

JAMES CARTER BLINDFOLDED

DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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ROY
Hargrove

Kenny
Garrett

Opposites Agree: Play More Pop

**Willis Conover
Receives Lifetime
Achievement Award**

**Ella Fitzgerald
L.A.'s Finest
Collette, Candoli,
Edwards, Land & More**

**CLASSIC INTERVIEW:
Dexter Gordon**



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Opposites Attract

Two generations. Two sounds. Two worlds. Yet, Roy the young whippersnapper and Kenny the so-called late-bloomer inhabit overlapping turf. The contrasts and complements are more than a little striking.

By Martin Johnson

Cover photograph of Roy Hargrove and Kenny Garrett by Teri Bloom; location provided by The Fashion Cafe.



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Roy Hargrove

Opposites

By Martin Johnson

"If you're looking for controversy, you've got the wrong two guys"...

...so says trumpeter Roy Hargrove. A slight smile creeps across saxophonist Kenny Garrett's face as he nods in agreement from across the table.

But honest, guys, we weren't shopping for controversy, we were looking for contrasts—and we found them in abundance. Garrett is one of the last musicians to do the traditional apprenticeship route. Although accepted at Berklee, he turned down the academy to go on the road in 1978 with the Duke Ellington Orchestra under the direction of Mercer Ellington; since then he's worked in bands led by Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw, Art Blakey and Miles Davis. The *New York Times* recently referred to him as an elder statesman

at 34. Although his latest recording, *Triology*, is winning a deserved bounty of praise, he's recorded only a few times as a leader and admits to *having* to spend half the year doing sideman gigs (see "CD Reviews" July '95).

Hargrove, on the other hand, is the product of jazz's new fast track; he very nearly burst onto the New York jazz scene a full-fledged star. Although he went to Berklee for a year and a half, he made frequent visits to New York and made a strong impression on jazz insiders. By the time he was 19, he had left Berklee and was recording his own major-label debut, *Diamond In The Rough* (1990). After five recordings for Novus, he's now working for his second major label, Verve, and supporting *Family*, his second somewhat thematic release for them (see "CD Reviews" Aug. '95).

What they do share in common is musical excellence. Each man is a highly distinctive soloist. You can hear their influences, but not at the expense of hearing the players. They have earned their high regard. In fact, if we're choosing up sides for bands whose members are under 40, and you bypass these guys at trumpet and alto saxophone, then my band can kick your band's butt.

MARTIN JOHNSON: *Have y'all ever worked together?*

ROY HARGROVE: The first time I worked with Kenny was probably with Carl Allen on his Manhattan Project [Dec. '88].

KENNY GARRETT: That was the only record we did together.

RH: Yeah!

KG: We should hook up on a date soon [both laugh].

RH: I remember being so excited about getting to play with you because I had been listening to you on this one recording called *Double Take* [1985] by Freddie [Hubbard] and Woody



Kenny Garrett

Attract



[Shaw]. I remember listening to it and going, "Man, I never heard an alto sound like that." You have a very original sound. Man, it was deep. Then, I went over to Berklee and I heard Antonio Hart—I heard him outside a club, and I said, "Man, Kenny Garrett is playing here." It was Antonio; I thought, "Wow, I thought I was the only one on to that sound." When Carl told me about the date, I said, "Wow!"

KG: That's true; that was a good date.

MJ: Do either one of you regret not pursuing the conservatory route all the way?

KG: I was going to go to Berklee, but then the opportunity to play in the Duke Ellington Orchestra came up, so I took that. I got to play with Cootie Williams and Harold Minerve, this guy who was a protégé of [Johnny] Hodges. I think a lot of universities turn out players that are not individual...

RH: Yeah, clones.

KG: I felt that by being in a big band I got a lot of firsthand experience.

RH: I believe that Berklee is a place that a lot of cats go to for a short time until they get gigs. A lot of cats do that, then there are cats who go all the way and graduate. It's very easy to get caught up in the school. Basically, what they teach you is how to transcribe solos and all that. You have all this information at your fingertips, John Coltrane solos note for note. People practice that stuff and they think that's how you learn how to play; but that ain't it [*shaking his head*].

KG: It depends on where you come from. If you're from a small town, then you need that environment.

RH: Yeah. I have to agree. I was traveling back and forth to New York, I was getting so much work. I played with pianists John Hicks, Kenny Barron, Harold Mabern, some others, too. Ralph Moore... Bobby Watson; yeah, Bobby! Curtis Lundy got me that gig. I was influenced a lot by Bobby's style of writing. He had a little rhythm-and-blues and dance and some intellectual stuff, too. Right away, being from Texas I could relate to that.

Roy was born near Dallas in 1969, a time when his hometown was in transition from being a happy confluence of Southwestern and Southern cultures to the urbane, appearance-conscious city featured on the hit television series of the same name. Hargrove is a canny amalgam of both components. His slight accent and warm, friendly manner speak to old Dallas. His stylishness speaks to the new Dallas.

If Hargrove seems bothered by the Verve high-concept approach to recording, it doesn't show. Of course, he probably knew what he was getting into; the label has specialized this approach since the "songbook recordings" of the '50s. He's planning a big band performance for the Washington Square Jazz Festival in New York (late August). And for his next record? "I think I'm moving toward working with vocalists, maybe doing some vocal stuff myself," he said. "That would surprise a lot of folks."

Maybe, but Hargrove—like Joshua Redman—seems bent on translating jazz virtuosity into pop stardom. Even his upcoming

small-group project, *Parker's Mood*, a tribute to Charlie Parker with a drummerless trio featuring pianist Stephen Scott and bassist Christian McBride, has a distinctly market-friendly air to it. (Its release is timed to celebrate Bird's birthday, August 29.) But though both Garrett and Hargrove came of age long after pop had relegated jazz to the margins, it should come as no surprise that both men want to change that situation. For instance, shouldn't jazz musicians integrate the contemporary pop vernacular into their repertoire?

KG: Young musicians shouldn't be afraid to take the opportunity to play popular music, and show that it's all relevant.

RH: Yeah!

KG: There are a lot of cats that won't play popular music because their loyalty is to jazz. But we *all* have that; it doesn't mean you have to stay there. You don't progress [if you do].

RH: That's the thing that messes me up about Sonny [Rollins]. When I heard him this year [in Europe], he was playing all these contemporary notes, and I said, "Wait a minute, where did that come from?" That just shows the whole history of it. I always thought you should be open; you got cats who say hip-hop, contemporary r-and-b or whatever, and they say, "Oh no, not that." At the same time, you take them to a party and they hear their song and [*mimics dancing*]. A lot of the great cats always stay current: Wayne [Shorter], Ron Carter. I just heard Jackie McLean doing a cover of Luther Vandross' [version of] "A House Is Not A Home."

My favorite hip-hop group is Wu Tang Clan right now. I also like Mobb Deep and Notorious B.I.G.

MJ: Do either of you ever wanna do a hip-hop jazz album?

RH: I want to do something, but I don't want to do something where it's supposed to be integrated with jazz. I would just do it to be a hip-hop record.

MJ: Like Branford did?

RH & KG: No! [*both laugh*]

RH: I would just come straight from a hip-hop vein and not even call it acid-jazz, hip-hop jazz or whatever.

KG: I think everybody is waiting for me to do it because of my association with Miles. I just did some stuff with GURU [*Jazzmatazz Volume 2*], and I'm getting a feel for it. When the time is right, I'll do it. But one obstacle is the record companies, they'll look at it and...

RH: They'll say, "Wait a second, we can't put this in a hole."

It's a problem that Garrett is probably very familiar with. If prominence were at all related to ability, Kenny Garrett would be a household name in jazz, not a so-called late bloomer; but record companies haven't known how to handle his multifaceted brilliance. The Detroit native is a quiet, thoughtful man in person. If he is frustrated by the long road toward recognition, it doesn't show. He laughs at the notion. "I'm just glad they acknowledged me. I've been out here playing a long time."

The public may be getting a very solid idea of that playing thanks to *Triology*. Already hailed by some critics as one of the year's best, it's a superb and daring recording with the virtuosic Garrett stripped down to an alto-bass-drums format. And while he possesses mind-numbing technique, he still feels an obligation to entertain. "When I go to a club, I want to be entertained. So when I go to play, I'm an artist, but I want people to be entertained. I'm always changing my compositions. I want it to be fresh. Now, we're in a society where you can just put the remote on, and people can't sustain themselves [for long periods of time]. I learned that from Miles. Coltrane messed it up for saxophone players. He played [solos] for 20 and 30 minutes, so everyone else thought that they should, too. He learned a lot by doing that, but Miles said, 'Were not going to do that. You're going to play a little bit, then you're going to play, then you; we're all going to play a little bit. This is a family; we'll spring.' I'm caught in the middle, because I love to play; but by the same token, I want people to be entertained. That's the process you have to continue to work on."

By now, it's become clear that the major difference between the men refuses to play a minor part—namely, experience. Kenny's got it; Roy's getting it. Will future generations only be left with the academy? Is that a bad thing?

KG: Five years ago I would say it is. I think it's a way to get from point A to point B. Now, a lot of the cats [from school] are getting record dates.

RH: Record dates; oh, man.

KG: In the long run, I feel that the music will suffer from them not having the same experiences; but every generation says that. Every generation you lose something. If the cats can find themselves...

RH: Experience—that's what it is. A lot of people helped me. I got the chance to play with Clifford Jordan, Barry Harris; just

EQUIPMENT

Roy Hargrove plays a Monette trumpet with a Monette mouthpiece. He also plays an Inderbinnen flugelhorn with a Giardinelli mouthpiece. Kenny Garrett plays a Selmer alto saxophone and uses a Selmer mouthpiece. Although he

has played soprano saxophone and even borrowed a tenor saxophone for Terence Blanchard's *Romantic Defiance* album, they are not essential weapons in his arsenal.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Roy Hargrove
FAMILY—Verve 527630
WITH THE TENORS OF OUR TIME—Verve 523019
APPROACHING STANDARDS—Novus 3178
THE TOKYO SESSIONS—Novus 63164 (co-led with Antonio Hart)
OF KINDRED SOULS—Novus 63154
THE VIBE—Novus 63132
PUBLIC EYE—Novus 3113
DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH—Novus 3082

with various others
PARKER'S MOOD—Verve 527907 (Stephen Scott and Christian McBride)
A TURTLE'S DREAM—Verve 527382 (Abbey Lincoln)
HERE'S TO THE PEOPLE—Milestone 9194 (Sonny Rollins)
CHICAGO. PARIS. NEW YORK—Verve

527367 (Johnny Griffin)
DUET—Telarc 83349 (Dave Brubeck)
THE SWEETEST DAYS—Mercury 526172 (Vanessa Williams)
SKETCHES OF DREAMS—Columbia 67021 (David Sanchez)
DAMN!—Verve 527631 (Jimmy Smith)
SOMETHING TO CONSIDER—Verve 849557 (Stephen Scott)
GETTIN' TO IT—Verve 523989 (Christian McBride)

Kenny Garrett
TRIOLOGY—Warner Bros 9-45731
BLACK HOPE—Warner Bros 45017
PRISONER OF LOVE—Atlantic 82046
AFRICAN EXCHANGE STUDENT—Atlantic 82156
GARRETT 5—Paddle Wheel K32Y 6280
INTRODUCING KENNY GARRETT—Criss Cross 1014

with various others
WARNER JAMS, VOL. 1—Warner Bros. 9 45919 (Wallace Roney, Joshua Redman, et. al)
AMANDLA—Warner Bros. 925 873 (Miles Davis)
DINGO—Warner Bros. 7599 264382 (Miles Davis)
MILES DAVIS & QUINCY JONES LIVE AT MONTREUX—Warner Bros. 45221
MUSIC IS MY MISTRESS—MusicMasters 5013 (Duke Ellington Orchestra under the direction of Mercer Ellington)
TOPSY—enja 7025 (Freddie Hubbard)
THE SUN DON'T LIE—Dreyfus 36560 (Marcus Miller)
HAND IN HAND—Novus 63153 (Mulgrew Miller)
SOLID—Muse 5329 (Woody Shaw)
THE NURTURER—Blue Note 95139

(Geri Allen)
ARCANE—Muse 5341 (Cindy Blackman)
HARD CHAMPION—Paddle Wheel K28P 6472 (Art Blakey)
GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS—Landmark 1523 (Donald Byrd)
ROMANTIC DEFIANCE—Columbia 67042 (Terence Blanchard)
THE FUNK STOPS HERE—Tiptoe 888811 (Mike Clark)
THE CHARMER—CTI 1010 (Charles Fambrough)
MOON ALLEY—Criss Cross 1018 (Tom Harrell)
EVIDENCE—Telarc 83343 (Cody Moffett)
THREE OR FOUR SHADES OF DANNIE RICHMOND—Tutu 888120 (Dannie Richmond)
INTUITION—Muse 5335 (Wallace Roney)
A MOMENT'S NOTICE—Novus 83123 (Hilton Ruiz)

being able to watch them. Otherwise, you could be at the gig and playing, and someone like J.J. Johnson comes in and just looks at you [*Roy scrunches up his face, both laugh*]. I remember one time I was at the gig, and Freddie walked in the door. He's my all-time hero, King Freddie of Hubbard.

KG: I feel very fortunate to have played with so many strong players—Freddie, Woody, Dizzy, Miles, Donald Byrd.

RH: Dizzy, Miles, *gaaaaahhhhd!* That's why, sometimes, I wished I played like trombone, so I could play with some of those cats: Miles, Dizzy or even Wynton. I think I'll get me a valve trombone and play in Wallace's band, then play in Wynton's band, then play with Terence.

KG: I hope that a lot of the younger cats can get together. There's you and Wallace and Terence and Wynton, but because of the way things go, y'all never get to just hang out like our forefathers used to. You can't do that.

RH: They've got you on a schedule, you've got to go out and do your thing—*your* thing. You don't have any bands anymore. The band I have has been together for only three years. Back in the day, cats had bands together 20 years, 30 years. Everybody wants to do their thing. It's like you get the date and you do your thing. "Well, I got a record date, so I guess I've got to go promote my record and band."

MJ: *How do you feel about your reception from the critics?*

RH: They always try to make it an age thing. I don't think there should be so much emphasis on the "young lions." Of course, I guess you've got to make the story interesting, but let me tell you a story about when I was in L.A. and got reviewed. The critic said the bass player could have sounded a little more like Ray Brown. And he went around the whole band like that. Can you guess who it was?

KG: Leonard [Feather]? [*everyone laughs*]

RH: I feel when they say stuff like "kids in suits," that's really

shallow. I feel when you play, you should look your best. I have a thing about looking at photographs of jazz musicians—of Bird, Sonny, Dizzy—and how they used to dress.

KG: I'm kind of on the other side. I can't play with a suit on. When I played with Art Blakey, I had to play with a suit and tie on. When I looked at those pictures, I said that's not me. But you have to keep it on a certain level.

As a matter of fact, the photo shoot highlights some differences between the musicians' personal styles. In contrast to Roy's effective, by-the-book casual duds, Kenny is casual in his own way: blue jeans, sneakers, a long-sleeved black T-shirt, occasionally covered by a jacket made of an intricately detailed Third World fabric. Garrett has made such fascinating duds a trademark. Whenever his work takes him to an exotic corner of the world, he seeks out fabrics and religious artifacts. He works with a tailor in Ohio to produce his clothing. Even seated, certain disparities stand out. Roy is very much the young whippersnapper, eager to please, anxious to have his say, and fidgety throughout the interview as if it's work for him to sit still. At the cafe we visit, he skips lunch while Garrett chooses one of the vegetarian offerings and betrays his avuncularity only when told that the cafe isn't fashionable enough to serve herbal tea.

KG: Did I tell you the story about when we did the second *Double Take*? Woody was killing it. Freddie was saying stop!

RH: It came out, though. *Volume Two*. Right?

KG: *Volume Two* came out, but the stuff they was really playing, that didn't come out. Woody didn't want to step on him, but he got in the area. At one point, we had Dizzy come in.

RH: [*Eyes bugging, head cocked back*] Dizzy, Woody and Freddie? WOW!!

DB

HOME GROWN IN NEW ORLEANS. LEROY JONES

"MO' CREAM FROM THE CROP"
HIS DEBUT ALBUM.



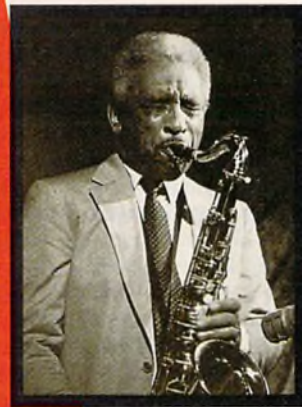
IN THE TRADITION OF JAZZ GREATS LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND WYNTON MARSALIS, LEROY JONES IS A TRUMPETER STEEPED IN THE HERITAGE OF NEW ORLEANS. AFTER PLAYING AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN THE RESURGENCE OF BRASS BANDS IN NEW ORLEANS AND PERFECTING HIS SOUND FOR 4 YEARS WITH HARRY CONNICK, JR.'S BAND, LEROY TAKES THE SPOTLIGHT WITH "MO' CREAM FROM THE CROP," A DEBUT ALBUM FEATURING REVITALIZED STANDARDS AND RIVETING ORIGINALS - ALL FLAVORED WITH A CENTURY OF NEW ORLEANS. PRODUCED BY TRACEY FREEMAN.

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Lost in A

The Legends Who

By Zan Stewart



Teddy Edwards

JAMES PATTERSON

Jazz in Los Angeles. To some, those four words will sound like an oxymoron, might even lead a chatterbox into thunderous silence. But, truth be told, there are a number of jazz greats who, amidst the palm trees, sunshine and smog, have established careers and essentially stayed put. Who are some of them and why have they remained in L.A.?

First, a bit of history. We all know about L.A.'s jazz past, the golden years of the '40s when the near-downtown Central Avenue district was lit up with the rollicking sounds of greats such as Charlie Parker, Art Tatum, Charles Mingus, Dexter Gordon and Teddy Edwards raising the roofs of fabled joints like the Club Alabam, the Last Word and, yes, the Down Beat.

The '50s and early '60s were a teeming time, too, with clubs from the Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach on the Pacific to Shelly's Manne-Hole in Hollywood and the It Club in the middle of town booking everyone from Thelonious Monk, Sonny Rollins and Duke Ellington to local notables Shelly Manne, Harold Land, Bill Holman and Phineas Newborn.

"It was a great musical atmosphere," says saxophonist Land. "A lot of musicians were working six nights a week."

Since then, though, jazz has been on a roller-coaster ride as clubs open and close, opportunities sprout, then disappear. Still, within this topsy-turvy environment, a

number of jazz artists with close to legendary status have survived, even thrived.

We're not talking about the international stars such as Herbie Hancock, Charlie Haden, Chick Corea, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Freddie Hubbard, Benny Carter and Billy Higgins, for whom Southern California is just a stepping-off point to steady engagements worldwide.

Rather, we're referring to such renowned figures as saxophonists Land and Edwards, woodwind player Buddy

Harold Land



PAULA ROSS-JAZZ ART

Collette, trumpeters Bobby Bradford and Conte Candoli, bandleader Gerald Wilson, singer Ernie Andrews and pianist Horace Tapscott. These are musicians who have chosen to live, and mostly perform, within Los Angeles and its neighboring regions. They are musicians who clearly would have enhanced their careers had they decided to live in New York.

So, despite its hot-and-cold climate for jazz, what is it that has made Los Angeles so appealing to many musicians?

Land says it's a matter of temperament. "Los Angeles, with all its space and sunshine, is just my kind of groove," he notes in his quiet yet upbeat voice.

Land, a native of Houston who grew up in San Diego, has resided in Los Angeles since the early 1950s. But, from 1954-56, as a member of the famed Clifford Brown-Max Roach quintet, he had a chance to live anywhere. The death of his grandmother, and the fact that his son was growing up while his father was on the road, made Land opt to leave Brown-Roach and return to L.A. "It seemed like it was time to stay," he says.

At first, Land did well here, fronting a quintet with bassist Red Mitchell, and appearing on sessions with everyone from Gerald Wilson's orchestra to Monk. But the middle '60s were a tough time in Southern California, and like for others, "things slowed down," he says. His career revived in the late '60s, thanks to intermittent cameos with singer Tony



Bobby Bradford

and wrote that I'd be perfect for the Village Vanguard, and I got hired," says Edwards, who has played the hallowed room twice since 1990. The saxophonist was just in the Apple, making a trio recording for Verve, with bassist Christian McBride and drummer Higgins, and a guest outing for Muse, where he teamed with fellow tenorman Houston Person.

These days, though, Edwards appears more in Europe than Manhattan, traveling there about twice a year, and often in Los Angeles, where he recently held forth to packed houses at the Club Brasserie in West Hollywood. Andrews, too, sees Paris and London more than New York, though he has played the Blue Note club three times and returns in November to star with Ray Brown's trio.

They both feel that the jazz life in Los Angeles has treated them fairly. "I've enjoyed myself. What else can you ask for?" says Andrews. "I have no

complaints," says Edwards. "I like playing and the fact that people like to hear me play."

Buddy Collette is a man whose name has popped up now and then in jazz history for his work with Charles Mingus, his teaching of Eric Dolphy and his role in the amalgamation of the black and white musicians unions in Los Angeles in 1953. Born there, Collette says he's never had a reason to leave.

"New York's a fast town and I wouldn't want to live there," he says. "I stayed here because we have plenty of challenges, things to build up. I'm more of a team player than a guy that stands alone. I love to play in a section or lead a band as well as solo, and I've known this since I was growing up."

Collette, whose life story can be heard in part on his new album, *A Jazz Audio Biography*, makes a fine living as a jazzman, arranger, first-call studio musician and teacher. It's this last aspect that probably thrills him the most.

"I'm taking a big band into Catalina's," he says, referring to one of the two L.A. rooms that book top-name talent six-nights-a-week (the other is the Jazz Bakery). "Five of the members will be high

Stayed Behind

Bennett and the quintet he co-led with vibist Bobby Hutcherson from 1967-71. Wider recognition came when he played with the Timeless All-Stars (with Billy Higgins, Cedar Walton, Curtis Fuller, et. al) in the late '80s and early '90s.

Now hard-bopper Land, 66, is comfortable. He has a new album, *A Lazy Afternoon*, which features a string section led by Ray Ellis, and he travels regularly to Europe. He wouldn't want to live in New York, he says, because of "the pace,

The spirited singer, 67, and the gritty-toned saxophonist, 69, have known each other since the Central Avenue days, when both had hit records. Edwards' was "Blues In Teddy's Flat," which came out on Dial, while Andrews, who was still in high school at the time, scored with "Soothe Me" on G&C Records; the latter sold 300,000 copies.

And while both of these stellar artists have had chances to live in New York, they've both passed.

"It's too tough there," says Andrews, who appeared in Gotham while with the Harry James Orchestra from 1959-69, and who got his first taste of worldwide stardom when he toured the globe with Gene Harris' Phillip Morris Superband in 1989 (he's heard on the group's *Live At Town Hall N.Y.C.*).

"I get a little nervous in New York," says Edwards, who was there while performing with Benny Goodman in the '60s, and has made intermittent trips in the past five years, thanks, he says, to recordings on Verve and a write-up in the *Village Voice* from critic Gary Giddins.

"He heard me in L.A.



Ernie Andrews



Conte Candoli



Horace Tapscott



Gerald Wilson

the lack of light, too many people." Besides, in Los Angeles, where he's with his family, he gets to exploit his other career: tennis. "I play two to three times a week, and have for 20 years," he says. "I wouldn't want to give that up."

Two others who enjoy the mixture of jazz and sports are Ernie Andrews and Teddy Edwards, mainstream jazzmen who are longtime golfing partners and lifelong friends. "I love the fact that you can play golf all year long," says Edwards, a native of Jackson, Miss., who also gets out on the course with bassist Ray Brown.

school students. They'll get an experience working with professionals that they'll never forget." Collette is currently teaching on a volunteer basis at Le Conte Middle School in an after-school program.

Gerald Wilson, also active in education, has taught at Cal State universities in Los Angeles and Northridge, and is currently on the faculty of the music department at UCLA. In the liner notes to his current release, *State Street Sweet*, Wilson thanked his students, who have allowed him, he writes, "to share my love and respect for the artistry of jazz music and my dedication to keeping it alive."

A 76-year-young recipient of an NEA American Jazz Masters Fellowship in 1990, Wilson has kept his jazz fires blazing with appearances at the Jazz Bakery, the Chicago Jazz Festival last year, and the Playboy fest in Hollywood in June, where he was a standout. The composer/arranger/trumpeter for Lunceford, Basie, Ellington and many more knew that he wanted to live in L.A. the first time he set foot in it.

"It was February 1940; I had just left Chicago with Lunceford, and it was 24



Buddy Collette

degrees below zero," says the native of Shelby, Miss. "We arrived in Los Angeles by train, and the sun was out and it was as hot as if it were summer. It was so pretty, and I thought right then, 'I think I'll make my home here.'"

Two years later, Wilson was back to stay. Besides the weather, "there was so much music and a progressive attitude. I'm black, and we were struggling very hard for rights, and things were happening in Los Angeles."

For many blacks, life was indeed easier in Los Angeles than elsewhere, with a greater degree of acceptance than in the South.

Bobby Bradford's father brought his family from Cleveland, Miss. to Tulsa, Okla., then to L.A., working all the while with Douglas Aircraft, which had large

plants in the Los Angeles area. Horace Tapscott's family came to Los Angeles from Houston as part of an influx of blacks from the South who were looking for a better life. Both musicians, who have embraced jazz's more experimental edge, found things to their liking here. And there were expanded work opportunities, especially in the blue-collar sector.

"I grew up with all this music, so I already had a foothold in this area," says Tapscott, who was just nine when his family arrived in L.A. in 1943, and who was a trombonist before he became a pianist. "So being around all these greats—Mingus, Eric Dolphy, Dexter, later Ornette—getting a kind of hands-on teaching all the time, that gave me an advantage I couldn't beat anywhere in the world."

Too, there was an acceptance of freer forms of jazz here quite early on. "In the '50s, there was a saxophonist named George Freeman before Ornette," he says. "He and Don Cherry were playing what they called 'the strange music.'"

Tapscott, after a long period of local notoriety, is now regaled on the stages of the world. His Pan-Afrikan People's Arkestra recently appeared at a festival in

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Moers, Germany, and on his way back home, he stopped in New York and made an album (for Arabesque Records) due out this fall. He says that by remaining in Los Angeles, he proved a point. "If you believe enough in yourself, you can succeed anywhere," he says.

The pianist also feels that the L.A. scene, tough as it is sometimes, gets a hard rap. "A lot of players say nothing is happening here, but then they go to New York, and nothing happens there, and they have a new perspective," he says. "If players would stay here, build their following, then go out, they'd be fine."

Bradford finds the activity in L.A. uneven, with great acts one week, "rigor mortis the next." But he, too, says he wouldn't move. "I lived in New York when I was playing with Ornette in 1961, '62," he says. "We'd work a couple of weeks on, then a couple off. I was scuffling. So I came here and became a teacher, and that took the strain off so that I could still play my horn while taking care of my family."

The trumpeter has been active, playing festivals with David Murray (whom he taught at Pomona College) and with his own band, The Mo'tet. However, Bradford, 60, says he knows he'd do better if he were in New York. "There, you

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY		
Ernie Andrews NO REGRETS—Muse 5484 JUGGERNAUT—Concord Jazz 4040 (with Frank Capp, Nat Pierce)	Conte Candoli SWEET SIMON—Best 92101 AT THE MANNE-HOLE. VOLS. 1-2— OJC 714-15 (Shelly Manne)	Harold Land A LAZY AFTERNOON—Postcards 1008 HAROLD IN THE LAND OF JAZZ— OJC 162 HEAR YE!—Atlantic 1376 (with Red Mitchell)
Bobby Bradford COMIN' ON—Hat Hut 6016 (co-led with John Carter)	Buddy Collette A JAZZ AUDIO BIOGRAPHY— Issues 005 MAN OF MANY PARTS—OJC 239	Horace Tapscott THE DARK TREE 1 & 2— hat ART 6053/6083
WEST COAST HOT —Novus 3107 (with Horace Tapscott)	Teddy Edwards BLUE SAXOPHONE—Verve 517 298 TOGETHER AGAIN!—OJC 424 (co- led with Howard McGhee)	Gerald Wilson STATE STREET SWEET— Mama Foundation 1010 PORTRAITS—Pacific Jazz 934142
SHADOWS ON A WALL — Gramavision 79422 (under John Carter's leadership)	VOLANCO BLUES —Anililies 314 519 269 (under Randy Weston, Melba Liston)	
LOST IN L.A. —Soul Note 121068 ONE NIGHT STAND —Soul Note 121168 (Frank Sullivan Trio)		

can grab a record producer, get him to listen to your tape. It's the center of the heat."

It may have been the center, but New York never offered Conte Candoli a steady job, which was just what he got at the Lighthouse in the early '50s, when he left Stan Kenton's band. "I got \$125 a week, and rented a place on the beach," says the former *Tonight Show* trumpet ace. Los Angeles gave me a great place to raise my family."

Starting in the '60s into the late '80s, Candoli, along with musicians like Collette, drummer Manne and

saxophonist/flutist Bud Shank, became one of the many jazz players to establish themselves in the thriving field of film and TV soundtrack work specific to the L.A. area. And when *The Tonight Show* moved from New York to Burbank in 1972, Candoli was hired to join Doc Severinsen's band. This job, which took up a few hours of each weekday afternoon, allowed Candoli to both do studio work and play jazz clubs at night.

These days, the 67-year-old Candoli is a freelancer, and like the others, can hop a plane and be in New York or Madrid in a jiffy. As he says, "Why should I move?" **DB**

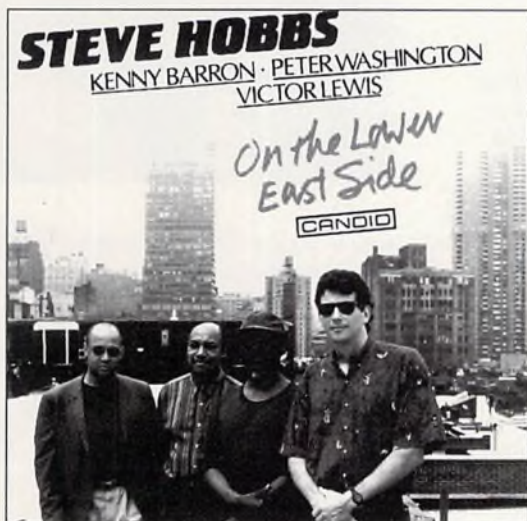
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(to be continued)

(At Left) The suspects were apprehended swinging on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in what authorities alleged was a blatant abuse of 4/4 time.

Tales from Ella's Fellas

By John McDonough



During this spring's "Ultimate Caribbean Jazz Spectacular" aboard the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line's Majesty of the Seas, a quintet of famous fellows who have known and worked with Ella Fitzgerald over the years gathered in a lounge as the ship lay at anchor off Ocho Rios, Jamaica. There they shared some stories and feelings about their famous friend. The panel, assembled by producer Hank O'Neal, included pianist Oscar Peterson, vibraharpist Milt Jackson, reedman Frank Wess, trombonist Urbie Green and singer Joe Williams, who helped moderate at the request of *Down Beat*. Here are some of the stories they told.

Also, comments on Ella from her

manager, Norman Granz, pianist Paul Smith and bandleader Billy May (who arranged and conducted her Harold Arlen songbook album) are inserted. Although these men were not part of the conversation in the tropics, two years ago they shared their observations on Ella for a portion of the book that accompanied Verve's double-Grammy-winning collection *The Complete Ella Fitzgerald Song Books*. Because some of their comments amplify points made by those aboard the ship, it seems proper to include them here.

Ella's career slowed to an effective end in the fall of 1992 with a concert in West Palm Beach, Fla. Her last recording, *All That Jazz* (Pablo), was made in March 1989; a subsequent session later that year

with trumpeter Harry Edison and guitarist Joe Pass remains unreleased. Since then, her public appearances have been rare as declining health has restricted her to her home in Beverly Hills, Calif., where she sees friends and family but has given no interviews. Yet, at 77, she remains an object of great interest and even greater worship as an American icon.

As Williams asked his colleagues to recall some of their experiences with Fitzgerald, the audience applauded spontaneously. Oscar Peterson led off.



HERMAN LEONARD



HERMAN LEONARD

OSCAR PETERSON: She never called me her accompanist. She used to call me her lawyer. I was with her until practically the very end of her singing career. Right now, I have to be very honest with you: she is incapable of making public appearances. But I know the voice is still there. But, unfortunately, we'll never get to hear it in person again.

I have never truthfully played with a musician—and that includes an awful lot of them—who frightened me as much as playing for Ella. Because she has the kind of gift you can't describe.

I'll give you one instance of her talent. When we first did the Jazz at the Philharmonic tours in America [1949–57], we used to do them by bus. The guys would keep some of their instruments in the back of the bus. Ray [Brown] would have his bass. And Ella would say, "Go get

your bass, Ray." Herbie [Ellis] would get out his guitar and Buddy Rich would grab a pair of brushes, and they would form a rhythm section. Ella pulled out a harmonica one day and wasted everybody. She really did! Roy Eldridge had his horn out, but he put it away. Because she has that kind of talent, believe me. It's a special talent, and those who have not been fortunate enough to play for her would not realize how deeply God gifted her.

JOE WILLIAMS: You said she won't sing again. But [the USC School of Music] threw a [party] for her in Hollywood [in May 1992], and she was sitting there at the head table with her doctor and Quincy Jones. [Fitzgerald received the school's Magnum Opus Award for lifetime achievement.] I came down off the stage with the microphone and knelt down beside her. She was in a wheelchair by then. I had the piano player play an intro to "Lady Be Good." So I start singing, and I get into the second chorus, and Ella leans over to Quincy and says, "Give me a piece of ice." Quincy reaches over and gave her a piece of ice. So I just kept going—"I'm just a lonesome babe in the woods..." And the next thing I know, I hear these bright, clear notes—"Scooooooobie oobie da da doobie..." as Ella pulls my microphone toward her.

Wow! The crowd went wild. People cried. She hadn't sung a note in months.

Mary Jane Outwater [Ella's assistant of 35 years] said to me later she never would forget that.

MILT JACKSON: The most memorable experience I had with Ella was in 1947, playing with Dizzy's band. She was headlining and we were doing a tour around the country with her. Finally we played Detroit, which is my home. My mother and father were the kind of parents who always said, "You can't make no money as a musician, man. Get yourself a job where you can get paid every week." So they were not into what music was about. [But they] knew about Ella. So I decided to take Ella home for dinner. I invited her and any members of the band that wanted to come. And when my mother found out I was bringing Ella Fitzgerald home for dinner, it was all over. She called up everyone she knew in Detroit and said, "My son is bringing Ella Fitzgerald to the house for dinner."

After that she thought playing music might be pretty good.

URBIE GREEN: My experience with Ella was mostly in the studios, where she hit about everything she did in one take, and also on some tours with Woody Herman. When Basie would record with her, they would add me onto the band for some of the arrangements Quincy Jones and some others would write.

FRANK WESS: That was a good session with Ella. I actually met Ella about the time of that session. Before that, I lived in Washington and was off the road for about five years before joining Basie. Whenever Ella would come to the Howard Theater, I'd be there. And she'd say, "There's that man I like." She was a ball to work with.

JW: Sis was a doll.

OP: People don't realize it, but Ella had one of the biggest hearts of anyone I've ever met. I remember once I played a joke

on her; or I thought I was playing a joke on her. We were working at the Carter Baron Theater, and Norman Granz had just gifted her with a brand-spanking new ermine coat. I would hang out in her dressing room, of course, because we used to talk about what tune she was going to do and all the rest. The coat was sitting up on a little alcove stand she had in her dressing room. Earlier in the day I had gone off and bought one of those trick bottles of ink to play a joke on someone else. It had the plastic blot you put next to this spilled bottle. It looked very real.

So I told her secretary at the time not to say anything and told her what I was going to do. I was in the dressing room when Ella left to do the first part of the concert, and I made sure I was writing something as she walked out. She said, "O.P., now you be careful with that pen. That's my new coat over there."

"Don't worry about it, Fitz," I said. "Nothing's gonna happen." So she went out to listen to somebody, and I, of course, turned the bottle over and put the blot on her coat.

When she came back in, I pretended to cry as if something awful happened. I was able to cry real tears. "Oh, my God, O.P.," she said. "What's wrong?"

"Oh, Fitz," I said sobbing. "You won't believe this, but your coat...your coat..."

"What's the matter?" she says. "There's nothing wrong with my coat." Then she looks and sees this ink blot, and tears start streaming down her eyes.

But it wasn't for the coat. It was for me.

"Oh, that's alright, sweetheart," she says. "Don't you worry about it. Don't cry. I hate to see you cry." [laughter]

She was more concerned about me than the coat. I should have put that one in my book. She was—she is—such a sweet person.

DOWN BEAT: *After all the years you men have known Ella, do any of you feel she had a clear vision of her own talent and where it could take her? Or was this kind of focus provided by Norman Granz? In other words, what role has management played in creating the Ella the world honors?*

OP: Ella had a natural innocence about her. She was totally naive about life in many ways. And she was the same way about her talent. I don't want to get into a commercial for Norman. But in many ways Norman forced her to see herself in a much truer context by asking her to do things she didn't want to do. Then after she did them, she'd come back and she was glad he made her do it.

PAUL SMITH: Norman made about 99 percent of the decisions. It was a Svengali relationship. To her, he was the one who took her out of clubs and got her into concerts. He made her millions. So she rarely bucked him.

He guided her on material. He never liked anything Stephen Sondheim wrote. Once, she did a beautiful Benny Carter arrangement of a Sondheim number, and Norman came roaring backstage saying he hated the tune. Rather than get her blood pressure up and hassle with him, she just cut it out.

She rarely got involved in decisions over musicians or bookings. She was only fussy in that she liked to work with people she knew, and Norman was pretty

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sensitive to this. It was like a family thing with her. Keter Betts was like the old friend on the gig. But if Norman fired him, she wouldn't have batted an eye.

Her interests outside of music are almost nil. No one worked as hard as she did. It didn't make any difference about days off, holidays or how many shows in one day. It made no difference whether it was Detroit or Iowa. They'd give her an allowance from the office. Her life revolved around the stage.

NORMAN GRANZ: On the Svengali business, no, she didn't always agree with me. And, in some cases, rather than push it, I thought she should do what she wanted. If she was wrong, she'd realize it. I wouldn't press the issue. She was very sensitive about things like that.

I wasn't always happy. When we did the Rodgers and Hart album, Ella refused to do "Have You Met Miss Jones" because it was a woman's song. She changed it to "Have You Met Sir Jones." I was very unhappy about that. But we were in the midst of recording and Ella [was adamant].

BILLY MAY: When we did the Harold Arlen songbook, Ella was very upset that Norman insisted on doing "Over The Rainbow." She said Judy Garland had done it so definitively. When we got to the bridge, she started [goofing around] a little. So Norman called me into the booth and said, "Look, she's blowing it off, and I know why. But I don't want to get into a thing. So I'm going to tell her the pickup on the drums was bad and we have to do it again. But don't tell her I didn't like the performance."

So I went into the studio and said we had to do another one. Then Ella comes over to me and says, "I know what he said. He said the drums were too loud and we gotta do another one. But he didn't like the way I sang it."

She read him perfectly. That kind of shit was going on the whole time.

DB: On the Cole Porter tune "Always True To You Darling," Ella drops the vaguely

risque verse—it may be the only unperformed verse in the entire songbook series—and substitutes the word "Tex" for "sex" in the chorus.

PS: She's like a little girl.

OP: The only time I saw Ella react with a really powerful and self-directed assertion of her talent was if somebody challenged her [musically]. She would rise to that with a vengeance. There was once a female vocalist—I won't mention any names—who came in one night when Ella

was playing Basin Street and just walked up when Ella was performing and started to sing [laughter]. It must have taken months to clean the blood off the floor. It was pitiful for that poor singer. But I can truthfully say that that's the only time I've ever seen Ella come out of herself.

As for Norman, I think he did a great deal to help her realize part of her gift. I don't think to this day she really knows.

JW: I wish I'd been there to watch her rain on that girl's parade. *Woowooooo-Wee!*

DB

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Willis Conover

By Fred Bouchard

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VOICE OF AMERICA

If you had to identify a single voice on the radio airwaves that has changed the course of jazz history, it would certainly be the sonorous, serious, meticulous basso of Willis Conover, the jazz host for Voice of America these 40 years.

Like the musicians whose art he has promulgated to millions of people worldwide, Conover—1995's *Down Beat* Lifetime Achievement Award winner—is far better known in Europe than in the U.S.A. Lack of recognition at home is due to the simple fact that VOA, the radio wing of the United States Information Agency, does not and legally cannot (according to the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948) broadcast in North America—although dedicated U.S. listeners do tune in on their short-wave radios.

If Conover has been a prophet unheard in his own land, he has been a jazz messiah 'round the globe, the best-known and -loved ambassador for America's art form since Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie. The tall, slim Conover, 74, still produces, programs and announces as many as 16 programs a week, each 30 to 40 minutes in length. His solemn, almost lugubrious, eminently intelligible voice slowly and thoughtfully weighs each word of the jazz gospel it sends to distant points on our shrinking globe. He is the ultimate jazz messenger.

Born in Buffalo, N.Y., on Dec. 18, 1920, the son of an army officer, Conover "got into" radio making a guest emcee spot as a freshman in college in Salisbury, Md. "I started as a fill-in but ended up working eight weeks," recalls Conover, a tireless raconteur, from his office. "They had me announcing news, music, commercials, everything. I decided I wanted to be a

radio announcer and hitched to D.C. for an amateur announcing contest. When I won it, they recommended me for a job at WTBO [Cumberland, Md., 1939], where I stayed until I was drafted [1942]. The first record that turned me on was Charlie Barnet's 'Cherokee.' I went to a record store owned by a musician, and started picking out Art Tatum, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington. The guy said, 'You really like that jazz, don't you?' I said, 'What's jazz?' I didn't even know what it was called. He said, 'You should read *Down Beat!*' And so I did."

How Conover became a fixture on Capitol radio playing jazz on WWDC after World War II brought up another anecdote. "There was a stage-door canteen at Lafayette across from the White House," recalls Conover. "They were playing the wrong kind of music for dancing, Andre Kostelanetz. I rummaged through their records and found the Dorseys and Artie Shaw. When we put those on, people came back and said, 'Great!' A woman said, 'My husband is manager of a local radio station. How'd you like to meet him?' He said, 'We're shorthanded, would you like to work weekends?' That was July 1944, and after my discharge in February 1946, I went on full-time. It was the only jazz program in town."

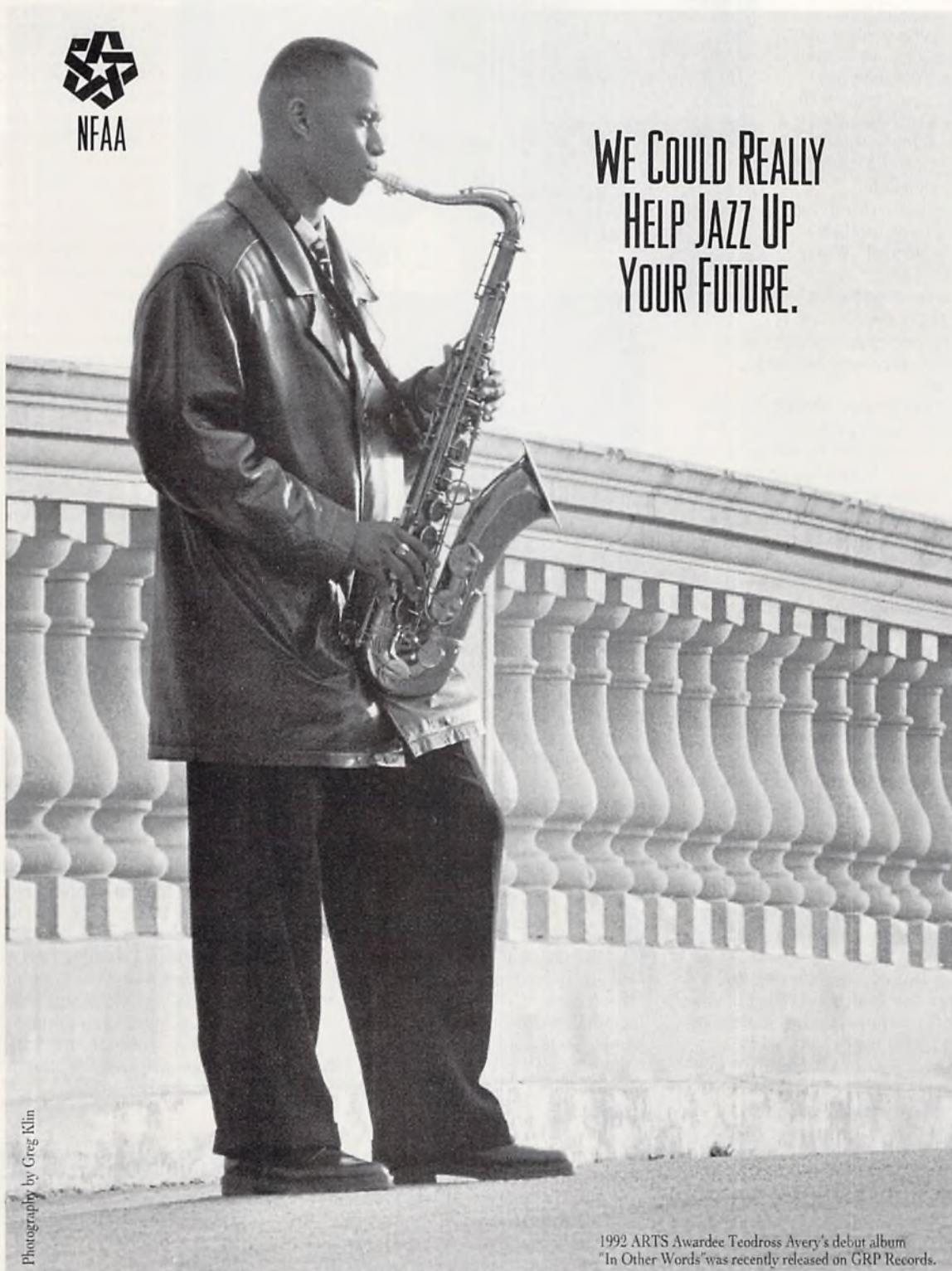
When Voice Of America (on the heels of Louis Armstrong's '54 tour) decided to go with a daily two-hour program (pop and jazz), Conover got the nod. He aired his first show in January 1955, and has done it ever since. They call it *Music USA*, and it's been one of VOA's most popular shows ever. Conover's voice is known to a wider audience than any other in the world—probably 20 million at present. At the height of the Cold War, he had possibly 30 million listeners, largely behind the Iron Curtain and in Eastern Europe. The House of Representatives passed a resolution (6/14/93) honoring him for his VOA broadcasts.

"Conover was the main [force] in our life," says Armenian-born pianist David

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1992 ARTS Awardee Teodross Avery's debut album "In Other Words" was recently released on GRP Records.

Azarian, who from the age of 10 was glued to the radio every night at the vulnerable hour of 12:15 to 1 a.m. "His was the powerful voice, with the greatest music, from the strongest country in the world! He played Oscar Peterson, Horace Silver and Herbie Hancock, and I would go to sleep dreaming [of becoming] a jazz pianist. He played the big bands: Gil Evans, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis, Stan Kenton, Quincy Jones. His excellent articulation—even for those who didn't know English—was like music itself. When you are in a jail, that music makes you [wonder] what kind of country produced it. I tell you, Conover was America's best weapon to destroy socialism and communism."

Conover hardly sees himself that way. Though a champion of desegregation in the '50s in bureaucratic Washington, he's an apolitical sort. Music has always been first, and all. Forget news and propaganda! His programs—since 1955 entirely self-produced—consist of music exclusively from his own record library, primarily jazz. He plays only what he feels is the best the music has to offer.

"I play big-band and bebop and music that happened after bebop," says Conover, "but not as much dixieland as I used to." Regulars in his pantheon are esteemed "homeboy" Duke Ellington and tenor giant Ben Webster, whose magisterial intonations somehow complement his own. Duke supplied his theme songs from Day One: "Take The 'A' Train" and "Across The Track Blues" with Barney Bigard. Conover's other VOA shows, both pop and *Music With Friends* (aired in Poland) tended to avoid rock & roll. On a recent show, Conover aired some new Frank Capp Juggernaut, Arturo Sandoval, Dave McKenna, some '60s Clark Terry/Bob Brookmeyer Quintet, Bill Potts' *Porgy And Bess*, some '80s Joe Pass. Whatever Conover programs, it breathes dignity and good taste.

Ron Della Chiesa of WGBH-FM, Boston, points out intriguing parallels between Conover and the late Metropolitan Opera announcer Milton Cross. "As Milton Cross was the voice of opera, Willis Conover is the voice of jazz," began Della Chiesa, himself a distinguished announcer of jazz, popular and Boston Symphony and Pops broadcasts. "They reigned on the airwaves over 40 years, and intimately described their beloved music to millions. Both were artists of the announcer's art, sadly forgotten in our era of radio slobism.



Conover in the studio with Louis Armstrong

**"His was the powerful voice,
with the greatest music, from
the strongest country in the world!
...I tell you, Conover was
America's best weapon to destroy
socialism and communism."**

**—David Azarian
Armenian-born pianist**

They share many appealing traits: perfect diction, pacing and timing; mellifluous, golden speech that uplifts the spirit; genuine, unfakeable love and enthusiasm for music, elegance and sophistication that make listeners sense their being 'dressed' for the occasion. Milton even did a jazz show, *Chamber Music Society Of Lower Basin Street*, as Willis early on did classical. They stand as two of the finest broadcasters this country has ever produced."

Conover's 40th anniversary on VOA in January was celebrated with parties from Washington to Warsaw. At Washington's Cosmos Club, the jam band included (old pal) guitarist Charlie Byrd, pianist Sir Roland Hanna, saxophonist Buck Hill, a Polish pianist and Russian bassist. Billy Taylor and Milt Jackson attended.

Conover flew to his feting in Poland (a nation with which there's been a long mutual affection) at the Olsten Jazz Festival. One performer was Polish-born pianist Adam Makowicz, whose wife, Irena, says: "I have no words to describe how much this man meant to us. He was a beacon of freedom. In Poland in the '50s, we could not improvise: everything [in our lives] was pre-programmed. But Warsaw groups were playing jazz at underground

happenings due to his influence. There were no tape recorders, just radio. Adam would try to remember the tunes [Conover aired] and chords, and bring them to the piano."

Over the years, Conover has interviewed innumerable jazz stars. To name but a few: Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Erroll Garner, George Shearing, Dizzy Gillespie. One event he's especially proud of was Duke Ellington's 70th-birthday party at the White House, which he arranged and emceed. "The jam session," recalls Conover, "went 'til 20 minutes to 3."

Conover the writer has published a well-reviewed memoir of author H.P. Lovecraft, articles in *The Saturday Review* and edited *Science Fantasy Correspondent*. He enjoys writing trenchant limericks! "[Composer] Alec Wilder got me doing it," says Conover. "The first one I ever wrote I called 'D.J. Vu.' Here it is:

*"The world showered honors on Duke
But you can't find his discs on a juke.*

*I suppose we should thank
Them for Tony and Frank,
But the rest of the box is to puke!"*

Despite all the kudos and applause, Conover remains the dedicated pluggger—unassuming, impassioned and devoted. He has cherished his autonomy, privacy and independence. Never a VOA employee, he's been a contractor for 40 years. Bouts with cancer, currently under control, required a throat operation eight years ago, have sapped his stamina, thinned his frame and made him quit moonlighting on AM radio. Conover manages his shows well, focusing tightly and working with a patient engineer with retakes as needed. "I don't take vacations," he says matter-of-factly. "When I go overseas, I backlog new shows. I revive some of the old ones sometimes." There's talk of packaging some Conover classics. Readers may contact Willis Conover at Voice Of America, 330 Independence Ave. SW, Room G501, Washington DC 20547. **DB**

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

1981 John Hammond	1989 Norman Granz
1982 George Wein	1990 Rudy Van Gelder
1983 Leonard Feather	1991 Bill Cosby
1984 Dr. Billy Taylor	1992 Rich Matteson
1985 Dr. Lawrence Berk	1993 Gunther Schuller
1986 Orrin Keepnews	1994 Marian McPartland
1987 David Baker	1995 Willis Conover
1988 John Conyers Jr.	

Dexter Gordon: Transcontinental Tenorist

By Jenny Armstrong

The following "Classic Interview," reprinted from our June 22, 1972 issue, finds expatriate Dexter Gordon still glowing from his Tenor Saxophone win in Down Beat's 1971 Critics Poll.

For nearly a decade, long, tall, debonair Dexter Gordon has made his home in Copenhagen, Denmark, where this interview took place. From time to time, he visits the United States to perform, visit with friends and relatives, check out the scene and make recordings.

JENNY ARMSTRONG: *Why do you think you won the Critics Poll?*

DEXTER GORDON: Because I'm the world's greatest tenor saxophonist—ha, ha, ha! No, I really don't know.

JA: *Was it a surprise?*

DG: Yes, I would say so. I hadn't really thought about it, you know...I was always kind of curious to peek at the results, but it has never been a really big thing for me.

JA: *In what way can it be of importance to you?*

DG: Well, first of all, recognition—to have a little recognition, that is very nice, you dig. It is good for the ego, for the psyche. A recognition of what I've been trying to do for years—it's certainly not just a spot opinion; I mean, it's something that obviously has been building up for years. Of course, it is also very good for publicity, and it is the kind of recognition that maybe will help financially, also.

JA: *Do you think that these polls mirror the reality of what is happening in the music world?*



DG: You know, there are two kinds of polls. There's the Critics Poll, and then there's another poll where the readers write in. But one would say that the first is the, of course, more critical poll, because it's supposed to be music critics who are voting. But it doesn't necessarily reflect your popularity or name-value.

JA: *Do you think that critics are able to judge who's best?*

DG: Well, it's an individual thing, but we must assume that if they are music critics, then they must know something about music. They spend a lot of time listening—they must know something

about music in order to be able to write halfway intelligently about it. So you have to assume that they do know something about it.

JA: *Do you think that music can be criticized?*

DG: I think so, but it should always be kept in mind that it is also a personal opinion. I mean, there's always a certain amount of prejudice, pre-judgment, in anybody's opinion—about anything, you know.

JA: *So what would you say the critics have to go by?*

DG: Part of it must be comparison.

JA: *If you had lived in the States, would winning the poll have meant more when it comes to jobs and money?*

DG: Hmm...yes, I think so. But since this has happened, I've had all kinds of interviews for radio and the papers and all of this is very good.

JA: *What has it meant musically to live in Europe?*

DG: Well, for me, it has been very good because my whole lifestyle is much calmer, much more relaxed. I can devote

music—jazz or black music?

DG: What I'm doing, I prefer to call that jazz, because to me it's not a dirty word. To me, it is a beautiful word; I love it. And, I mean, if I were to call it black music that would be untrue, because there are a lot of other influences in there. In jazz, there is a lot of European influence harmonically. Many of the harmonic structures of bebop come from Stravinsky, from Handel and Barok, so to say "black music"—I don't know what that is, unless it would be some African drums or

something.

JA: *Do you think your latest album before the poll, The Panther, was of importance for the decision?*

DG: Yes, I'm sure it was. Also, the fact that the title tune has a rock-beat flavor to it, which is a very commercial thing today—I think that's very valid. That's why jazz is such a living thing. It will never die, because it can use things from everywhere, from all kinds of music, and you can take what is valid and incorporate it into jazz—into your thing. **DB**

"...jazz is such a living thing. It will never die, because it can use things from everywhere, from all kinds of music, and you can take what is valid and incorporate it into jazz—into your thing."

more time to music, and I think it is beginning to show. It's not that everyday scuffle, and I'm able to concentrate more on studying. Of course, the music scene is more competitive in the States. I think it would be very easy for an American jazz musician to come over here and just relax and play by rote, so to speak. But I think that's very rare, 'cause, you know, if a man is a musician he is interested in music and he is going to play as much and study as much as possible. And I think most of the guys who have come over here have improved—there are some very good musicians over here.

JA: *What's the difference between audiences here and in the States?*

DG: I think the European audience has a more intellectual approach to the music, and in the States they're more demonstrative—the whistles and all that.

JA: *You go back to the States frequently. Is that to keep up with the music scene, with what's going on there?*

DG: In part, but also a lot of times I go back to record and to make a tour; but of course I'm very happy to do it, because it gives me an opportunity to dig and hear what's going on. After all, it's still the center—the new trends are coming from there.

JA: *What do you prefer to call your*

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Exposed: Latin Jazz Taboos

Thirty unsung years unmasking the hidden connections between Latin music and jazz have driven double-threat drummer Steve Berrios to be adamant about authenticity. "I wish there were more drummers who could play a straight-ahead jazz tune and then play a folkloric Afro-Cuban tune," he says. "But you have to do a little homework and research to be able to do those things well. You have to know the vernacular, know the language and know the history of the music. Latin jazz supposedly combines two different musics, Afro-Caribbean and African American, but if you can't swing or play the authentic Afro-Caribbean rhythms, either, then I have to call you an imposter."

For many years, Berrios was *the* Latin-jazz drummer. One of his idols, Willie Bobo, played both traps and Latin percussion, but Bobo's career was fading by the late '60s, when Berrios joined Mongo Santamaria's band. Through the following decade, while salsa swept Latin dancers to their feet, Santamaria almost singlehandedly kept the Latin-jazz flame burning, with Berrios, in support, switching effortlessly from drum kit to timbales. Since 1980 Berrios has been a member of Jerry Gonzalez's Fort Apache Band, the group that spearheaded the current Latin-jazz revival. But he never cut a solo album until his recent *First World* (Milestone 9234), a star-studded bicultural masterpiece that picks up where the Apaches leave off.

Except for the absence of Jerry and Andy Gonzalez, the album's core quintet is identical in instrumentation and personnel to the Apaches; the Apache-like alternation of mainstream jazz tunes with Afro-Cuban chants likewise makes comparisons inevitable. "The things that might seem similar are because of my influence on the Fort Apache Band and not the other way around," Berrios maintains. "They got that Afro-Cuban influence from Julito Collazo, who is my godfather, my friend and my mentor." Collazo, a revered percussionist who emigrated to the United States from Cuba in the mid-'50s, came out of retirement to perform on *First World*, to which he also contributed two songs.

Other artists featured on the album include singer Freddy Cole, saxophonist Grover Washington Jr., trombonist Papo Vasquez, trumpeter Eddie Henderson and bassist George Mraz. "Everyone on this record is someone I've been involved with in some way or another," says Berrios, "so



Steve Berrios

it was like a family affair." The material ranges from straight-ahead swing to bossas, boleros, rumbas and ritual songs. Berrios plays a ballad on trumpet, his first instrument, and a spaced-out omni-percussion solo that reflects his ongoing tenure with Max Roach's M'Boom ensemble. The most striking track, however, is an otherworldly superimposition of the traditional Santeria chant "Acolona" on top of Ornette Coleman's "Lonely Woman." "It's almost the identical melody," Berrios explains.

Of Puerto Rican extraction, Berrios was born in Manhattan, where his father played trap drums and timbales with some of the top Latin orchestras of the day. After seeing Dizzy Gillespie, he picked up the trumpet, and by age 16 was playing well enough to win the Apollo Theatre amateur contest five weeks in a row. But he liked to fool around with his father's drums, and when he was 19, the elder Berrios asked him to sub for him at a midtown hotel. "I stayed on that job for about four years, six nights a week," he says. "We played foxtrots, tangos, merengues—what you call a society gig, with a bow tie.

"Then Mongo came in one night and heard me play, and that's how I got into his band. That was my college. The music is so different now. It's lost its intimacy. You can't really distinguish one artist from another, because they're all basically dealing with the same concept, where

before, every band sounded different. It's too superficial to me, what young players are playing today. They haven't even fallen in love; they don't know what it is not to be able to pay your telephone bill, or your wife leaves you or you have to pay the mortgage on the house or the alimony for your children. When you pass certain experiences, it makes you play differently."

Besides Santamaria's band, Fort Apache and M'Boom, Berrios has worked with Miriam Makeba, Leon Thomas, Kenny Kirkland, Randy Weston, Paquito D'Rivera, Michael Brecker, Hilton Ruiz, Emmanuel Abdul-Rahim, Eddie Palmieri, Ron Holloway, Chico O'Farrill and others, including a yearlong stint with Art Blakey in the mid-'80s. "Art invited me to go to Europe just as a vacation, and I turned into his road manager," he says. "I started rehearsing the band on trap drums, and then I started playing congas in the band."

But as a member of jazz's overlooked in-between generation, Berrios, now 50, has only begun to win recognition. "I'm finally being treated like I should have been treated a long time ago—like a human being," he says. "It takes years to do what I do, and you have to expose yourself to different worlds. But it can be done, and I'm the proof of that. I'm trying to eliminate the taboo of these worlds being so apart from each other, because if you really think about it, they're so similar that it's frightening." —Larry Birnbaum

Talkin' Trash

When Ellery Eskelin named his adventurous new CD *Jazz Trash* (Songlines 1506), he knew he would catch some flak. "It's not meant to be taken so seriously as to be insulting," says Eskelin. "But the title does have an edge to it that I endorse. An overly reverent attitude has a negative effect on the health of the music today, so if I can come out in today's climate with this title, it says we can lighten up and still be serious."

Eskelin, 36, grew up on a steady diet of jazz. His mom was a professional Hammond B-3 organist, and his 1988 debut was a set of reworked standards. He's a member of drummer Joey Baron's Baron Down, Joint Venture with trumpeter Paul Smoker and he's on Gebhard Ullmann's new album, *Basement Research* (Soul Note 121271). "Jazz is my first love; my earliest musical memories come from hearing jazz and standards," admits the New York-based tenor saxophonist. "But I'm not all that compelled by what 'jazz' is or isn't. All I know is that I'm so influenced by jazz that I don't think that I could get away from it if I wanted to, and it would be disingenuous to claim that *Jazz Trash* isn't jazz."

"There's too much in-breeding in terms of influences these days. There are musicians who are knowledgeable about the minutia of jazz recordings, but it's so narrow it's only about jazz. All through the history of the music, there have been influences from outside the music itself, so this really isn't different." In name and substance alike, *Jazz Trash* puts some of the music's unspoken rules in the dumpster. First, there's the lineup: tenor, Jim Black's wide-ranging drums and percussion, and Andrea Parkins' accordion and sampler. Hardly a standard-issue jazz trio. The music asks penetrating questions about structure and content, rarely falling into the traditional head-solos-head formula. Pieces like "Jargon" and "Interfaith" use static drones, slow ostinato counterlines and other devices to interrupt the music's flow and recontextualize the material that follows, throwing it into a bold new light.

"I was looking for some alternatives to the motion in free improvisation where it builds energy, peaks, then dies down. That shape is pretty typical, and so I wanted to incorporate the feel from pieces that don't move that same way, to give each piece a unique shape." To help articulate this new sound, Eskelin also turned to contemporary classical composers like Morton Feldman, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Mauricio Kagel, and he wrote "Untitled One" with



Ellery Eskelin (center) with trio members Jim Black and Andrea Parkins

the traditional Laotian mouth-organ (called the khaen) in mind. Lately, Eskelin's been listening to the recordings of his father, Rodd Keith Eskelin, a studio musician whom he barely knew and who composed strange, adventurous pieces for an amateur songwriters service. "There's a lot of music I love, and frankly I don't care where it comes from. Given the instrumentation of this band and where we come from, anything we do is gonna be a little different."

As radical and questioning as elements of *Jazz Trash* are, the disc is as imbued

with jazz-life. Eskelin's personal compositional vision, his supple phrasing and gorgeous tenor sound all qualify him as a major player in today's creative music. "There's so much history that I do not want to consciously avoid in the name of keeping the music forward-looking," he explains. "In the past, people tried to break with the past. Now, I think there's a recognition that you don't have to avoid history. You can make a fresh personal statement, move ahead in terms of the instrument or band, and still admit your influences." —John Corbett

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Opportunity Knocks

After decades of performing in Chicago clubs and traveling with many of the music's giants, pianist Jodie Christian released his first disc as a leader three years ago. Since then, he's vibrantly moved forward.

Throughout his career, Christian has embraced the entire scope of his city's diverse jazz styles. After a youthful immersion in the works of Bud Powell, Erroll Garner and Nat King Cole, he played in bands led by such legends as Coleman Hawkins and Benny Carter as well as with local heroes, including Gene Ammons and Eddie Harris. In the early '60s, Christian was a founding member of the perpetually experimental Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM). But a more recent



Jodie Christian

encounter with Bob Koester of Delmark Records brought Christian into the studio for a project of his own.

"I've known Bob for 30-odd years," says the 63-year-old Christian. "All these years we've talked about it, and four years ago he just walked up to me and said, 'I'm ready.' I said 'I'm ready, too.'"

The resulting disc, aptly titled *Experience* (Delmark 454), featured Christian's consummate solo technique and sparked an irrepressible wave of activity. Last year, his follow-up *Rain Or Shine* (Delmark 467) was released (see "CD Reviews" Nov. '94) along with *Blues Holiday* (SC 31337), a trio session on the Danish Steeplechase label. Christian is also featured on AACM-alum Roscoe Mitchell's recent *Hey Donald* (Delmark 475) as a player and as the writer of the succinct tune "Jeremy."

While Christian has worked with a comprehensive array of reedists, he has a special affinity for his endeavors with Mitchell.

"The intensity of playing with Roscoe really puts me to the test, especially physically. Roscoe has got that energy, just like Von [Freeman]. And it gets me out of the rut of playing standards. With his groups, I can play the whole instrument, not just in a couple of octaves that most modern players use."

Increased performance opportunities around the world followed the release of Christian's discs. A recent touring schedule included festivals from Elkhart, Ind., to Estonia. And for an engagement in his hometown's jazz fest in Grant Park this summer, Christian has assembled a group featuring veterans of the Count Basie, Duke Ellington and Louis Jordan big bands. "It will be good, sound jazz played by experienced men," he says.

This sense of determination does not mean that Christian feels the need to be overly competitive. "I'm not trying to be a new star, since there are so many young players out there. And I'm happy about that. I imagine there must be somebody who got something from me. But I've gotten so much from others that I've concentrated on that more than on what I've given out."

—Aaron Cohen

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Kurt Elling

Scat & Rant

Kurt Elling uses his brawny baritone to "recite poetry on the fly," as he puts it, or just "to rant." He comes off as part scat singer, part coffeehouse poet, part lounge lizard—all of which coalesce into one improvisational voice, with its own existential dilemmas to relate.

"What I'm trying to do," the 27-year-old singer says, "is, for me, a natural progression from the jazz musicians I've admired, based on my own life and experiences." Elling's own life and experiences are steeped in religion. Yet, unlike many a singer, Elling is no former choirboy or gospel minstrel. Enrolled at the University of Chicago's Divinity School, Elling's sights were set on teaching philosophy and religion someday. But he was quickly turned off by the atmosphere of academia and lured to the ambience of clubs like Chicago's Green Mill.

Such nightspots became Elling's new study hall. And it was saxophonist Ed Peterson that freed the singer's mind. "I had a couple of wedding-band dates with Ed," Elling recalls. "And over the changes of songs like 'My Romance' or 'Isn't It Romantic,' while people were getting the wedding cake or something, I would make up lyrics about what was going on. When I played with Ed's group at the Green Mill, he asked me to try that, and I said, 'I don't know what I would say.' He told me, 'Just start, and we'll come in.'"

What one hears is an amalgam of first-person narrative, peppered with philosophical asides and colorful characters. Most often, these are set to riffs, like Wayne Shorter's from "Dolores," but occasionally they occupy a decidedly free musical space. As on his hard-hitting Blue Note debut, *Close Your Eyes* (see "CD Reviews" July '95), Elling's bandmates are with him every step of the way. "The thing that's made me proudest," Elling says, "is the reaction I get from other musicians when I depart from tradition. 'You're blowing, swinging,' they say. 'Just like us.'"

—Larry Blumenfeld

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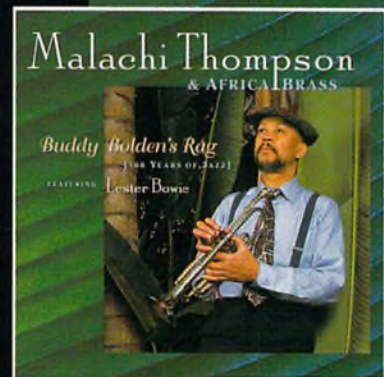
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Erroll Garner

Magician &
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★★★★

Telarchive, the reissue line of Telarc, continues its restoration of Erroll Garner's music with a second generous helping of two 1970s LPs, originally released on London Records.

The main body of the pianist's work doesn't divide easily into periods. Once he found the formula that brought him the accolades of both critics and general audiences, he delivered what was expected of him. These two albums, released in 1974 and '76 (though no recording dates are given), form a pretty seamless and attractive match.

Magician comprises the first nine tunes, and Garner is a one-man orchestra in a program of five standards and four originals. "It Gets Better Every Time" is a blues; "One Good Turn" pounds out gospel changes that Garner milks with big, fleshly tremolos; "Mucho Gusto" is a swirl of Latin basso machismo and soft lyricism; and "Nightwind" is an epicurean ballad. He loads his playing with rhythmic and dynamic contrasts. But, in the end, it pretty much boils down to two modes: percussive and swing. Yet, in these modes lie an imperial range of variations. Compare the "Someone To Watch Over Me" from *Magician* with the one from the Gershwin set; not alternate takes, but alternate designs.

The signature bits of musical stagecraft are, of course, all here in mature, but I think not caricatured, form. On "Strike Up The Band," he begins with percussive blobs of bass notes against a broken-field outline of the melody, both out of rhythmic register, only to snap it all into focus. On some numbers he heaps on climbing superstructures of chords through which one may glimpse some cubist abstraction of the tune, then he cuts to a streamlined single note line that swings like mad. It's like a big-band breaking for a solo. Other times he gets right to business. Sample the simple drive of "A Foggy Day" or "Only Make Believe."

Garner is sometimes as witty as he is bold.

He uses dissonance to tease, never to outrage. And he briefly turns "Love Walked In" into an admiring sendup of Gershwin's "Rhapsody In Blue," adding an unexpected dimension to the Gershwin theme. The rhythm sections are here to keep time, and do journeymen work.

—John McDonough

Magician & Gershwin And Kern—*Close To You; It Gets Better Every Time; Someone To Watch Over Me; Nightwind; One Good Turn; Watch What Happens; Yesterdays; I Only Have Eyes For You; Mucho Gusto; Strike Up The Band; Love Walked In; I Got Rhythm; Someone To Watch Over Me; A Foggy Day; Nice Work If You Can Get It; Lovely To Look At; Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man; Only Make Believe; Old Man River; Dearly Beloved; Why Do I Love You?; A Fine Romance.* (76:13)

Personnel—Garner, piano; Norman Gold, organ (1-9); Bob Cranshaw (1-9), Eddie Calhoun (10, 11, 13-22), Charles Isaacs (12), bass; Grady Tate (1-9), Kelly Martin (10, 11, 13-22), Jimmy Smith (12), drums; Jose Mangual, conga (1-9, 12); Jackie Williams, tambourine (1-9).



Charlie Hunter Trio

Bing, Bing, Bing!
 Blue Note 31809

★★★★

Here's a debut of listener-friendly, summer-perfect Bay Area acid-jazz. Catchy themes abound; nine of the 10 tracks, all Charlie Hunter originals but Kurt Cobain's "Come As You Are," blend the motivatin' synopation of the second-line, the big-shouldered sax shrugs common in neighborhood bars, the buzz of a happenin' dancehall, the cool glide of a session that falls into place. The near-title track is unexpectedly a ballad—it, too, is effective and straight to the point.

Trio leader and 8-string guitarist Hunter plies his innovative, two-handed technique with self-effacement, providing *mucho* rhythm and accompaniment simply in the service of his musical concept. With no bassist in sight, he makes the bottom lines sound full on extra-low strings, sometimes in the timbres of organ foot pedals. Simultaneously, he can pluck patterns that weave around Ellis' righteous tenor and Lane's fine-swinging strut an ensemble net fine as the early Meters'.

Ellis has a warm, steady tone, and doesn't repeat himself or reach for inappropriate pro-

fundities; he fits into the sound, not over it. Lane, too, prefers effective fills to flashy ones. Hunter's superior arranging skills are evident from the repertoire, which occasionally necessitates extra instruments. David Phillips' spritely pedal-steel turn on "Haggis" and Ben Goldberg's pointed clarinet enquiry on "Purchase" emerge from the compositions—in the latter case, a beguiling theme voiced with Jeff Cressman's dark 'bone.

Soloing, Hunter cuts heavy-gauge phrases one irregular length at a time; his shards create suspense, but he resolves them with confident logic, more like John Scofield than any other established guitarist. Hunter also unites unlikely sources; "Come" is a swing-waltz treated with Quicksilver Messenger Service quaver. "Bullethead" nods to Hendrix, James Brown and George Clinton in every *wah*.

This CD will likely find its audience, because unaffected, unpretentious, inviting, mostly good-time, up-to-date and dependable urbane blues animates it. Like a cherry, *Bing, Bing, Bing!* is quite refreshing—but don't demand it be long-sustaining as well as tasty. It's just a start—this year's Us3, sunblock for the beach, stress relief while driving, lubrication for hanging out. And *maybe* we'll love it tomorrow.

—Howard Mandel

Bing, Bing, Bing!—*Greasy Granny; Warnell's Yorkies; Fistful Of Haggis; Come As You Are; Scrabbling For Purchase; Bullethead; Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing; Squiddlesticks; Lazy Susan (with a client now); Elbo Room.* (56:37)

Personnel—Hunter, 8-string guitar; Dave Ellis, tenor saxophone; Jay Lane, drums; David Phillips, pedal steel guitar (3, 7); Ben Goldberg, clarinet (5, 9); Jeff Cressman, trombone (5, 9); Scott Roberts, percussion (2, 3).



Modern Jazz Quartet

Dedicated To Connie
 Atlantic Jazz 82763

★★★★ 1/2

The original Men in Suits (tuxedos have been a staple), the 40-year-old MJQ epitomized so-called classic jazz well before the term was invented, and with different meaning. Indeed, the band's center emanates more from Europe than Africa, the "classic" in classic jazz

digging (up) the spirit of Bach and classical music in general. A generally quiet bunch, I still find it hard to believe these guys essentially started off with Dizzy and Bird.

Dedicated To Connie, a two-CD set recorded in mono, is available to us due to the untimely passing of the band's drummer, Connie Kay, last December. Going through some of the unreleased material the band's recorded over the years, musical director/pianist John Lewis unearthed this music, a 1960 concert held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, of all places. According to Lewis, "never before or since has the Modern Jazz Quartet played better." It's hard to argue with him, as the group's inimitably rich, distinctive blend of swing, European devices and uncanny musical interplay is on display throughout.

The group's most flamboyant voice, the virtuosic vibraharpist Milt Jackson, seems to float over the restrained yet intensely swinging rhythm section. This pattern is interrupted only when the group is engaged in the arrangements that form the skeletons for many of Jackson's improvisations. *The Little Comedy*, made up of three pieces, including "Fontessa" (from the album of the same name), is a case in point. Twenty-three minutes in length, this concert opener offers a distillation of tempered moods and colors, labyrinthine fugue-like arrangements, tempo variations, gradual crescendos and decrescendos, blue notes, inlets of solo excursions, and, just when you think these guys are simply reading off the sheet music in their heads, a fair amount of jamming to break things up.

While Jackson may be the most pronounced and celebrated player of the group, it is Lewis who forms the backbone. On a Lewis feature like "A Social Call," one hears in his playing a disarming blend of Basie and Ellington that's

all Lewis: the non-virtuoso shines with sweet little right-hand figures supported by equally delicate, selective left-hand chords. (For the best window into Lewis' keyboard work, try to find *The John Lewis Piano*—currently out of print.) Speaking of John, the best performances here involve his compositions where arrangements showcase the group's unique way around the head-solo-head conundrum of post-polyphonic jazz, all the while putting the band's infectious swing into satisfying relief. Heath and Kay are like one musician with four limbs, as their sense of time drags just enough to enliven Lewis' formal touch, and adding the requisite anchor to Jackson's soulful flights of fancy.

At times, such tunes as "Cylinder," "How High The Moon" and "Django" seem like brief blowing respites from the more arranged material. (How delicious, and audacious, by contrast, is the group's 1958 version from Music Inn of "Bag's Groove" with Sonny Rollins, where the rhythmic sensibility sounds almost drunken when compared to the group's version here.) Not so with "Pyramid," where, for over 10 minutes, this Ray Brown blues waltz meanders like a lazy river, offering us a special intimacy with all four members. And, one senses, it's that intimacy which now makes *Dedicated To Connie* so important for everyone, musician and listener alike.

—John Ephland

Dedicated To Connie—*The Little Comedy: La Cantatrice/Harlequin/Fontessa; 'Round Midnight; Cylinder; Bag's Groove; Odds Against Tomorrow; It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing); A Social Call; Django; I Should Care; How High The Moon; Colombine/Pulcinella; Spanish Steps; Pyramid (Blues For Junior); Milt Meets Sid; I Remember Clifford; Vendome; Skating In Central Park. (57:05/61:37)*

Personnel—John Lewis, piano; Milt Jackson, vibraharp; Percy Heath, bass; Connie Kay, drums.



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MODERN JAZZ QUARTET <i>Dedicated To Connie</i>		★★★★★	★★★★★1/2	★★★★★	★★★★★1/2
PEE WEE ELLIS <i>Sepia Tonality</i>		★★★	★★	★★★1/2	★★★

this pleasing album from three studio sessions and a single concert performance.

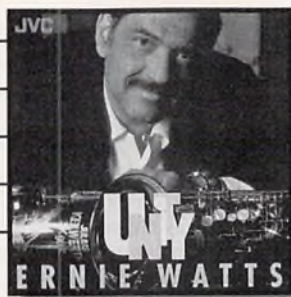
Creative spontaneity informs a dozen songs, and they run together as one long and lissome piece, obstructed only by an abstract sound-trifle titled "Artic Turn/Land Rover." McCandless' oboe and lower-pitched english horn are featured now and again, pure in tone, honest as the day, their orderly lines throbbing with the spirit of jazz. Moore's playing on string bass is well-conceived and he walks the fine line between the refined and the glib with complete confidence. Guitarist Towner offers ample evidence of purposeful musicality without being the least bit methodical or prissy. His piano playing on several songs is thoughtful and even swingingly bluesy in one place, the Moore composition "I Said OK!"

Throughout *Troika*—whether it's with a gentle affirmation of life like Towner's "Mariella" or an evocation of otherworldly moods as on McCandless' "Pale Sun Of BK-71"—the three musicians achieve a politely passionate rapport through mutual admiration.

—Frank-John Hadley

Trioka—Charlotte's Tangle; Gekko; Prelude (Improv 2); Mariella; Spanish Stairs (Squanto); Artic Turn/Land Rover (Free Piece); Mexico For Sure; Pale Sun Of BK-71; I Said OK!; Tower; Minaret; Celeste. (57:33)

Personnel—Paul McCandless, oboe, english horn; Ralph Towner, guitars, synthesizers, piano; Glen Moore, string bass.



Ernie Watts

Unity

JVC 2046

★★★★½

FourTune

FourTune

Drive Archive 41037

★★★½

With enough creative intelligence and spontaneous drive to silence even the most unforgiving naysayer who had

dismissed him long ago as a studio hack, Watts seems to have great control over his evolution as a no-nonsense jazz saxophonist on his latest feature album. Using John Coltrane's energized playing as a springboard, he lets notes jump out of his horn as starbursts of fresh insight into the melodies and harmonies of Trane vehicles "You Say You Care," "In Your Own Sweet Way" and "Soul Eyes." Watts says he always hears music as a singer, and his rapt attention to beautifying melodies perhaps gets its best exposition when he sheds a rueful tear or two during "Lonely Hearts," a ballad co-composed with West Coast pianist David Witham. Witham has a penchant for shaping compositions with difficult harmonic curves, but the saxophonist is more than up to the challenge of leaning into those curves of the prickly title track and "Joyous Rebellion."

Watts has tremendous emotional presence on the entire program, ballads and up-tempo tunes alike, with additional edge provided liberally by Geri Allen, Jack DeJohnette, Steve Swallow and Eddie Gomez, each of whom possesses an earnest sense of tone, time and expression. Take special note of Gomez and Swallow's intriguing blend of acoustic and electric bass colors on Oscar Pettiford's "Tricotism."

Even when Watts was serving the like of Johnny Carson and Diana Ross, he kept his jazz

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chops together working one night a week with a spirited combo at Donte's in southern California. And once in a blue moon he'd do a date that let him unleash his artistic imagination, as on 1981's *The John Dentz Reunion Band*, a two-LP set for the obscure RealTime label now titled *FourTune* on CD with three tracks deleted. With nary a rehearsal and only a couple lead sheets in hand, Watts joined Chick Corea, bassist Andy Simpkins and drummer John Dentz (a onetime Thad Jones-Pepper Adams Quartet member now semi-retired) in lighting fires under material ranging from the inquisitive Corea tune "Boop Bap" to warhorses "Oleo" and "Night And Day." Watts, playing tenor or alto, absorbs the influences of Trane, Eric Dolphy and Jackie McLean, at times getting a pinched sound and letting his fast fingers on the keys outrun his thinking power; but handling himself quite decently all told. He and the pianist alone size up "My One And Only Love" with a boldfaced sort of tenderness. —Frank John Hadley

Unity—*You Say You Care; In Your Own Sweet Way; Tricotism; Unity; Silver Hollow; Some Kind Of Blue; Don't Look Now; Joyous Reunion; Lonely Hearts; Sticky Kisses; Soul Eyes.* (69:00)

Personnel—Watts, tenor saxophone; Geri Allen, acoustic piano; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Eddie Gomez, acoustic bass; Steve Swallow, electric bass.

FourTune—*Swing, Dentz, Swing; My One And Only Love; Boop Bap; Miyako; Night And Day; Invitation; Blues For John C.; Bud Powell; Sifu; Andy Meets Chick; Oleo.* (66:51)

Personnel—Watts, alto and tenor saxophones; Chick Corea, acoustic piano; Andy Simpkins, acoustic bass; John Dentz, drums.

the first rank, on *Tribute To The Masters* he steps out to lead a most satisfactory small bebop group featuring Jamey Aebersold on tenor in a run-through of some of the standard repertoire.

Shew is best when he's quickest. His solos on "Rhythm-A-Ning" and "Confirmation" have a subtle, pent-up quality held in check by an excellent technique that gives all aspects of his playing a precision-like quality, unspectacular at first but thoroughly musical. His front-line partner, Aebersold, scales the material with

esprit and drive. Together, they phrase the ensembles as one, and the rhythm section is quick to respond throughout.

If you catch a moody critic in just the right mood, an album like *Metropole Orchestra*, with its trumpet solos played against violin sighs and flourishes, can pass muster nicely. It also helps if the music is well-chosen and played. In this case (and in my present mood), I find only minor things to beef about in this set recorded in 1986 and '88. Shew's trumpet is soft and dry without being parched. I won't promise that

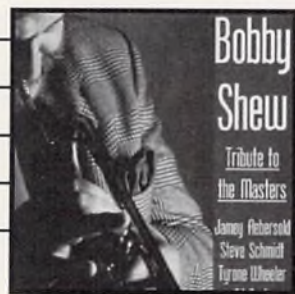
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Bobby Shew Tribute To The Masters Double-Time 101

★★★ 1/2

Metropole Orchestra
Mons 874 821

★★★

Bobby Shew is a journeyman brassman whose name has periodically surfaced in the personnels of the Buddy Rich and Toshiko Akiyoshi bands as well as assorted West Coast rehearsal units. A section player of

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you'll hang on his every note, but the sum total of notes he invests in "Joy Spring," "Round Midnight" and "Waltz For Debby" are thoughtful and, where the occasion allows, swinging. Arranger Lex Jasper, who wrote all the charts, has given "Speak Low," "With A Song In My Heart" and "You're My Everything" enough brass and saxes to achieve a big-band feel. Considering the limited objectives of what is essentially easy-listening jazz, Shew has logged a thoroughly respectable effort.

(Double-Time Records: P.O. Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151-1244; 1-800-293-8528)

—John McDonough

Tribute To The Masters—Nica's Dream; Whisper Not; Rhythm-A-Ning; In Your Own Sweet Way; Confirmation; Tiny Capers; In A Sentimental Mood; This I Dig Of You; A Night in Tunisia. (67:51)

Personnel—Shew, trumpet; Jamey Aebersold, tenor saxophone; Steve Schmidt, piano; Tyrone Wheeler, bass; Ed Soph, drums.

Metropole Orchestra—My One And Only Love; Speak

Low; Nadalin; Round Midnight; Joy Spring; Ballad For Bobby; With A Song In My Heart; Here's That Rainy Day; You're My Everything; Waltz For Debby. (53:39)
Personnel—Shew, trumpet; orchestra unidentified.

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George Freeman

Rebellion
Southport 0027

★★★ 1/2

Rebellion is a recording with several highly unusual traits. First, it is an extremely rare showcase for George Freeman, whose last date as a leader was in 1969. Secondly, it is a guitar record with no noticeable debt to either Wes Montgomery or fusion records of the '70s. Lastly, the record features George's older brother, saxophone legend Von Freeman, on piano. Yet, this is a recording that succeeds on its merits, not its novelties.

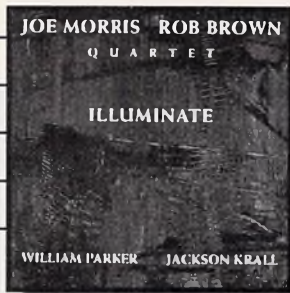
The 68-year-old leader lists Charlie Christian, T-Bone Walker and Oscar Moore as his influences, and traces of their work are evident in Freeman's playing, but not at the expense of Freeman's distinctive and idiosyncratic sound. He possesses a clean, crisp tone and an aggressive, attacking style which he extends toward mild dissonances. Despite the implications of the title, Freeman isn't a self-aggrandizing outlaw; instead, he breaks the rules when they get in his way. His playing seems to fortify tunes without sacrificing any of his mobility. The key flaw is Freeman's garrulousness. He fills almost every open space with notes (it's often as if he fears another quarter-century wait before another recording date). It yields a slightly claustrophobic feel to some of the tunes.

It was at George's insistence that Von play piano for this recording. He is a wry accompanist; his chords are on the outside edge. His solos are light and playful; they leaven the recording's tone. The contrasts help make *Rebellion* a highly individual and highly satisfying date.

—Martin Johnson

Rebellion—There Will Never Be Another You; I Should Care; Time Was; Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho; I Remember You; I Wish I Knew; Emanon. (64:58)

Personnel—Freeman, guitar; Von Freeman, piano; Penny Pendleton, bass; Michael Raynor, drums.



Joe Morris Trio

Symbolic Gesture

Soul Note 121204

★★★★½

Joe Morris/Rob Brown Quartet

Illuminate

Leo Lab 008

★★★★

Bostonian guitarist Joe Morris is perhaps the most exciting and original jazz plucker to emerge in the last decade. Since the early '80s, he's released a steady stream of excellent records, many on his own Riti label. These two killer works on European outlets should help bring him to the broader audience he certainly deserves.

Symbolic Gesture is a perfect introduction. Morris is a slinky melodist with an Ornettish approach to refracting the blues (check out "Lowell's House," especially, though blues pervades the disc). His even-tempered guitar work builds energy through articulation and phrasing, rather than volume or theatrics, and a clean, dry Les Paul tone helps keep his ideas clear.

Sometimes, as on "Invisible," he'll cultivate an unusual, half-slurred shape, hammering on or pulling off repeatedly or using an unorthodox pick technique. The title cut finds Morris and McBride playing the neat head in unison before Newton rides rims into a sure swing. Morris' solo on this cut is constant invention; he offsets needle-sharp single-note runs with periodic acid-wash chords. Newton's excellent snare and cymbal work reminds me of Dennis Charles, while McBride has a hefty sound and deft touch (the bassist wowed the pants off a crowd when this trio played live in Chicago last year).

Morris has worked with Rob Brown before; in fact, the 1992 record *Youiverse* (Riti) featured an entire program of compositions by the alto ace. They're a well-matched team—both line-minded and blues-tinged; both highly expressive and explorative. Brown's sound strikingly recalls alto great Jimmy Lyons in

its ability to somehow mix soft caress and harsh abrasion. *Illuminate* contains two focused, free improvisations ("Results," "Pivotal") that bookend compositions by Morris ("Illuminate") and Brown ("Inklings"). The guitarist's contribution is uncharacteristic—a ballad with chords that ring out like Jim Hall. Brown's expansive 23-minute trip is full of jagged, scripted improvisations and outbursts. Drummer Jackson Krall succeeds at wearing many percussion hats on the date.

And ubiquitous bassist William Parker is typically masterful; don't miss his amazing, blazing, unaccompanied bowed solo on the first track.

—John Corbett

Symbolic Gesture—*Invisible; Lowell's House; Symbolic Gesture; Finite/Margin; The Lookman.* (53:52)

Personnel—Morris, guitar; Nate McBride, bass; Curt Newton, drums.

Illuminate—*Results; Illuminate; Inklings; Pivotal.* (53:26)

Personnel—Morris, guitar; Brown, alto sax; William Parker, bass; Jackson Krall, drums.

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CD REVIEWS

JAZZ

To Hal & Beyond

by Bill Shoemaker

Hal Russell's concert strategy was to "leave 'em wanting more." His sudden departure from the scene in 1992 left more people wanting more of his vibrant, idiosyncratic music than at anytime in his lengthy, largely unheralded career. A recent flurry of recordings by "jazz's very own Ives" and his NRG progeny provide a good look at what all the excitement was about.

Generation (Nessa 25; 53:28: ★★★★★) This album revisits the '82 edition of Russell's gang, which included present-day NRGers Steve Hunt, an exceptional drummer and vibist, and Brian Sandstrom, whose fluent use of an unlikely arsenal of bass, electric guitar and trumpet was, and is, central to NRG's stylistic flexibility. Ostensibly an encounter with the late saxophonist and Ayler cohort Charles Tyler (whose braying baritone and squalling alto and clarinet are excellent foils for Russell and Chris Burdellik's jarring reed work), *Generation* is rounded out by Curt Bley's churning bass.

The Hal Russell Story (ECM 1498; 67:25: ★★★★★) Russell's circuitous route to Haldom is recounted here as a gloriously kaleidoscopic sound experience waxed just five weeks before his death. Tracing his improbable evolution from teenage Krupa wannabee to avant-garde icon via his alternately humorous and bittersweet narration, Hal and NRG turn flecks of swing, bop, cool, bossa nova and free-jazz inside out. The intense shedding of the decade since *Generation*, a period that saw the return of post-Ayler tough-tenor Mars Williams and the arrival of hard-boiled bassist Kent Kessler (replacing Burdellik and Bley, respectively), more than paid off on this tour de force, as the music bristles with a pinpoint precision that belies its air of reckless abandon.

Naked Colours (Silkheart 135; 65:17: ★★★) This '91 Berlin club recording with the powerful post-Taylor pianist Joel Futterman reflects many of the glories and the caveats of extended, high-energy improvisations. At their peak, this quartet—fueled by bassist Jay Oliver's propulsiveness and Robert Adkins' crisp drumming—is gripping. Yet, the newly acquainted ensemble occasionally generates more heat than light over the course of the three 20-minute performances. However, Russell's spirited turns on tenor, soprano and trumpet strongly suggest that he found Futterman's expansiveness to



Russell: Krupa wannabee to avant-garde icon

be a rewarding change of pace from NRG's compacted compositions.

Calling All Mothers (Quinnah 05; 55:49: ★★★★★) NRG's first post-Hal album, *Calling All Mothers* is a strong transitional statement. Though the set includes three Russell pieces utilizing everything from nimble swing pastiches to full-bore sax blasts, the compositional strengths of Williams, Hunt and newcomer multi-reedist Ken Vandermark preclude the possibility of NRG ever becoming a ghost band. *Calling All Mothers* is teeming with compositions built on deftly manipulated idioms and jolting juxtapositions, not to mention improvisations of chortling cutthroat intensity.

Vandermark Quartet: Solid Action (Platypus 002; 61:28: ★★★★★) This band's second outing, *Solid Action*, is a persuasive statement of Vandermark's ability to harness rock's gut-rending intensity to post-Coleman jazz's quest for liberating new structures. Just when Vandermark's pieces seem to gratuitously grate and grind, they leapfrog with surprising agility into refreshingly unexpected terrain. Without the responsiveness of Kessler, drummer Michael Zerang and violinist/guitarist/cornetist Daniel Scanlan, Vandermark's sudden stylistic shifts would be stilted, if not silly.

Caffeine: Caffeine (Okhadisk 12002; 72:59: ★★★) The eponymous debut of Hunt, Vandermark and pianist Jim Baker's free-improvisation trio, *Caffeine* provides high-energy blow-outs followed by explorations of space and color. Baker's first recorded outing is appetite-whetting, as he skillfully skirts Taylor's long shadow. Still, the concise, pointed statements of Russell, NRG and The Vandermark Quartet prove to be more dynamic than *Caffeine*'s elemental ebb and flow.

DB

BLUES

Blues Confluence

by Michael Point

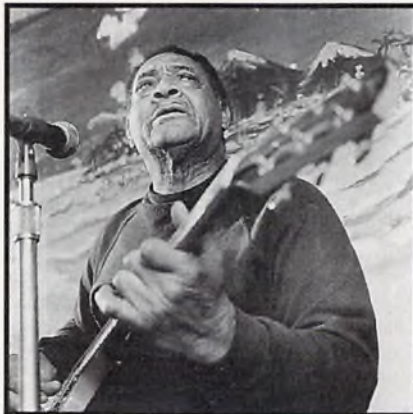
The most intriguing, as well as rewarding, area in blues continues to be the one where the creative confluence of individuality and influence occurs. That situation is, thankfully, a common one lately as old masters and emerging stars are making the most of the opportunity to strut their stuff for the expanded audience.

Junior Kimbrough: *All Night Long* (Fat Possum 42085; 49:30; ★★★★★) Kimbrough's ragged-but-right creations make for serious celebratory sounds perfectly suited for all-night sessions on sawdust floors. Operating in a close-knit trio with his son on drums and blues buddy R. L. Burnside's son on bass, Kimbrough's low-profile, high-impact blues style is far from primitive, but it's never less than pure. Rhythm-based with frequent eccentric guitar excursions, Kimbrough's sound is a fresh blast of raw-boned brilliance from the last frontier of roots-conscious blues.

Robert Cray: *Some Rainy Morning* (Mercury 526867; 52:30; ★★★) The licks are still hot, but Cray has long since transformed himself from a guitar hero to a first-class r&b vocal stylist. Fans more fond of grit than grace will still find Cray has much to offer. *Some Rainy Morning* was intended as a return to straight-ahead blues, but instead it supplies convincing evidence that Cray's musical strengths transcend the basic blues structure.

Coco Montoya: *Gotta Mind To Travel* (Blind Pig 5020; 46:51; ★★★½) Former Albert Collins and John Mayall guitar ace Montoya shines with this debut disc. Montoya's lean-and-mean guitar tone carries echoes of the icy sustain and straight-razor edge of the Master of the Telecaster, but the sound's all his. Support comes from fellow Collins alumnus Debbie Davies on second guitar and backing vocals, and from the funky foundation of Mike Finnegan and Al Kooper's Hammond B-3 organ work. Guest spots by Collins (on Lowell Fulson's "Talkin' Woman Blues") and Mayall (on his "Top Of The Hill") provide some added spice.

Dave Thompson: *Little Dave And Big Love* (Fat Possum 42089; 49:15; ★★★½) The recorded debut of 24-year-old Booba Barnes protégé Thompson, a live-in-the-studio romp of all originals, is a revelation. Thompson, already a fully mature guitar stylist, uses quarters for picks and oils down the fretboard for faster action, delivering an impressively muscular attack that works well in a variety of styles.



Ragged but right: Junior Kimbrough

Sweetman: *Austin Backalley Blue* (Wild Child/Mapleshade 02752; 48:31; ★★★½) Texas saxist Sweetman reprises the raunchy r&b stylings of King Curtis in a restrained but rocking blues format, mixing in some sharp and surprisingly jazzy guitar work amidst the smokey horn solos. Drummer Mike Buck, the original Fabulous Thunderbirds timekeeper, ably anchors things as Sweetman and his South Side Groove Kings take on "Night Train" as well as Magic Sam's "Looking Good."

Bluebirds: *Swamp Stomp* (RAM 1000; 46:57; ★★★) The boisterous bayou beat of northern Louisiana is alive and well in the hands of this suitably steamy Shreveport trio. Guitarist/vocalist Buddy Flett leads the band through a dozen sweat-drenched originals and adds a solo-acoustic rendition of Leadbelly's "No More Cane On The Brazos" for good measure. The originals are solid slices of swamp soul, but it's the 'Birds' version of Don & Dewey's Cajun blues classic "Justine" that's most effective.

Pinetop Perkins: *Live Top* (Deluge 3010; 69:04; ★★★); Pinetop Perkins: *Solitaire* (Lunacy 77732; 59:39; ★★★) Veteran piano pounder Perkins isn't long on sonic subtlety these days; but while he occasionally overpowers the music he never loses the basic blues groove. On *Live Top*, Perkins often leaves the band in his dust, but that's fine because the "Top" is the most interesting part of the proceedings. Perkins' singing, erratic but enjoyable, is effectively showcased on tunes ranging from the funk romp "High Heel Sneakers" to a sublime rendition of Ivory Joe Hunter's "I Almost Lost My Mind," while his patented piano lines flow free and easy. The *Solitaire* studio session is almost as energetic as the live disc, beginning with the full-tilt boogie of the opening track, but is considerably more focused. David Short's harp work provides Perkins with a strong instrumental foil. **DB**

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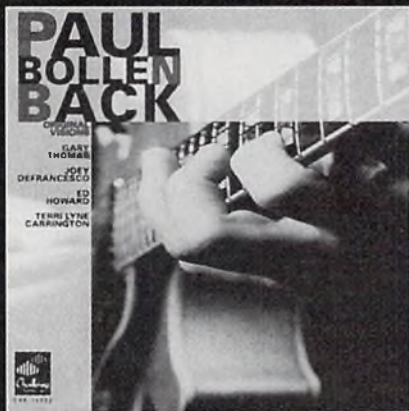
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FACE THE CHALLENGE IN MUSIC

CD REVIEWS

BEYOND

Ambient Heat

by Jon Andrews

When Brian Eno coined the term "ambient music," he imagined an atmospheric, functional music that implied more than it expressed—a sonic haiku. Mutating with the speed of a virus, the genre developed strains of world music and dance music. Often generated through digital synthesis, sampling and editing techniques, ambient music may not be replicable outside the studio. It's virtual music for virtual reality.

Axiom Ambient — Lost In The Translation (Axiom 314-524 053; 66:51/54:24: ★★★★★) Bill Laswell plundered his Axiom catalog to create the surreal "sound sculptures" of *Axiom Ambient*. Using the cavernous echoes and deep bass of "dub" reggae production, Laswell creates an eerie sonic environment in which trance-inducing musics of various cultures, e.g., Indian raga and North African percussion, mingle with other found sounds. Publishing credits and your ears are the only guides, but the sounds of Pharaoh Sanders, Jonas Hellborg and other Laswell regulars can be heard floating in and out.

The Orb: Orbus Terrarum (Island 314-529 099; 79:41: ★★★½) The Orb take their ambient-techno music into live performance, and are bolstered by a loopy sense of humor. As the name implies, *Orbus Terrarum* is relatively "grounded," with sounds of nature replacing the beeps and blips of their intergalactic explorations. "Slug Dub" successfully and improbably unites dub rhythms with an organ riff lifted from Miles Davis' "Calypso Frelimo."

The Deseo Remixes (High Street/Windham Hill 72902 10338; 59:25: ★★★) Four ambient production teams manipulate, twist and have their way with tracks from Jon Anderson's Brazilian-influenced *Deseo* (Windham Hill) project. The remixer's art lies in breaking their "source material" (i.e., Anderson's vocal encounters with Milton Nascimento and other Latin performers) into soundbytes, forming, shaping and reconstructing the sounds into imaginative, hypnotic trances while retaining some essence of the original.

Kevin Braheny & Tim Clark: Rain (Hearts of Space 11052; 55:35: ★★★★★) Braheny coaxes a distinct, expressive tone from the EWI, and Clark surrounds him with impressively sampled kalimbas and tuned percussion, as well as orchestral textures reminiscent of Vangelis. Never trite or obvious, tunes like "Rainstreet" and "Falling Like



Bill Laswell: creating surreal "sound sculptures" Tears" bring a strong melodic sensibility to the ambient proceedings.

Peter Scherer: Very Neon Pet (Metro Blue 31600; 54:41: ★★★★★) Adept at jazz production (World Saxophone Quartet, Bill Frisell) and twisted avant-pop (*Ambitious Lovers*), Scherer has constructed his first solo project around sampled sounds, mesmerizing percussion loops and electronics. *Very Neon Pet* is a fascinating excursion through a multicultural dream-state. Building up from pulsating beats, Scherer adds layers of intricate detail with trumpet, sampled voices, spare keyboard figures, guitars, violins and occasional bursts of noise.

Michael Stearns: The Lost World (Fathom/Hearts of Space 11054; 54:36: ★★★★★½) The product of many weeks in the back country, *The Lost World* uses traditional flutes and percussion, Stearns' field recordings of environmental sounds and the incantatory vocals of Keri Rusthøi to add local color and depth to his mysterious, often ominous, evocation of a world where dinosaurs and volcanos can exist alongside remote tribal cultures.

Tim Story: The Perfect Flaw (Hearts of Space 11045; 45:12: ★★★★★½) Story's piano frames such numbers as "After 4 O'Clock" and "A Broken Alphabet," with Kimberly Bryden's oboe sharing the melodies. Haunted and haunting, Story's emotionally complex compositions quickly attain the familiarity of an old friend. *The Perfect Flaw* has a warmth and depth too often missing in the ambient genre.

Path: An Ambient Journey From Windham Hill (Windham Hill 01934 11163; 65:00: ★★★½) Producer Robert Duski assembles a broad overview of musics here. Along with Tim Story and Mark Isham, *Path* spotlights European artists like Bob Holroyd, Gary Hughes and the duo Uman. Isham's "Tibet Part II" utilizes trumpet and electronics to capture a stillness reminiscent of Miles and Zawinul's "In A Silent Way," setting the right tone. **DB**

REISSUES

M.D. Unplugged

by Jon Andrews

Scrimp and save where necessary—you're going to want this. During Christmas week 1965, Miles Davis played a Chicago nightclub, with two nights recorded for release.

Miles Davis: *The Complete Plugged Nickel Sessions* (Mosaic MQ10-158; ★★★★★) Breathtaking, bountiful and a bit overwhelming, *Complete Plugged Nickel* emerges from the vaults as a joint venture between the Mosaic and Columbia labels, available in a 10-LP, Q-disc format from Mosaic, and on eight CDs from Columbia (see DB Mar. '95, p. 39).

Where does one start? The leader is in prime form, sounding particularly wired and caustic on "No Blues" (disc 5) and "Agitation" (7). Even on ballads like "When I Fall In Love" (3), his playing is searching and on edge. On tenor sax, Wayne Shorter is amazing throughout—urgent, fluent and unpredictable, bringing new vigor and a taste of Coltrane-ish



JOSEPH L. JOHNSON

Davis with Hancock: breathtaking

fire to staples like "Walkin'" (6) and "So What" (8). Tony Williams also seems ready to push the envelope as far as his employer will allow. By contrast, Herbie Hancock's luminous piano is heard to best advantage on medium-tempo tunes and ballads. With bassist Ron Carter, the rhythm section sounds flawless.

How's the sound quality? Significantly cleaner than the original LPs, and more detailed than the original single CD, with Williams sounding crisper and more prominent. Davis and Shorter are tightly mic'ed, with Hancock and Carter at times sounding a little distant. Teo Macero's production captures the "audio verité" of the club, including phones, cash registers and the patrons, both the inattentive and the overly enthusiastic.

The box contains two full nights (seven sets) of music previously available as two LPs, a single CD and a rare seven-CD Japanese import, and is now enhanced by the restoration of additional solos, adding more than 20 minutes. Despite some repetition (e.g., three versions of "Stella By Starlight"), the set is full of variety and the quality of performance is uniformly excellent.

This is not a "historical interest" release that will merely look good on the shelf. Start anywhere, and 30 years quickly melt away. *Complete Plugged Nickel* is still fresh and vital, the definitive document of Miles and company at their collective peak, in concert. (Mosaic Records: 35 Melrose Place, Stamford, CT 06902) **DB**

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BLINDFOLD TEST

SEPTEMBER 1995

James Carter

by Larry Birnbaum

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.

No young saxophonist, with the exception of Joshua Redman, has been as loudly heralded as 26-year-old James Carter. And none, without exception, can match his power, versatility and stylistic range. His huge, penetrating tone on tenor, alto, baritone and soprano saxophones, plus clarinets and flutes, commands instant attention. With an all-inclusive approach to tradition, he weaves such disparate influences as Ben Webster, Don Byas, John Coltrane and Albert Ayler into a seamless unity, closing the gap between mainstream and avant garde.

Born in Detroit, Carter bloomed early, toured the U.S. with Wynton Marsalis' quintet while still in high school. He started working with Lester Bowie and Julius Hemphill even before he moved to New York in 1990. His talent stood out in groups as varied as the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and Wendell Harrison's Clarinet Ensemble, and last year he signed with Atlantic Records, but not before Columbia issued the acclaimed *J.C. On The Set*, a session Carter had recorded for Japanese DIW. His recent Atlantic debut, *The Real Quietstorm*, an album of classic ballads, coincided with DIW's *Jurassic Classics*, a set of jazz standards. Lately, he's been touring with his own quartet and preparing another Atlantic date, a tribute to old masters.

This was his first Blindfold Test.

James Moody

"Look Into My Eyes" (from *Honey*, BMG/Novus, 1991) Moody, tenor saxophone; Kenny Barron, piano; Todd Coolman, bass; Akira Tana, drums.

Sounds like Newk [Sonny Rollins]. And then it doesn't. I like the drive on it. It's a relaxed drive, a quiet intensity. The conviction's there. This is not Newk, but there's some Newkisms in there. He's Newking; he's got the microwave oven on, whoever it is. I give it 3 stars.

David S. Ware

"Autumn Leaves" (from *Third Ear Recitation*, DIW, 1993) Ware, tenor saxophone; Matthew Shipp, piano; William Parker, bass; Whit Dickey, drums.

That's a whole 'nother version of "Autumn Leaves." It's one thing to talk about autumn leaves starting to fall, but this cat's got the sound and intensity to make the whole tree go down. He's definitely got some Aylerisms happening, that spiritual cry that's up in there. Is this Charles Gayle? Is it Archie Shepp? I'm stumped on this recording, but whoever it is is dealing. 4 stars.

Coleman Hawkins & His Rhythm

"Sophisticated Lady" (from *Coleman Hawkins/Johnny Hodges in Paris*, BMG/Disques Vogue, 1995/rec. 1949) Hawkins, tenor saxophone; Jean-Paul Ménégon, piano; Pierre Michelot, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums.

This is definitely one of the predecessors. Sounds like Hawk, just by the harmonic conception. And there's a guttural thing in there that Ben [Webster] has. It sounds like a later Hawk recording, past '56 or something like that, even the fidelity of it. He has that way of going through the passing chords on there; he definitely had a connection with the younger bebop cats who were dealing that then, like [Don] Byas and Dizzy and all of them up at Minton's. So you could already hear that. The tune is



"Sophisticated Lady." 5 stars. How many stars are there?

Pharoah Sanders Quartet

"Misty" (from *Crescent With Love*, Evidence, 1994) Sanders, tenor saxophone; William Henderson, piano; Charles Fambrough, bass.

It sounds like Pharoah, because there's a Trane vibe there; but there's this directness that Pharoah has when he's just squarely dealing with the melody from the onset. And then he goes from there; he goes about dealing with it on his own terms. Pharoah's always been one of the constant inspirations to me as far as being an extension of that spirituality that I get from Trane. This track's just a testimonial to that, the spiritual urgency that's in it. A million stars, same as the preceding one.

Chico Freeman & Brainstorm

"Trespasser" (from *Threshold*, In + Out, 1993) Freeman, tenor saxophone; Norman Hedman, percussion; Vincent Evans, piano; Jack Lee, guitar; David Dyson, bass; Gene Jackson, bass; Ursula Dudziak, vocal; Rodney Harris, rap.

This isn't Joe Lovano, by any chance? The intro reminded me of a tenor/voice thing that he did, but then they spun off into this go-go thing. It's got a nice feel to it, that "Let's do jazz for lunch" type of thing. I guess cats can just bop to it. I have no idea who it is. But the percussive thing on here is real tight. I like it. Is it Bill Evans? Is this that Buckshot LeFonque thing? I give it 4 stars. I like it, that go-go beat. I could use more transitional elements between the swing part and the go-go thing, but other than that, it's cool.

Roscoe Mitchell

"Walking In The Moonlight" (from *Hey Donald*, Delmark, 1995) Mitchell, tenor saxophone; Jodie Christian, piano; Malachi Favors, bass; Albert "Tootie" Heath, drums.

It's Roscoe. Sounds like Favors on bass, Albert Heath on drums. I played with them at Lincoln Center a while ago. Definitely one of my heroes. It just goes to show you, it's all a part of the continuum. I could tell from his phrasing it was Roscoe, and also I can hear it up in the higher notes. That's how he plays soprano and alto most of the time. He's one of the cats that, after I started listening to him, made me get these other timbres and shadings out of notes. It's just like learning a different dialect on the instrument, and he's one of the cats who indirectly showed me that, just by listening to him and watching him play. It all makes sense. 10 stars.