crossed over into the mainstream as pop stars appropriate their exotic colors and textures. Plus, music based in the Afro-Cuban tradition, long a wellspring for Latin jazz, has attracted new listeners eager to tap into its percussion-rich legacy. Like jazz, the most compelling world music teems with experimentation and improvisation.

BeauSoleil: *L'Echo* (Forward R2 71808; 53:09; ★★★★★); BeauSoleil: *Vintage BeauSoleil* (Music of the World 213; 52:05; ★★★½) *L'Echo*, BeauSoleil's latest, is an exceptional collection of standards written in the '20s and '30s by seminal Cajun composers. Fiddler/vocalist Michael Doucet and his band, known in part for resuscitating and popularizing the Louisiana-based French dance music, celebrate the masters by rejuvenating their tunes with a steamy gumbo undergirded by non-stop cadences and steeped in the two-step/waltz tradition. Such highlights as the stomping "Chez Denouse McGee" and the swinging "La Cravate A Ziggy Zag" feature Doucet's blazing fiddle and Jimmy Breaux's pulsing diatonic accordion. While *L'Echo* showcases rarely heard Cajun gems, *Vintage* is packed with invigorating crowd-pleasers such as the rowdy drinking tune "Parlez-nous A Boire" and the sizzling "Courtableau." Culled from live performances in New York in 1986-87, these choice tracks not only display BeauSoleil's prowess in spicing the mix with swing, country, rock, blues and Caribbean flavors but also document the band's love for gigging.

Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band: *Live! At The Dance* (Arhoolie 418; 76:14; ★★★) Doucet teams with husband & wife accordion-rhythm guitar duo Marc and Ann Savoy on this recording of Cajun music delivered in a more traditional vein. Captured live, the trio (plus bassist Billy Wilson on seven tracks) unleashes raw and unbridled two-steps and waltzes, featuring Doucet's reeling fiddle flights and the powerful tones and swelling notes of Savoy's syncopated squeezebox pumping. The proceedings get especially intoxicating during "J'ai Été-z-au Bal," when Marc whoops and hollers as Doucet gleefully soars, swoops and glides.

Flaco Jimenez (Arista/Texas 07822 18772-2; 34:32; ★★★) A founding member of the Texas Tornados, the Tex-Mex accordion god gets a bit stingy with time on his self-titled latest. But all is forgiven when



Michael Doucet: a mix of swing, country and blues

he works the reeds of his diatonic accordion to squeal with scintillating beauty. In addition to standard norteño fare, including a buoyant ranchera and an entrancing waltz, Jimenez successfully explores more contemporary expressions, enlisting a horn section and snarling electric guitar for the rocking party tune "Seguro Que Hell Yes" and a pedal-steel guitar for the Tex-Mex-seasoned country number "Jealous Heart."

John Santos & The Machete Ensemble: *Machete* (Xenophile 4029; 61:54; ★★★★★); Conjunto Céspedes: *Vivito y Coleando* (Xenophile 4033; 65:32; ★★★½) Top-notch percussionist John Santos delivers a superb collection of contemporary Latin music rooted in a variety of Afro-Cuban song forms, infused by expressive jazz improvisation and fueled by an arsenal of explosive rhythms. With his tight 16-piece Machete Ensemble, Santos offers an effervescent percussion feast on the Cuba-Africa-America axis that both adheres to tradition and advances it (e.g., "Health Is Our Only Wealth," a hybrid of funk and West African music, and the string quartet-graced danzón-mambo "Media Luna"). Guesting on this exhilarating session are Latin jazz pillars bassist Cachao, trumpeter Chocolate, timbales master Orestes Vilató and percussionist Anthony Carrillo, who star on "Modupue" and "El Mago Vilató." Santos sits in with Conjunto Céspedes on its remarkable sophomore Xenophile recording of inventive Afro-Cuban music. With son-salsa jazz-funk sensibilities, the ensemble cooks up simmering dance tunes ("Qué Viva Changó"), chills with gorgeous ballads ("Dolor Y Perdón") and sails into deep-grooved mid-tempo numbers ("Buenos Dias América"). **DB**

BLINDFOLD TEST

AUGUST 1995

“Smitty” Smith

by Zan Stewart

The “Blindfold Test” is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to identify the musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information about the recordings is given to the artist prior to the test.

These days, Marvin “Smitty” Smith doesn’t doubt for a minute that as the drummer for Kevin Eubanks’ Tonight Show Orchestra, a post he’s held since January, he’s got one of the best jobs in the music business. “When I took the job, I had some preconceptions that it wouldn’t be creative, but once I got here and saw the situation, I found that I could add something to the music, give it some life. I don’t lose any integrity as an artist by doing this.”

A native of Waukegan, Ill., Smith started formal drum studies at age three, was jamming at seven, a working professional at age 14. After studying at the Berklee College of Music—where he met Eubanks and fellow “Tonight” tenorman Ralph Moore—Smith headed for New York, where he lived for 14 years and played with such notables as Jon Hendricks, Dave Holland, Sonny Rollins and Eubanks, as well as leading his own bands.

The 34-year-old Smith’s last recording as a leader was 1989’s *The Road Less Traveled* on Concord Jazz, but he’s recorded prolifically with others, appearing this year on Eubanks’ *Spiritalk 2* (Blue Note) and Randy Sandke’s *The Chase* (Concord Jazz).

This is Smith’s first Blindfold Test. He was given no information about the recordings.

Kenny Barron

“One Finger Snap” (from *Wanton Spirit*, Verve, 1994) Barron, piano; Charlie Haden, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

“One Finger Snap.” That was definitely Roy Haynes. I know that for sure. I wonder if this is Dave Kikoski’s record, because I didn’t recognize the pianist’s style of play, nor the bass player’s. The production sounded so bright, so trebly. I’m so used to hearing Roy with the bottom, cause he drops so many bombs, that’s a staple of his playing, to hear that textural balance. Hag, he was killin’. Still playing some bad rhythms. And I even feel like he was holding back. If he had really let go, I feel the rest of the band would have been lost.

Hag’s one of my heroes. But it sounded cool. I’ll give it 3½.

ZS: That was Kenny Barron.

Really? That didn’t sound like him to me. He’s one of my favorites, and one of the most underrated. Nor did I feel it sounded like Charlie Haden, especially playing a Herbie tune.

John McLaughlin

“Juju At The Crossroads” (from *The Free Spirits: Tokyo Live*, Verve, 1994) McLaughlin, electric guitar; Joey DeFrancesco, Hammond B-3 organ; Dennis Chambers, drums.

Dennis, that’s my man. And I really do like John. So their playing I appreciate greatly. But as far as this group concept here, it misses the mark for me. I got the feeling that John was selling himself short, as if he were making an effort to sound like John Scofield’s group. And it probably doesn’t help that feeling that Dennis is playing drums, because he played with Scofield. It’s just not a strong enough group concept. It doesn’t have enough projection and impact for me.

This music needs movement, harmonically, rhythmically, so it really helps when you have a moving bass line, a linear aspect that is really missing here. The musicianship is high here, but in terms of performance, I have to give it 2½.



Dave Holland

“Four Winds” (from *Triplicate*, ECM, 1988) Holland, bass; Steve Coleman, alto saxophone; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

That’s one of my favorite Dave Holland tunes. And I like that record with Jack and Steve. Funny, since I’ve worked in Dave’s band, and we played this tune, in listening to it now, I hear other things in terms of how I would approach it. I would integrate more percussion into the sound. Jack’s really one of my heroes. At 14, I got into Jack via Charles Lloyd’s records, then Miles’ *Black Beauty* and *Live Evil*. Some of my concept of integrating percussion and drums was from those Miles records with Airtio and Jack, because, to me, they sounded like one. 4 stars.

Roy Hargrove

“Mental Phrasing” (from *With The Tenors Of Our Time*, Verve, 1994) Hargrove, trumpet; Joshua Redman, Ron Blake, tenor sax; Cyrus Chestnut, piano; Rodney Whitaker, bass; Gregory Hutchinson, drums.

This is in the bebop tradition, there’s some melody that’s executed rather well, but I’m not moved by it. I can tell it’s played by a younger generation of guys, and we’re almost in the 21st century, and bebop is like 50 years old. I’m all for preservation and tradition in transition, but somehow here the transition part got lost. Young players, in general, get stuck here. Here, there’s a high level of proficiency, but the spirit of really forging forward, striving to create a new direction of sound I don’t get. It’s like they were just getting by, and it’s not about that, it’s about doing something, striving to affect change. That’s why performances like these don’t go anywhere for me. It leaves me flat. I don’t get a strong individual personality out of any of them. I couldn’t say, “That’s so and so.” I don’t feel any distinction, and I like to feel something. 2½.

Art Blakey

“Justice” (from *At The Jazz Corner Of The World*, Blue Note, 1959) Blakey, drums; Hank Mobley, tenor sax; Lee Morgan, trumpet; Bobby Timmons, piano; Jymie Merrill, bass.

Now that’s what I’m talkin’ about, man. Spirit in the music, having a personality, making yourself an integral part of what’s happening—Buhaina had plenty of that. Unmistakable! The stuff he played became integral parts of the compositions themselves, so if you hear somebody else play them, you want to hear what Bu played—like “Hey, you got to put that little rhythm in there that Bu played.” The other cats played that way, too. Sounded like Kenny Dorham, Hank Mobley; this had that personality, that fire. That’s what’s missing in a lot of today’s music. 5 stars. **DB**