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Lionel Hampton

Tito Puente

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Views from the Back

Why drummers rarely lead

Mark Isham

Dianne Reeves Blindfolded

Classic Interview: Erroll Garner



16 Lionel Hampton & Tito Puente

That's Entertainment

If anyone knows how to tear down a house, it's Lionel and Tito. Put them together, and you get 159 years of jazz percussion and expert showmanship (plus a whole lot of laughs).

By Larry Birnbaum

Cover photograph of Lionel Hampton and Tito Puente by Teri Bloom.



TERI BLOOM

16 Lionel Hampton & Tito Puente

FEATURES

22 Views From The Back

Why Drummers Rarely Lead

By Robin Tolleson

26 Kevin Eubanks

Sorry, No Sell-Out

By Zan Stewart

30 Mark Isham

Miles, Movies & The Muse

By Phil Gallo

32 Classic Interview:

Erroll Garner:

The Next Jelly Roll

By Ralph J. Gleason

34 Tradin' Fours:

Frank Foster

Cornell Dupree

Diva

Kahil El'Zabar



MARK SAVAGE

30 Mark Isham

DEPARTMENTS

6 On The Beat

8 Chords & Discords

10 Riffs

38 CD Reviews

74 Caught

76 Woodshed

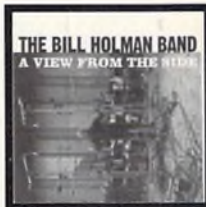
86 Blindfold Test



38 John McLaughlin

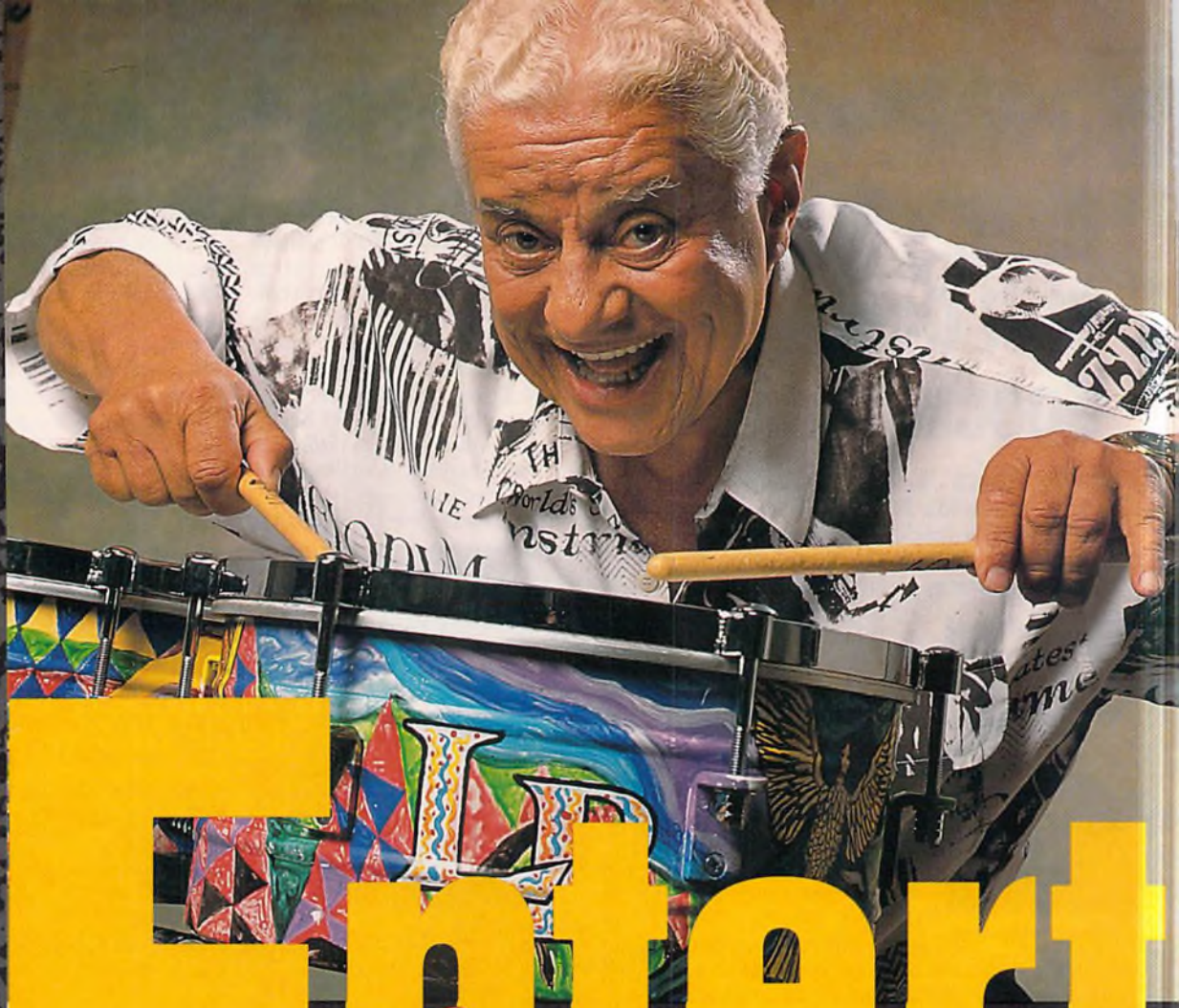


Chico O'Farrill



Bill Holman

THE GREATS



Entert



Tito Puente

Anyone who's witnessed a recent performance by Lionel Hampton or Tito Puente knows that for these master percussionists, age is nothing but a number.

For Hampton, the number is 87; for Puente, it's 72. Yet both still tour and record prolifically, playing with the stamina and enthusiasm of teenagers, turning in high-energy marathon sets that would leave the average young lion panting for breath.

Both are living legends and musical pioneers; both play vibes and drums (in Puente's case, timbales); both are unabashed showmen and gifted, underrated composers. Both now front all-star bands in addition to their regular ensembles, and over the years both have nurtured the talents of the top vocalists and instrumentalists in their fields. Both have performed for presidents, appeared in Hollywood movies and reaped honors around the globe. Both are devoted to music education—Puente with a college scholarship fund, Hampton with an annual festival named for him at the University of Idaho, where student bands from across the country attend concerts and clinics with a host of international jazz stars. And both share a mischievous sense of humor, snickering like

aimment

BY LARRY BIRNBAUM

schoolboys as they traded quips at a recent interview at Hamp's high-rise apartment overlooking Central Park in New York City.

Having suffered a minor stroke at the beginning of this year (press reports of a second, more serious stroke this year proved unfounded), Hampton walks and talks hesitantly, but his mind is sharp and his playing ability is remarkably intact. In July, he and Puente jammed beneath a mural of jazz and Latin greats (including Hampton) at the opening of "Tito Puente's" restaurant in City Island, New York. Earlier, Hampton had joined Puente's Latin Jazz Ensemble to cut a track on Hampton's latest CD, *For The Love Of Music* (MoJazz), a star-studded, funk-flavored outing that quickly climbed the sales charts, a testament to Hamp's enduring

Lionel Hampton

popularity. Puente also has a new release, *Tito's Idea*, on Tropijazz.

LARRY BIRNBAUM: *Tito, how did you come to record with Lionel?*

TITO PUENTE: We've been friends over 40 years, so he asked me, "Tito, would you like to play on my MoJazz album?" We did a Stevie Wonder tune, "Don't You Worry 'Bout A Thing." But we've played together in concerts for years, on and off.

LIONEL HAMPTON: Yeah, yeah.

TP: We were on a few ships together, and we do jazz festivals in Japan—some mountain that I forgot the name of.

LH: That's right. We did two jazz festivals.

TP: And then we were cruising on a ship, the U.S.S. Norway.

LH: Yeah, about three years ago.

TP: He had his Golden Men there, with Clark Terry, Al Grey and all the boys. We run into each other all the time.

LB: Was Lionel the first vibist you heard?

TP: I think he was, and then I heard Red Norvo. But I heard Hamp more, because I used to follow him a lot in New York. I was born in Harlem, so I knew about the Savoy, the Renaissance and all those ballrooms. And he was already playing vibes way before the Benny Goodman days. Everybody listened to him. I started very young, and he was already known.

LH: When you first came out, I was playing at that place upstairs.

TP: I remember it. It was on 49th Street and Broadway.

LH: Yeah. You were coming out with your Latin band. If you think about it, you made timbales famous. I never heard of timbales before. Everybody was playing conga drums, and you came out with timbales. After that, everybody started throwing the conga drums away and playing timbales. Yeah, you shot right up, man, when you came out.

TP: Hamp has always loved the Latin rhythms, for years.

LH: That's right.

TP: On his drum solos, you can always hear that Latin touch. On a lot of the tunes he played a cowbell figuration on the cymbal or something on the tom toms.

LH: I think Tito's one of the finest percussionists in the business. I played on Tito's timbales a couple of times, and I said, I'm going to give it up because I can't do the things he does. But I'm going to catch him. [laughs]

TP: Yeah, man. He always used to dig Machito's band a lot, with Mario Bauza. And he used to dig us. Of course, we always dug him, too—all those rhythm things that he does. So there was some sort of a marriage there.

LH: Well, you certainly turned out to be a hell of a businessman. No kidding. You're so full of fun and keep everybody in stitches, but it's just wonderful how many business activities you have and the things that you do to make money. Look how you have this big restaurant now.

TP: I had a dream, like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He had a dream, and I had my dream, too.

LH: Were you on a mountain? [both laugh]

TP: Yeah, I was up on a mountain when I had that dream, but we were in Japan. They didn't understand me up there, them Japanese, but they just loved our music.



"I think Tito's one of the finest percussionists in the business. I played on Tito's timbales a couple of times, and I said, I'm going to give it up because I can't do the things he does. But I'm going to catch him."

—Lionel Hampton

LH: I played on some vibes made out of stone that came out of some mountain in Japan. It's really amazing, the sounds you can get. They've got these stone plates, and they use them as bars on the vibes. We astonished everybody with them, and we got requests to play it again. People wanted to come see it. You'll see them out there, Tito. I have it set for you to play the stone vibes.

LB: Did you ever play vibes together on stage?

LH: We have, yeah.

TP: We did "Oye Como Va" for Hamp's next album, where we answer each other on vibes. It came out very nice.

LH: That was a great number. And Tito told me, "Get a hold of your publisher, and tell him I want the words of 'Midnight Sun' translated into Spanish. I want to get my new singer to do it."

TP: Her name is La Duké. I told her, "I want you to sing 'Midnight Sun' in Spanish, but first I want to see if you can hear the changes, because I don't want you to rap the tune. I want you to sing it, not recite it." So I checked her out.

Yeah, she heard it. She sang the number, and I said, "That's it. Now I'm going to call the publisher and get them to translate the lyrics into Spanish, and we're going to be the first ones to do it."

LH: That's sensational, boy.

TP: And I want to do "Flying Home" as a mambo, because I know it'll swing with a Latin beat. I'm going to catch up

to him, like he says, with a timbales solo on "Flying Home."

[laughs]

LH: Oh, I just was kidding you, man. [laughs]

TP: I'm kidding you, too. [laughs] I'm going to take you to my restaurant and feed you camarones.

LH: Give me some camarones.

TP: You know, Lionel is a name everybody knows around the world. Someday I hope to be that way. The whole world loves him.

LH: I was just fortunate to start ahead of you, that's all.

TP: And the people got into your music right away. The Latin music is getting popular, but never like the music he plays—that hit the whole world. Everybody knows him. I hope someday to have his name, if I keep working at it. He's still paying his dues, and so am I. And for me, it's an honor, a personal satisfaction, to be here with him.

LH: Listen to him. Boy, you certainly speak good English. You sound like a professor. [laughs]

TP: He's my hero. I love him.

LH: Yes, sir, just like a professor.

TP: For years I've loved him. You know that.

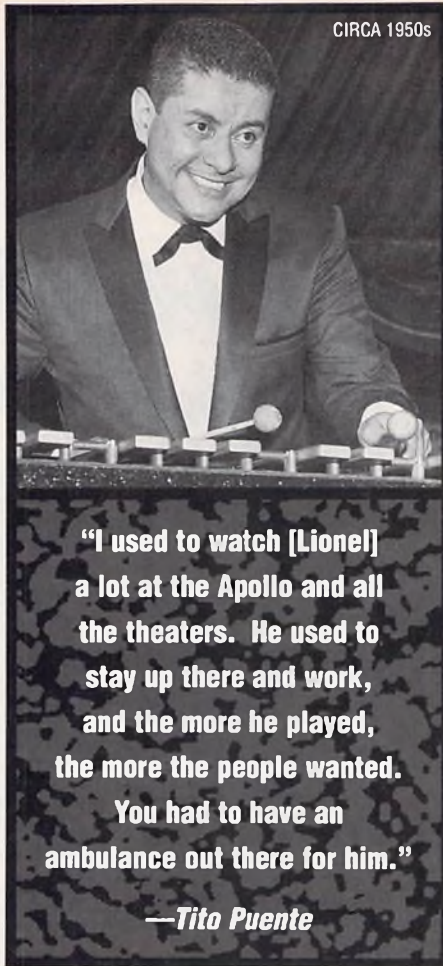
LH: Tito, you astonish me. I'll bet you're a good actor, man.

TP: You, too. You're a very funny cat. You've got a beautiful sense of humor. He's very funny, that guy, when you know him. When him and Clark Terry get together, forget about it. They've got a repertoire and a half of jokes, incidents, things that really happened to them in their lives that are funny now but not at the time they happened.

LB: When did you start playing vibes?

TP: I started playing vibes at the Palladium, on 53rd Street, about 1949 or 1950. Cal Tjader wasn't even playing then. He

CIRCA 1950s



"I used to watch [Lionel] a lot at the Apollo and all the theaters. He used to stay up there and work, and the more he played, the more the people wanted. You had to have an ambulance out there for him."

—Tito Puente

was with George Shearing as a drummer. He used to come up there to visit us, and he heard me playing the vibes, so that's where he got his idea. But Hamp started way before that.

LH: It was when I was drumming with Louis Armstrong. I was playing in a place called Sebastian's Cotton Club in Los Angeles, and Louis had a recording session there. We backed Louis up, and a set of vibes was sitting in the corner. I had played xylophone when I was a kid in this military band, the *Chicago Defender* newspaper boys' band. We used to play overtures, like *William Tell* and *Poet And Peasant*, and I used to play the flute part on xylophone. So Louis asked me, did I know anything about the instrument, and I said, "Sure." I had never played the vibes before in my life, but I picked it up and played Louis' solo from his record "Chinese Chop Suey," note for note.

TP: The reason drummers can become vibes players is because it's a percussion instrument. All you need is the feeling for the instrument, and that's what Hamp's got.

LH: I didn't say it was "Puerto Rican Chop Suey." [both laugh] Anyway, Louis said, "That sounds good. Let's keep him out there, and let's put a vibes solo on this song that we're going to record." Eubie Blake had sent him a copy of "Memories Of You," which he just wrote, and so the introduction I made on that song, that was the first time jazz had been played on a vibraharp.

LB: You both still play such long sets.

TP: I learned that from Hamp. I used to watch him a lot at the Apollo and all the theaters. He used to stay up there and work, and the more he played, the more the people wanted. You have to have an ambulance out there for him. The sets he does now, he does one-and-a-half, two hours without stopping. The concerts, that's what they call for. His segments are very big. And my segments are at least 70 minutes. That's a long time. You've got to have your chops up for that. It takes me about a half hour to get warmed up, heated up like him. He gets hotter and hotter, and he excites more people, and he goes to another tune and another tune, and then he gets into that "Flying Home" and puts everybody away. I don't care what nationality you are—Japanese, German, Russian or what—it's the music

that gets to them, especially the percussion. They'll dig trumpets and saxophones, but when you play percussion, they love that.

LH: Yeah, they love it.

TP: That's everybody's language, from the mother country, Africa. I'm so happy I was brought up that way, too, right there, right in the middle of it. Because we're all from the same neighborhood; we all grew up together. I was born in Harlem Hospital, and I was brought up in Harlem, so I was very close to the music and the food.

LB: How have you both managed to maintain your popularity together with your artistic integrity?

TP: There are a lot of good musicians, but they're not entertainers. But when you do a concert for big masses of people, you've got to entertain them, like Hamp does. The way he does it, he makes everyone so happy and swinging that they really forget their problems, and they have a ball. And that's what I like to do in the Latin field.

LH: They used to criticize my band and say, "Here comes the circus." And now all of them do it. As soon as they start singing, they're walking around the stage, they're sitting on the steps, they're singing out in the audience. And all that jive came from us. We were packing places every night, and so they began to watch. They said, "Oh, boy, this is catching on." So they started doing it. Right now, they pay a big artist a lot of money, and he can't draw

flies. But Tito and I can play some places, and they can't find room for the people.

TP: I've even got my timbales painted different colors. It's what they see now, not what they hear. They've been hearing me for a hundred years already, so at least you see the drums. Like Hamp has a beautiful set of drums in front of his band. People see that drum set, and they're waiting for him to get up and hit the tom tom. That's beautiful. That's showmanship, what he does—throwing the sticks up in the air and all that. They eat that up, baby. So that's what I'm doing. I put my cymbals around the timbales, three or four pairs of timbales—eight of them—and I put my sticks up in the air. I don't throw them up like Hamp, but I put them around my head, holding them, and the people like that. Because how much can you play? I like people to say when they leave the concert, "Man, did you see those drums that Hamp had? Did you see those colored timbales that Tito had?" They even talk about the instruments now, because they already know we can play.

DB

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| Lionel Hampton plays a Deluxe model Musser vibraphone and a set of Ludwig drums with Zildjian cymbals. He uses handmade sticks and calfskin drum heads. Tito Puente uses Latin Percussion equipment, including four sets of timbales plus cowbells, chekere and claves. He also plays Yamaha, Deagan and Musser vibes and owns marimbas and xylophones. He keeps two upright pianos at home, a Steinway and a Baldwin, and uses synthesizers and computers for composing. | Lionel Hampton <i>FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC</i> —MoJazz 314530554 <i>LIONEL HAMPTON IN PARIS</i> —Disques Vogue 09026-68214 <i>YOU BETTER KNOW IT!!!</i> —Impulse!/GRP 140 <i>THE COMPLETE LIONEL HAMPTON, VOLS. 1 & 2</i> —RCA 2-07863-66500 <i>SLIDE</i> —Fresh Sound 206 <i>VINTAGE HAMPTON</i> —Telarchive 83321 <i>MIDNIGHT SUN</i> —Decca/GRP 624 | RARE RECORDINGS. <i>VOL. 1</i> —Telarchive 83318 <i>FLYING HOME</i> —Drive 3536 <i>MY MAN</i> —Four Star 40079 <i>JUST JAZZ: LIVE AT THE BLUE NOTE</i> —Telarc 83313 <i>LIONEL HAMPTON WITH ALL-STARS—GNP</i> Crescendo 15 <i>TEMPO AND SWING</i> —Bluebird 66039 <i>LIVE AT THE BLUE NOTE</i> —Telarc 83308 | Tito Puente <i>TITO S IDEA</i> —Tropijazz 81571 <i>IN SESSION</i> —Tropijazz 81208 <i>MASTER TIMBALERO</i> —Concord Picante 4594 <i>ROYAL T</i> —Concord Picante 4553 <i>"LIVE" AT THE VILLAGE GATE</i> —Tropijazz 80879 <i>MAMBO OF THE TIMES</i> —Concord Picante 4499 <i>OUT OF THIS WORLD</i> —Concord Picante 4448 <i>GOZA MI TIMBAL</i> —Concord Picante 4399 <i>DANCE MANIA</i> —BMG U.S. Latin 2467 <i>MAMBO BEAT, VOL. 1</i> —BMG U.S. Latin 23870 <i>MUCHO PUENTE</i> —BMG U.S. Latin 16445 <i>CUBAN CARNIVAL</i> —BMG U.S. Latin 2349 <i>TOP PERCUSSION</i> —BMG U.S. Latin 3264 <i>TAMBO</i> —BMG U.S. Latin 3470 <i>MAMBO MACOCO</i> —Tumbao Cuban Classics 1518 |

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ND THIN

Why Drummers Rarely Lead

By Robin Tolleson

It could get kind of depressing being a drummer. They usually have to set up in the back and their names are listed last. Drums and percussion are quite often what fuels a pop record, but the last drum solo that made it big on the charts was "Wipe Out." And successful drummer/leaders, those who do it over the long haul and actually make some money, are still a rarity. "It's not really the talent, it's the instrument," says veteran stickster Steve Smith.

Could Phil Collins, Sheila E or Gino Vanelli have attained the success they did without moving out from behind the drum set? One of this month's *DB* cover artists, Lionel Hampton, was a drummer before switching primarily to vibes. "I don't know what kind of drummer Lionel Hampton was, but you can rest assured that if he had stayed on drums he would not be as significant as he is," says Joe Chambers, a teacher at Manhattan's New School.

Certainly, recent CD releases by Roy Haynes, Paul Motian, T.S. Monk, Leon Parker, Jerry Granelli, Bill Stewart, Vinnie Colaiuta, Carl Allen, Paul Wertico, Dave Weckl, Franklin Kiermyer and Ralph Peterson could be a sign that drummers are stepping out front. And yet, when it comes to taking *your* show on the road, drummers, along with bassists, continue to fight the perception that they are just an accompaniment instrument, a stereotype that reaches into music education and marketing that not only affects what kinds of leadership skills they learn, but their options to lead, their moneymaking potential and the public's reception as well.

Despite the success of a Chick Webb, Gene Krupa, Buddy

Rich, Art Blakey, Max Roach or Tony Williams, there are still factors conspiring to keep drummers "on the side," ably performing as expert accompanists but not stepping out of the traditional role. "It's true that quite a few drummers have put out their own records, and throughout history have toured with their own bands," says Steve Smith, who leads Vital Information and plays the sideman in Steps Ahead. "But if we look at the big picture in terms of name recognition, then the drummer/bandleader has a very difficult time getting notoriety beyond the drum world itself. And it's nearly impossible to make a good living as a drummer/bandleader."

Are drummers being nurtured more by record labels and accepted more by the public now than in the past? "The problem with the public and drummers comes from a traditional view of the instrument itself," says Andrew Cyrille. "As most of us in the West know, drums usually accompany. That comes from the European tradition, and in that light the public does not focus on listening to drum music per se. It's difficult for them to hear somebody playing the drum set and say these various sounds are good music and equivalent to listening to a violin or a piano."

Drummer Joe Chambers has studied the history of drums in the Americas, and believes that the subservient role of the instrument goes back to the slave-era banning of drums in New Orleans. "Drums are subordinate to the melodic and harmonic content," he says, "and that's definitely a Eurocentric-dominated way of thinking. Drums have always changed music and been as important as the other



instruments, but have taken a back seat with writers and promoters. And the agents and managers have always chosen to move composers, arrangers, songwriters, singers, and then melody-producing instrumentalists. They might not know that drums were once banned, but they still know that the drums are something subordinate in this culture."

Not true in all cultures, as Jack DeJohnette learned on a recent trip to Senegal.

"I got to play with a rhythm group called Sing Sing Rhythm, and heard the roots of the poly-rhythms and concepts that drum-set drummers play. There they celebrate the drums. It does accompany but its function is equal to that of whoever the soloist is, even when it's supporting. Here they don't play drummer-led recordings as much on radio. I'd like to see that addressed, and see America celebrate the drums," DeJohnette says.

"To change the mindset," Chambers concludes, "that's a little deeper. It has to do with history and opening up to the whole multicultural idea. As far as musicians, maybe drummers can present a more well-rounded, total world picture of music, display all the aspects of music, drumming and all other things."

The obstacle to many people is seeing drums in the same musical light as the instruments out in front that carry the melodic load. "The instrument that people probably relate to best is the voice, then guitar, saxophone, keyboards and trumpet, and then probably the drum," says Smith. "The sax players and guitar players have a recognizable sound that they can be consistent with record after record and develop an

audience. As drummers we have the consistency of our drums, but we don't usually have a consistent band sound or band concept."

"Drummers aren't really encouraged to lead," says Joey Baron, drummer with Naked City, Bill Frisell and Laurie Anderson, and now leader of his own band, Baron Down. "I was told that I had to learn a different instrument to be considered a musician. The drums weren't considered a musical instrument. Being a leader is not better, and being a sideman is not better. It's just an option that should be equally encouraged in anybody that plays an instrument. You have to respect somebody for sticking their neck out, and it's important for drummers to have models to look up to, whether it's Buddy Rich or Louie Bellson or Max Roach or Ronald Shannon Jackson or DeJohnette.

"There are some drummers whose first lesson was learning a quarter note, rather than starting on rudiments. So six months down the road they were writing music, and it wasn't such a big issue," says Baron. "There's a message sent when you first take up an instrument. Without getting that, drummers come up through the ropes helping other people realize their ideas. Most of my life was spent in that capacity. When you serve people for so long they can take you for granted, and don't think you have a thought of your own that's worth expressing, that's incorrect."

Photos taken by: (clockwise from upper left) Louie Bellson (Mike Hutmacher), Franklin Kiermyer (Alan Nahigian), Ralph Peterson (Enid Farber), Andrew Cyrille (Alan Nahigian), Jack DeJohnette (Hyoun Vielz), Steve Smith (R. Andrew Lepley), Joey Baron (Hyoun Vielz), and Joe Chambers (Mauri Beck)

The business of fronting a band isn't easy for any instrumentalist, and even Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa may have made more money during their sideman heydays than they did when leading. Ralph

Peterson recalls the excitement of his first gig as leader at New York's Five Spot, but also that he was the one in the band to take a loss. "You count on having to 'take a bullet' for the band at least two or three times a year," he says. "The first time I ever complained to Art [Blakey] about something that was going on in my band, I remember his guttural tone: 'So you say you want to be a bandleader, huh? Don't come cryin' to me.'"

"If you want a gig to happen and there's only 'X' amount of money, you could get real young sidemen and pay them apprentice wages, or you could get good players and make the same or less," Smith says. "Leading the band feels like 90 percent business and 10 percent playing. It's difficult to set up the environment. It's always an uphill struggle. I've yet to experience a band that has sort of its own momentum. It always feels like a fight just to keep the band working, keep the gigs coming in."

Smith continues, "Whereas a lot of other instrumentalists come across first as artists and composers in their own right,

all drummers get their initial exposure as sidemen. Especially in the jazz world, there's a period of apprenticeship. There's usually one gig that catapults them into the eye of the drum world."

"It's one thing if your initial visibility is that of being a leader," Baron agrees, "but quite different being a part of other peoples' music over many years and then coming back with your own band. Drummers who are seen as highly skilled sidemen have a hard time being accepted and taken seriously as leaders."

Drummers are not suddenly rebelling against the concept of supporting other musicians. They

know the musical value of accompaniment and enjoy creating textures for other musicians. "Very often sidemen help the leaders build their business as well as the music. In the great bands that Miles

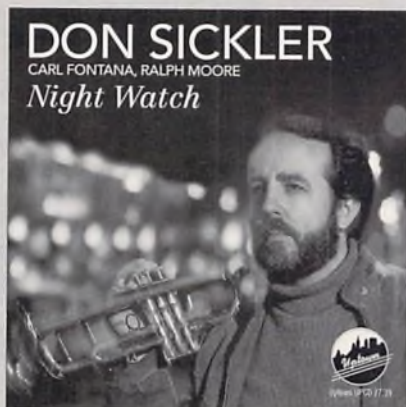
Davis had, he had great drummers and would let the drummers play," Cyrille points out. "Jo Jones used to have a saying: 'The drummer has to have some shit for himself and some shit for everybody else.' You must be able to motivate yourself and other people at the same time."

"Drummers who are seen as highly skilled sidemen have a hard time being accepted and taken seriously as leaders."

—Joey Baron

New From UPTOWN

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UPCD 27.40 Sonny Clark, Oakland, 1955



In 1955, when Buddy DeFranco played San Francisco, the upcoming local musicians were enthralled with his new pianist Sonny Clark. Bassist Jerry Good and drummer Al Randall attended many of the shows before heading off to their regular job at Jimbo's Bop City where they were part of the all night rhythm section. When Good got a job at a little piano bar in Oakland, he asked Sonny to sit in. Flashback to January 1955, as Jerry described it, "A Night at the Mocambo featuring Sonny Clark."

"The beautiful thing about jazz or improvisational music," says DeJohnette, "is not having people that sound like somebody else, but that everybody can tell a story. A drummer puts his own personal stamp on the music. I have a kind of dialogue that goes with the solos. I enjoy supporting musicians because I feel like when I'm supporting I'm also coming through in the front anyway."

There are drummer/leaders who are gifted enough musically to understand the whole spectrum of music and play other instruments, like Chambers, DeJohnette and Louie Bellson. Then there are leaders that are good at assembling and coordinating and motivating a team of people, and can implement their ideas. "Art Blakey would pick the pieces and orchestrate length of solos and control the dynamics of the band," confirms DeJohnette. "He was in everybody's face for 50 years, recording prolifically and developing musicians, soloing well and giving a good presentation. Then you see Tony Williams writing great tunes and featuring himself doing solos. He gets the drums out there and people love it. The industry should nurture the drummers coming up as well as they nurture the piano players and horn players and guitar players and vocalists. It's not a matter of 'giving the drummer some,' it's giving the drummers their share."

Bellson grew up around music—his family owned a music store—and his father insisted he study some piano to learn harmony, theory and composing. "I'm glad he did that," says Bellson. "In the early days I remember thinking, 'If I have a band of my own, I've gotta know all this, because if I don't, I won't have that much respect from my guys.' But if I can get up in front of the band and look at the score, rehearse an arrangement and even conduct, they're going to have a lot of confidence that I know what I'm doing, not only as a drummer,

but as a musician. Guys like Chick Webb, Jo Jones, Buddy and Gene inspired me to be a leader because I could see that they had complete command of the band."

"Not every drummer should have his own band early on," Peterson says. "It happens for different people at different times, and I think the market needs to be more accepting of that notion. A cat has not passed his prime at 28 because he hasn't done his first record, or 30 or 40 for that matter."

Franklin Kiermyer is a 38-year-old drummer whose debut U.S. release is the high-trajectory *Solomon's Daughter*, featuring Pharoah Sanders in some of this past year's most explosive improvisational music. Perhaps his vision of musicians' roles is the one we're all working toward, albeit slowly. "I write music that acts as a vehicle for the vibe that I'm trying to get happening. The drums are certainly an equal voice in the music. I don't conceptualize any instrument as playing a supportive role. The people I work with have strongly individual voices, and the idea of musicians playing an accompanist role never really entered my mind. For me, the drums was always the envelope, the continuum."

"People in this business react to cachet," Kiermyer concludes, "so if you're famous it doesn't matter what instrument you're playing, and if you're not famous it doesn't matter what instrument you're playing. It's only about great music and great musicians. My relationship with record companies has been based on the music that I'm doing, and I don't think they've felt that being a drummer has negatively impacted my marketability. Those notions have been broken down a little. It has more to do with who a person is than what instrument they're playing. The instrument really is secondary. I would hope that what I get happening on my instrument is important, not the instrument itself."

DB

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Kevin Eubanks

SORRY, No Sell-Out

By Zan Stewart

In late August, Kevin Eubanks spent a week in New York, concluding his summer with vigorous quartet performances at Visiones in Greenwich Village. It wasn't an ordinary foursome: the guitarist was accompanied by his brother Robin (trombone), Adam Rudolph (conga drums, percussion) and drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith. The bass-less band was playing loose-formed music to packed houses at the intimate jazz spot, and Eubanks was delighted.

"People actually come out to hear this music. They're lined up to hear it," he says, encouraged by the response to the group's three Visiones gigs this year. "They never heard it on the radio or on TV, yet they're all packed in there, lovin' it. We're playing kind of circular music, going in and out of each other's tunes, and improvising. It's cool to be in New York. They get mad if I play this stuff in L.A."

In Los Angeles, where Eubanks now lives, he's played many Sundays at the Jazz Bakery, hosting a free-form session with Rudolph and others that is also open to children. But, aside from that, he rarely plays a club like Visiones, where he presents the evolution of what he calls his "Spirit Talk Music," his personal blend of constructed melodies, insistent rhythms and flowing improvisations that has been documented on two Blue Note albums. Last year, Eubanks played once at Catalina Bar & Grill, offering sizzling straightahead stuff in a trio with pianist James Williams and bassist John Clayton.

Eubanks, 37, mostly plays on *The Tonight Show*, which he joined in late

1992 as Branford Marsalis' guitarist. He took over for the saxophonist when Marsalis left the show early this year to promote his *Buckshot LeFonque* CD. And while a number of his fans may think that Eubanks has hocked his scruples by taking the high-salary job as *Tonight Show* music honcho, the guitarist demurs.

"We're having fun—I got my guys in there," he says, referring to drummer Smith (who replaced Jeff "Tain" Watts), bassist Bob Hurst and saxman Ralph Moore, all longtime friends. (The other members are Chuck Findley, trumpet, pianist Gerold Etkins, trombonist Matt Finders and Vicki Randle, percussion and vocals.)

"I don't feel weird about the show," he continues. "To me, it's another opportunity, just something else to do."

Eubanks, who likes a myriad of music—from Brazilian to funk, from free-form to rock, from straightahead to country—makes an ideal leader of the *Tonight Show* Band and was Marsalis' personal choice to replace him. The guitarist has regularly fronted bands since he was a teenager in Philadelphia, and he knows that you can't always play what you want when you want to.

The Tonight Show, for example, is not a place to play the kind of adventurous numbers that evolved at Visiones or at the Jazz Bakery. Nor is it, he said somewhat sadly, a place to play the kind of rousing jazz/fusion he delivered on

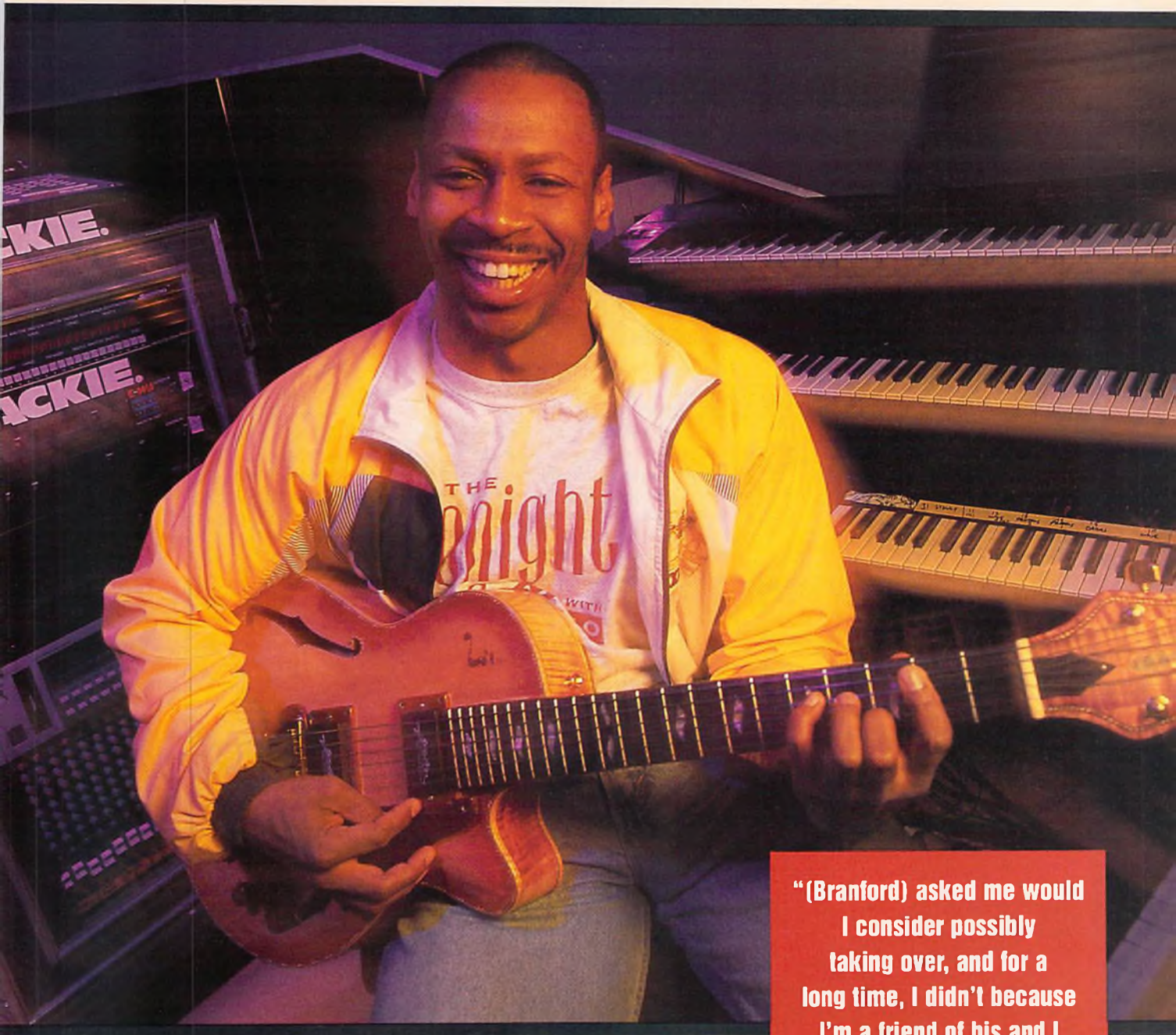
mid-'80s GRP albums such as *Sundance* and *Face To Face*.

Not surprisingly, the late-night NBC show starring comedian Jay Leno is suited for more accessible, recognizable music. This is drawn from a book of over 200 arrangements of mostly pop, country, funk and rock standards—many crafted by Eubanks, some by Marsalis and others—and includes the occasional jazz piece. It's all music Eubanks has no qualms about providing.

"To do a gig like this, you have to know where your music is, have no insecurity about it so that you can be professional, do what the show needs," he said in an earlier interview. "I don't have any conflict whatever. I don't need to feel like I'm being slighted or be on stage with a negative demeanor because I can't 'play what I want to play.' That doesn't make any sense. Obviously, I play music that I want to play, at least some of it. I love playing rock and country. That's my favorite on the show because it's guitar-oriented. I grew up playing it."

Eubanks says his main focus at NBC is finding music that excites the house audience for *The Tonight Show*, and the way to do that is simply to pick music that those 500 fans want to hear.

"We want them to feel like they've been at a show, at a concert where they get involved in the music," says Eubanks, a relaxed, easygoing sort. "If they get excited about the music they're hearing during the commercials, when we come back [on the air], they have all this energy built up that's ready to release. That creates energy for the show, and that way the people at home



feel it more.”

The guitarist's relationship with Leno—a very good one, he says—is a key link in this chain of events.

“We see each other every day, and get closer and closer,” Eubanks says. “It feels really natural to just hang out and talk to him. Then when we go on stage, some of that flows into the show, where we'll talk almost every day. The more comfortable I am with Jay, the more relaxed I am, then the more relaxed the band is. That starts a lot of stuff, like somebody playing a silly song behind a guest. I want the band to feel free to do what they want to do, so it's as loose and free as possible.”

Leno agrees that the comfort level between himself and the guitarist is

high. “We're clicking now,” says Leno. “I know I can go over to Kevin or any of the guys, and I know everybody is comfortable. I think it's flowing because Kevin is shyer than Branford, so now you have what's good in any comedy team: one loud person [Leno] and one reserved person. With Branford, it was two loud guys. Plus, Kevin's a great musician. He fits right in.”

Asked if he leads the band differently than Marsalis, Eubanks said he thinks they both had the same objective: “To make the music keep the energy on the show positive.” As for leadership styles, Eubanks says, “A new leader gives the band a new personality, a new identity.”

Marsalis, in a phone interview, said he felt that Eubanks was a more “accepting”

“(Branford) asked me would I consider possibly taking over, and for a long time, I didn't because I'm a friend of his and I wasn't sure he really wanted to go, or should. But when I realized his feeling was that he had to go, I said, 'Sure.'”

kind of person than he was, which made him ideal for the position.

While Eubanks doesn't foresee traveling with the TV band, he would like the group to have a life beyond the show. “I want the band to be more like a group, do some gigs, maybe some benefits, say, for homeless children,” he said. “All the players have benefited from the exposure we've gotten on the show,

and that would be a nice way of giving something back. And I'd like to do some recordings, maybe on our own and with some of the guests that have been on the show, like Willie Nelson or Vince Gill, who ask to have the band accompany them."

The guitarist said that Marsalis broached the idea about his becoming the leader early in 1994. "He asked me would I consider possibly taking over, and for a long time, I didn't, because I'm a friend of his and I wasn't sure he really wanted to go, or should. But when I realized his feeling was that he had to go, I said, 'Sure.'"

Eubanks grew up in a teeming musical family. Besides Robin, his brother Duane plays trumpet, his mother has a doctorate in music and his uncle is piano ace Ray Bryant.

"Ray lived in New York, but when he came to Philly to play the Showboat [jazz club], he'd come over and rehearse with Betty Carter, Carmen McRae and others. I was four or five. [The renowned swing-era drummer] Papa Jo Jones would babysit for me and my brother. So musicians were coming in and out all the

**"I was tired of traveling,
I was tired of halfway
falling in love with
people you meet on the
road, I was tired of saying
hello and goodbye in the
same breath."**

time because our house was the place in Philly where there was a piano where they could rehearse."

Music was always in Eubank's blood. He picked up a guitar at about age 10, playing rock and funk, then gravitated toward jazz. After studying for four years at the Berklee College of Music, Eubanks headed to New York in 1979. From there he joined Art Blakey's big band for a European tour ("That gave me a lot of exposure"), played with Roy Haynes and started a long series of piano-guitar-bass trio gigs, first at a club called Spring Street, then later at Bradley's. It was in this format, he says,

that he honed his straightahead style and learned how to pace a jazz set.

"The money was good, so I could call any piano player I wanted," he says. "So I called James Williams, Ronnie Mathews, Kirk Lightsey, and they ran it, making out the lists of tunes. They were so cool with me. They saw how I was really trying to learn, and I'd watch how they put a set together."

In 1983, Eubanks made his recording debut with *Guitarist*, a modern mainstream album, for Elektra/Musician (now reissued on Discovery). A year later, he signed with GRP Records: There he started a string of successful jazz/fusion albums, some with a hard-edged stance like *Sundance*, others more accessible to a general listener, like *Shadow Prophets*.

While these albums ultimately established Eubanks as a recording artist who could sell in the 150,000-album range, they also branded him a strictly commercial artist in the eyes of many of his peers.

"It was tough to hear it from friends: 'You're selling out,'" he said. "Or have people review it who thought that because of the first record on Elektra/Musician, I was supposed to be the next

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Wes Montgomery, supposed to be a jazz player, an acoustic player and all that. I just didn't feel it was time to do that."

Eventually, Eubanks moved to rural Pennsylvania and started making some basic changes in his life. He pursued the more open musical direction heard on his three albums for Blue Note: 1990's *Turning Point* and the two subsequent *Spirit Talk* recordings. And he made a business shift, entering into a lease agreement with Blue Note, so that after a period of time, he would retain ownership of his albums.

In the period between 1989 and 1992, Eubanks toured with a small band that usually included bassist Dave Holland, his brother Robin and "Smitty" Smith. But after a while, he was getting fed up with the road, and the call from Marsalis provided the ideal solution.

"I was tired of traveling, I was tired of halfway falling in love with people you meet on the road, I was tired of saying hello and goodbye in the same breath," he says. "I had been on the road pretty much since I was 19, and I was like 34. So when Branford called me, it wasn't like it was someone I'd never worked with. The curiosity and the financial thing got the better of me."

Now Eubanks has an added impetus to set up jobs at places like *Visiones*, where he recorded live. The album will follow another live date, recorded last summer at Bradley's featuring Hurst and pianist Williams. It's due out on Blue Note in January. As Eubanks talks about what he's gotten from his life in music, he segues, perhaps to his surprise, to the idea of "selling out."

"I get in touch with a sense of being, things that daily society doesn't really require from me," he begins. "Deeper things, on spiritual, psychological and emotional levels. Art can elevate attitudes, elevate human daily life or how you feel and think about things.

"People are touched by the music we're playing at *Visiones*. They're around the block waiting for music they've never heard. We've never heard it. We're making up most of it. But there aren't many clubs to play it in, even in New York. So there's a whole lot of selling-out going on. And some of it is in so-called jazz, where you can't do anything unless it's 32 bars. Why isn't that a sellout? Why do you have to have a quintet setup in order to be a serious musician? What kind of sellout is that: not to be able to evolve, not to be open

and acceptable to different forms of music? There are a whole lot of ways of selling out." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Kevin Eubanks plays custom-made electric and acoustic guitars by Abe Rivera. He uses D'Addario strings, Mesa-Boogie amps and Mackie mixing boards.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

SPIRIT TALK 2: REVELATIONS—Blue Note 30132
SPIRIT TALK—Blue Note 89286
TURNING POINT—Blue Note 98170
PROMISE OF TOMORROW—GRP 9604
THE SEARCHER—GRP 9580
SHADOW PROPHETS—GRP 9565
FACE TO FACE—GRP 9539
OPENING NIGHT—GRP 9520
GUITARIST—Discovery 71006

with World Trio

WORLD TRIO—Intuition 2152 (Dave Holland, Mino Cinelu)

with various others

LIVE AT MONTREUX AND NORTH SEA—Timeless 150 (Art Blakey)
EXTENSIONS—ECM 21410 (Dave Holland)
FROM KIRK TO NAT—Criss Cross 1050 (Kirk Lightsey)
ROUND TRIP—Reservoir 104 (Ralph Moore)
SKYWAY—Soul Note 121269 (Adam Rudolph)
PROGRESS REPORT—Sunnyside 1012 (James Williams)



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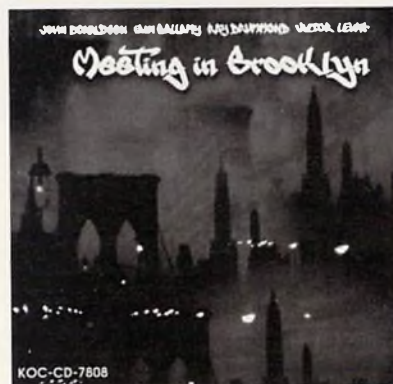
OWEN HOWARD, *drums w. Chris Potter, saxes; Phil Grenadier, trumpet; Brad Schoep-pach, guitar; Larry Grenadier, drums.*

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Owen Howard is a dynamic and powerful drummer and an exceptional composer. He was born in Edmonton, Alberta (in Canada) but now makes his home in Brooklyn. He has worked with John Abercrombie, Tom Harrell, Michael Formanek and many others. For his recording debut as a leader, he has gathered some of his favorite innovative musicians to play four of the drummer's very original originals and *Introspection*, by Thelonious Monk.



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JOHN DONALDSON, *piano w. Iain Ballamy, saxes; Ray Drummond, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.*

MEETING IN BROOKLYN

On their way from England to perform at the 1993 Monterey Jazz Festival, John Donaldson and Iain Ballamy stopped in New York where they recorded this intriguing record with two of the world's most in-demand rhythm players—Ray Drummond and Victor Lewis. Donaldson lived on the West coast in the '80s and worked with John Handy and Richie Cole. Ballamy played with Bill Bruford's *Earthworks*. This meeting includes tunes by the leaders plus a beautiful take on *Scarborough Fair*.

Mark Isham *Miles, movies*



"This is not intended to be a tribute."

by Phil Gallo

Film scores have taken trumpeter Mark Isham to practically every magical time period in 20th-century jazz. Sophisticated sounds of the '20s and the '30s filled his scores for *The Moderns* and *Mrs. Parker And The Vicious Circle*; the tale of a news photographer, *The Public Eye*, was told against 1940s big band music; Robert Redford's *Quiz Show* opened the door for faux-Basie standards; and *Romeo Is Bleeding* allowed him to dive into contemporary improvisational music.

If it seems like Isham skipped a step—small groups of the '50s and '60s—it wasn't because he wasn't thinking about them. Those sounds he's been savoring and keeping for himself, only recently

using them as an impetus to produce his first bonafide jazz album, *Blue Sun*, for Columbia.

"In terms of the actual writing and concept for the album, I wanted to make a quintet record that was very much a jazz record. But in looking for a direction and an idea," says Isham, who has released solo works on Windham Hill, ECM and Virgin, "I was looking for a strong jazz album I could use as a model, and *Kind Of Blue* was one of the ones that just stood out."

Commenting further on the legendary 1959 Miles Davis sextet recording, Isham says, "I tried to pick out the qualities of that music—there's a simplicity and a directness and a coolness. Nothing went very far afield from a certain emotional quality in that album. The writing was compact and concise, and the playing followed suit. And I don't know whether they

intellectually decided this that day, but it wound up being very high-concept. That's one reason it stands out as a single great work of art. And I tried to emulate that."

Not that *Blue Sun* is any sort of tribute album. If anything, there's very little to recall Miles, in terms of tone, save for a few runs on the disc's final track, "Tour De Chance." Instead, it's a free-flowing and friendly set of originals with two standards—"In A Sentimental Mood" and "Lazy Afternoon." And yet, among Isham's originals is a tune titled "And Miles To Go...Before He Sleeps." "This is me being influenced as I have been all my life by his music and his style," he notes. "This is not intended to be a tribute. It's more a reflection on the man who changed the face of music more than once. This is my personal musing on him."

Isham and his working band of the last

& the muse

4½ years—pianist David Goldblatt, tenor saxophonist Steve Tavaglione, electric bassist Doug Lunn and drummer Kurt Wortman—recorded about 100 minutes of music for the album, ranging from very cool to upbeat and rhythmic. (The September release of *Blue Sun* is being followed by an October-through-December national tour of his acoustic quintet.)

Compositionally, the music is sparse, an ideal antidote to the exact music Isham has composed for the bulk of the 36 films he's scored. Much of it was composed on the trumpet against a looped rhythm or chord progression.

publishes a quarterly newsletter about his activities. "That means you expand. You expand the style of music you feel comfortable with, the types of films and directors. Now I find there's not a genre I wouldn't take a shot at. I have expanded my vocabulary and my confidence in this job. I never studied film scoring. I had to learn on the job."

That determination has meant Isham has had to create his own jazz opportunities, writing jazz bits for films, including the upcoming Jodie Foster movie *Home For The Holidays*, in which he and the band emulate Modern

has played only in Los Angeles.

"The first jazz record I started to emulate was *Miles In The Sky*," says Isham, referring to the '68 quintet recording that included Davis' first real foray into electronics, with Herbie Hancock on Fender Rhodes. "So I missed learning bebop. When I discovered jazz, *Silent Way* was the innovative sound—it was changing in front of your eyes. That was the first music I would play in the garage with the guys. I also think it's an area of music that's been lost in all this looking backwards at jazz."

A recent *Silent Way* Project gig

It's more a reflection on the man who changed the face of music more than once."

—Mark Isham, commenting on Miles Davis, the inspiration for *Blue Sun*

Isham, 44, made his debut in 1983 in two formats: film and electronic music. He scored the semi-surreal nature film *Never Cry Wolf* and Windham Hill released his *Vapor Drawings* disc. In the years since, Isham's solo-recording side has emphasized pop, semi-classical and electronics with jazz working as an undercurrent: his film scores have garnered the most notice and acclaim when he has worked in traditional formats. It was 1992's *A River Runs Through It* that became the breakthrough effort, the one that critics hailed, making others look back on his impressive body of work. It also received Oscar and Grammy nominations.

But getting the *River* assignment was not that easy, as his agent ran up against an assumption that Isham was limited to synthesizer, rather than orchestral, scores. No one wanted to take a chance until actor/director Robert Redford found himself in a crunch—he didn't like the scores he had and the release date was three weeks away.

"It was one of those things where I knew immediately—within a couple of reels—what I would do for this picture. And I knew it would be the most traditional thing I had ever done—chamber orchestra performing as close as I could write to a Celtic suite. And because it was the most traditional thing I had ever written, it changed perceptions of me."

Which has led to Isham's name being placed on the A-list, available for and capable of doing any genre.

"Now I've been doing this for 13 years, and somewhere in there I made a decision that this is a career I'm going to become successful at," says Isham, who

Jazz Quartet recordings of the 1950s. "It's a real chance to experience the great styles of jazz and take it to the final level: recording," he says, reflecting on the Neal Hefti bits he did for *Quiz Show*. "It's great to force myself to think like Chet Baker for a day and a half."

Just as Isham has identified areas for recording, he has also made live performance a priority as well. Not the standard Blue Note fare, not the real-book standards, not even the modern music he has become associated with. It's Miles' music—the stuff he and members of his generation grew up with but nobody plays today.

The *Silent Way* Project of Isham's trumpet, two guitars and a rhythm section plays out-from-the-get-go, electronic music with its roots in Davis' late '60s electric masterpieces *In A Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*. So far, the band

provided Isham with new insights into the music and its audience when a group of 20 people—all between their mid-40s and mid-60s, and all black—came to see the band.

"I was hearing comments all night like, 'I haven't heard music like this in years.' This was my father's generation sitting out there, but my father didn't know about these records. It was really interesting because the black audience really followed Miles right into this avant-garde period and made those records hits. Very cool.

"I definitely had the wrong perception of those albums, because, to me, they sort of vanished. I never heard anybody talk about them. I just did this band because I love that music so much," he says, suddenly tapping into what drives him in so many areas: "I wanted to re-experience it."

DB

EQUIPMENT

Mark Isham's main trumpet is a Martin Committee model from the 1940s that he has had rebuilt several times. He uses a Monel B 15 mouthpiece. "To me, it's a jazz trumpet—it has a more complex sound, it's not as pure," he says, noting he has used the Martin on all his recordings. "I would never play it in a classical setting." He also has an older Martin from the '30s, which he used five years ago while his main horn was being rebuilt.

His flugelhorn of choice is a Yamaha 731 with a Bach 1C mouthpiece.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

BLUE SUN—Columbia 67227
MARK ISHAM—Virgin 21S86131
TIBET—Windham Hill 1080
CASTALIA—Virgin 21Y86050
FILM MUSIC OF—Windham Hill 1041
VAPOR DRAWINGS—Windham Hill 1027

film scores

QUIZ SHOW—Hollywood 616042
ROMEO IS BLEEDING—Verve 314 521 231
A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT—Milan America 13835
COOL WORLD—Varese Sarabande 5374
THE MODERNS—Virgin 21Z86059

with various others

WE BEGIN—ECM 21338 (Art Lande)
A CAREER IN DADA PROCESSING—One Way 1217675 (Group 87)
BEAUTIFUL VISION—Warner Bros. 3652 (Van Morrison)
COMMON ONE—Warner Bros. 26399 (Van Morrison)
CHARMING SNAKES—Private Music 2069 (Andy Summers)
CLOUDS ABOUT MERCURY—ECM 21284 (David Torn)
SECRETS OF THE BEEHIVE—Virgin 21Y86028 (David Sylvian)



MARTIN GLEASON COLLECTION

Erroll Garner: The Next Jelly Roll

By Ralph J. Gleason

The following "Classic Interview" with Erroll Garner is reprinted from our August 8, 1956 issue, just one year before he won top piano honors in both the *Down Beat Readers and Critics* polls.

In his declining years, Jelly Roll Morton, the granddaddy of jazz piano players, used to complain that he couldn't find any youngsters who really played the piano.

He never heard Erroll Louis Garner, the elfin pianist from Pittsburgh, whose cascading chords, lilting rhythm, romantic melodies and all-out freewheeling swing

have made him one of the major influences on jazz pianists in the past decade.

Garner is the personification of Morton's idea of a pianist. In case that sounds odd to you, consider Morton's two basic rules for playing the piano:

(1) "Always keep the melody going some kind of a way." Garner is undoubtedly one of the most melodic of modern pianists, and he himself says, "I don't play nothing you can't hear the melody in."

(2) "There's no jazz piano player can ever really play jazz unless he tried to get the imitation of a band." Garner says,

"There's those 88 keys! The guy who made it must have had *something* in mind. I've always felt a piano was to be as full as possible. If I had 13 fingers I'd be trying more. Always trying to get a band sound... that's what I'm still working for."

And the parallel between Morton and Garner extends further than an agreement on those basic premises. Both men were originals with an individual, highly personal sound that was instantly recognizable and just as instantly impressive.

It would be hard to pick out 10 jazz pianists today in whose work Garner would not be justified in calling attention to his own influence.

But the most important thing about Garner is that in a jazz era where, almost without exception, musicians are desperately trying to prove something in deadly seriousness, he has proved with ease that jazz is a way of playing music that can be pleasing to the general public. "I can play 'Mairzy Doats' and make you like it," he has said, and all you have to do is watch an audience when Erroll is playing to realize how true this is.

"If I'm not jazz, what am I?" Erroll replies to those critics who feel he is not of the mainstream of the music. "Some people have the idea that there's no such thing as pretty jazz. But there is." And here, we are reminded of another quotation from Morton: "Jazz music is to be played sweet, soft, plenty rhythm; when you have your plenty rhythm with a plenty swing it becomes beautiful." (Ever hear a better description of Garner?)

"I know one thing I can really do," Erroll says with the confidence of certain knowledge. "I can swing! Whatever I play, whatever tempo, you can pat your foot to it. I'm not [Art] Tatum and I'm not Bud Powell, I'm just playing something that appeals to my ear and I hope to the public's, too. Years ago, some of the guys would say to me, 'Why don't you change your style, pick up on bop with all your stuff, it would be crazy.' But I couldn't do that. I feel what I'm playing. Now I see elderly people and kids and all types coming into the club and getting pleasure from my music, and I'm glad I didn't do it any other way."

It is one of the inescapable facts of modern jazz that Garner is one of the most widely heard pianists we have. His records have sold thousands. And the odd part about it is that even his early recordings, done before high fidelity and even badly recorded for those times, still sell and still sound enough like legal-tender Garner to be pleasing after more than a decade.

One of the most amazing aspects of Garner's story is the fact that he cannot read music. He actually can't. But his

inability to read has little to do with the development of his style, Erroll says.

"It has allowed me to expand more, given me a chance to be freer, to be influenced by no pattern but my own. You see, when I couldn't play with a rhythm section because I couldn't read, I had to have my own drums and bass in my left hand. I didn't care—I knew they would go my way then, and no split decisions! In that sense it helped develop my style. But more people *still* insist I can read. 'Don't pull that on me, Erroll,' they say. 'You got to be able to read,' you know what I mean?"

"But I don't want it to change and learn to read. I found it that way—I was born with it, and I've gone too far now to learn to read and I don't want to anyway. I want to get bigger, fuller all the time. I'm still developing my style."

And all over the world, in the many lands where jazz has now taken root, and where there is always an Erroll Garner pianist, you now have warning that this man, one of the greatest talents in the history of jazz, one of its warmest personalities and one of its most influential stylists, is still working, still developing, still growing as a musician.

"I just want to develop what the good Lord gave me," Erroll says. It's a most admirable ambition.

DB

Garner's 'legendary trunk' overflows

There's a lot of current activity surrounding Erroll Garner even though the pianist departed this earth in 1977. Most recently, he's joined the ranks of nine other legendary jazz musicians and Elvis as his image graces a U.S. postage stamp (see "Riffs" June '95).

Just last year, Telarc International launched its six-CD series of 12 Garner albums recorded by his own label, Octave Records, circa 1959-1973. The series to date includes *That's My Kick & Gemini* (Telarchive 83332), recorded in 1967 and 1972, respectively; *Magician/Gershwin And Kern* (Telarchive 83337), the former from 1973 and the latter culled from sessions recorded in 1964, 1965 and 1968; and *Dreamstreet/One World Concert* (Telarchive 83350), recorded in 1959/1963 and scheduled for re-release this month. Future pairings from the Octave library include *Up In Erroll's Room/Now Playing: A Night At The Movies* (1968/1965), *Closeup/Campus Concert* (1961/1966) and

Feeling Is Believing/New Kind Of Love (1970/1963).

Garner recorded prolifically during his career. The Verve Group has released a plethora of previously unissued Garner material and has reissued albums on the Mercury and EmArcy labels, including *The Original Misty* (Mercury 834910). Other classic Garner albums in print include *Concert By The Sea* (Columbia 40589) and *Penthouse Serenade* (Savoy 0162).

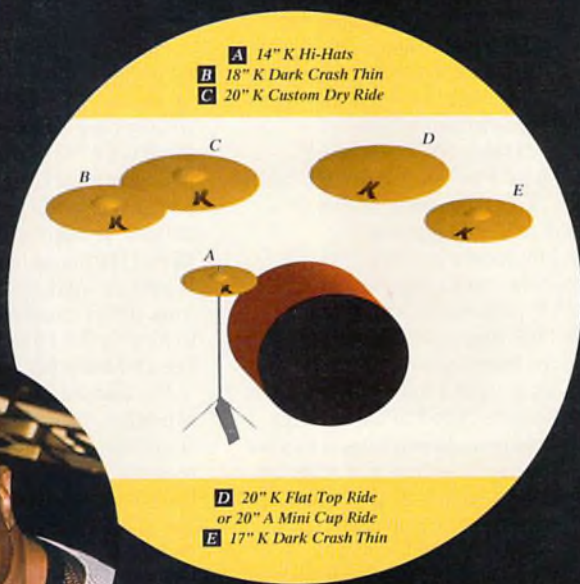
Cherry Lane Music Co. has published three songbooks of Garner's works, and a half-hour video of Garner recorded in Paris is available in the U.S. on Toshiba laserdisc.

Expect more Garner material in the future—previously unreleased albums, reissues and print folios. "The tributes continue, the posthumous honors continue and the legendary trunk is still overflowing," says Martha Glaser, Garner's former manager and producer of the Telarc series. "I can't tell you how much recorded material has yet to be released." —ed.

Set yourself up like Roy Haynes

(Jazz Legend)

Zildjian



Basie Legend Moves On

By the time you read this, a good part of the jazz world will have descended upon Aaron Davis Hall at 135th Street and Convent in Harlem Oct. 2 to honor Frank Foster's 50-year career in music. The list of guests, Ernestine Anderson, Jon Faddis, Lionel Hampton, Hank Jones, Al Grey, Branford Marsalis, Max Roach and, of course, Joe Williams and the Count Basie Orchestra, organized with the help of George Wein, has left the honoree "flabbergasted." It will be his first "reunion" with the family that has defined much of his career.

Last July, after nine years of foster-parenting the Count Basie Orchestra through much of its post-Basie era, the tenor saxophonist took his leave. He left that most persistent institution not only intact, healthy and vigorous, but working 40-plus weeks a year in everything from high school auditoriums with student bands to stadiums and theaters with Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett.

But Foster was tired. "Milwaukee... Atlanta... Minneapolis," he moans. "Sometimes three flights a day. My biggest complaint was travel. Airports are getting out of control with security. Nightmares!"

Foster also felt a bit caged. The Basie book is a 50-year accumulation of pieces that must be played almost nightly—some pieces by Foster himself: "Blues Backstage," "Down For The Count," "Blues In Hoss' Flat" and, above all, "Shiny Stockings." To tamper with such a franchise is to live dangerously.

"When I took over in 1986, I immediately began writing new music," he says. "My philosophy was, write no music the Old Man wouldn't have liked. But when my creative juices started flowing, a lot of what I was doing was not typical Basie fare. I tried to balance the programs between old and new, partly for myself and partly to feature and stimulate some of the great young guys we had. But a lot of folks began to complain.

"When I added electric guitarist Charlton Johnson, I had to soothe suspicious fans by explaining that Basie himself recorded with electric guitarists Eddie Durham and Charlie Christian in the '30s. Then it was alright."

So that, plus a wish to be with his family, to be back on the New York scene and to run his publishing business from something other than a laptop on a bus



BY ANDREW LEPEY

Frank Foster

were reasons enough to end a Basie association that went back to 1953, when he joined the band at age 25.

But Foster has not retired to his copyrights. ("I have about 50 compositions on record," he notes. "But when I get a royalty check, about half of it is for 'Shiny Stockings.'") He intends to record and to play quartet and quintet dates, some with Frank Wess, his former Basie reed partner. In September, Foster fronted the Lionel Hampton band at a Kennedy Center Hampton salute as the leader watched from the presidential box. Then he was off to Florida for a guest appearance with the Les DeMerle band.

His own longtime band, the Loud Minority, "is in a state of suspended animation now," says Foster, who has recently been guest-conducting the Swing Daddies, a young band assembled by singer Tess Marsalis, ex-wife of Branford. "It helps me keep my finger on the pulse of New York's younger players," he says. "Many are very interested in their roots and will jump at a chance to play charts from the '30s, '40s or '50s. They want to play anything that's good, and that's who I'm looking for."

"I intend someday to organize a saxophone ensemble," says Foster, whose buoyant soli work can be heard on his

chart of "In A Mellow Tone" (*Basie: On The Road*, Pablo 2312-112), among others. The flare betrays Foster's fundamental influences, Ellington ("Cotton Tail" blew me away in 1940"), Basie and the Lunceford/Sy Oliver/Tommy Dorsey continuum. "I liked Ben Webster over Coleman Hawkins in those days," he recalls. "Lester Young I had to develop a taste for. I liked Buddy Tate and I loved Don Byas. Later on, of course, Dexter and Sonny [Rollins] and Trane."

As one of a diminishing number of still-active players from the middle years in the Basie history, there will no doubt be more reunions. When it happens, the always-growing Foster will be ready. Although he describes the racial stereotypes of gangsta rap as a "blacklash," he sees value in the rap form and doesn't laugh off the rap-jazz fusion. "Even I see the quality of a clean and clever rap artist," he says, "which is why I'm writing something called 'The Basie Rap Jam,' a history of the band from 1935 on. It uses the rap rhythm but without the heavy funk background. Instead, it uses a soft, Jo Jones cymbal beat. I like it and would love to see a good rapper do it with the band."

The only thing Foster's rap history of the Basie band will not have, it would seem, is an ending. —John McDonough

Enlightened Funk Sensibility

It's nothing fancy, nothing complicated at all. "It's all about getting a good feeling, just getting a groove going and taking it from there," Cornell Dupree explains.

Dupree's trademark guitar tone, a slyly sophisticated jazz sound with just the right amount of soulful grease still

New York City, have focused on the material from *Bob 'N' Blues*. But Dupree has also kept his roots well-nourished with funkier performances, such as his blues-drenched date at Antone's in Austin. Dupree's jazz/blues dichotomy may confuse a few fans and critics, but the guitarist suffers no identity crisis.



Cornell Dupree

sticking to the licks, has generated grooves galore in the years he's been spicing up recordings. Best known in his session-superstar persona as a first-call guitarist, Dupree has been a pleasantly pervasive presence in the world of pop, as artists ranging from Aretha Franklin and Mariah Carey to Brook Benton and Robert Palmer can testify.

But Dupree, 52, has finally emerged from the session shadows as he's put his enlightened funk phrasings in the service of his own sound. His recent album *Bob 'N' Blues* (Kokopelli 1302) is an adventurous foray into the classic bebop repertoire, filtered through funky Texas roadhouse blues sensibilities.

Dupree admits to being more comfortable with the body-shaking rhythms of r&b than with the cerebral pleasures of the more experimental forms of jazz. He also thinks a lot of fans secretly agree with him. "A lot of jazz flies right over the heads of fans," Dupree says. "If you don't know anything about music theory, all the cleverness everyone is so proud of just sounds like noise. I never want to play that way no matter how great the material is supposed to be."

Dupree's recent live shows, like his sold-out jazz gig at the Bottom Line in

"I consider myself basically an r&b guitarist, and I'm not ashamed of that at all," Dupree proclaims. "What I play gets people moving. It puts a smile on their face and gets those toes tapping. I'm proud I can do that, and that's my major goal no matter what the material I'm playing might be."

Despite his always in-demand guitar work, Dupree remains based deep in the heart of Texas, working out of his native Fort Worth, a city he'll remind you is also the birthplace of King Curtis and Ornette Coleman. He doesn't feel like he's out of the music-business loop in the least. "There are plenty of studios here and plenty of great players," Dupree says. As for sessions on the coasts, Dupree simply replies, "That's why they invented airports."

Dupree will undoubtedly be using the Dallas-Ft. Worth airport quite a bit in the future as he undertakes his chosen musical mission. "I like to call what I play 'intelligent funk' music," he says. "I think that's what is missing from the music scene right now, so I'm going to do my best to get it back in front of people. It might be in jazz tunes or it might be behind singers or who knows what, but it'll always be me." —Michael Point

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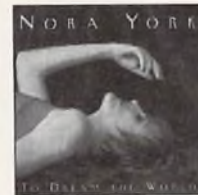
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No Man's Band

Bassist Melissa Slocum describes the jazz field as "one of the last bastions of male chauvinism in music." And she and the 14 other women who make up the big band Diva are intent on tearing down that final barrier.

Diva deserves, at the very least, the sort of professional respect men get by merely

showing up. But the group, also known as No Man's Band, has had to prove its ability repeatedly because of regressive

Diva

attitudes regarding women in jazz.

Diva founder Stanley Kay, veteran manager and onetime backup drummer for Buddy Rich, refused to be intimidated. Originally impressed by the playing of drummer Sherrie Maricle at an East Coast benefit gig, he wondered, "Are there other women of this caliber around?" He quickly found his answer. More than 40 women from all over the country—many former members of bands led by the likes of Woody Herman, Toshiko Akiyoshi and Thad Jones/Mel Lewis—showed up for auditions Kay held in New York in the summer of 1992. After three days, he saw the possibilities for an all-female jazz orchestra and decided to manage it and present it to the public.

"Their talent got to me. That's what it's all about—not novelty or gimmickry or having a commercial edge," Kay explains. "They're women—so what?! My interest is getting them what they deserve: the credit for what they are as musicians."

In '93, the band opened for the first time at New York's Tavern On The Green. Negative stereotypes concerning women's jazz chops were thrust aside.

Diva has continued to deliver its brand of uplifting, straight-ahead swing, striking a balance between challenging, inventive harmonies and time-tested, listener-friendly melodicism. The band plays from a diverse library of standards and original charts (arranged by bandmembers, musical director John LaBarbera, and such well-known composers as Mike Abene and Tommy Newsome), many of which they recorded this year on their first album, *Something's Coming* (Perfect Sound 1216).

Top-notch bookings and billings with big names like Joe Williams and Ray Brown continue to boost Diva's viability in the marketplace. The group has even appeared on CBS-TV's *Sunday Morning*. In November, they've booked a week at Chicago's Jazz Showcase (11/21-11/26).

Diva's rising popularity also indicates a growing interest in female jazz instrumentalists in general. "The high standards we must live up to and the pressure we must face as women can only make us better," says altoist Sue Terry. "Pressure—that's the way they make diamonds."
—Burt Korall



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Kahil El'Zabar

Liberating Limits

After listening to Kahil El'Zabar's forceful percussive declarations, it comes as a surprise to hear him call himself "a limited artist." This description then takes a spiritual turn when he adds, "I think through my limitations I've found some pretty infinite possibilities."

From his earliest endeavors through his recent disc with the Ritual Trio, the wildly rhythmic *Big Cliff* (Delmark 477—see p. 70), the 42-year-old El'Zabar established Chicago as a base for his global musical investigations. After playing traps as a teenager in the 1960s, he began an ongoing study of African hand-drumming. El'Zabar also became versed in African thumb pianos, such as the mbira, which he plays with a distinctive, quiet spaciousness.

"Every instrument has unique techniques, and the instruments have unique spirits," El'Zabar says. "With the thumb pianos, there's a certain serenity about the nature of the instrument. I've been able to create some intense kinds of tone qualities from them. With hand-drumming, it's very vocal, just like a wind instrument."

As a bandleader, El'Zabar frequently draws on various folk idioms for his reliable teams of instrumental virtuosos, many of whom hail from Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM). He creates challenging directions for these improvisers through compositions based on deceptively elementary blues, funk and gospel. Longtime collaborators include multi-reedists Ed Wilkerson and Ari Brown. And while a range of drummers have influenced El'Zabar—from Cuban bopper Chano Pozo to Air co-founder Steve McCall—he has an

affinity for Ritual Trio bassist Malachi Favors Maghostut. "There's a certain kind of sonority, consistency and pulse that Malachi Favors gets with the bass," says El'Zabar. "That is something that I attempt with African drums."

This summer, El'Zabar recorded a forthcoming disc for Silkheart with the Ethnic Heritage Ensemble, which includes Wilkerson and outcat trombonist Joe Bowie. He also plans to record in December with a quartet and continues his genre remixings with

Afrocentrix, a jazz/hip-hop combination that augments his African percussion with a rapper, keyboardist and deejay. "There's no one within 10 years of my age in that band," he observes.

Now that he's become a mentor to younger players, El'Zabar offers direct advice to other percussionists. "You should not be afraid to express your ideas, you should pioneer the ability to conceptualize your form and you should know in your heart that if you do it with integrity, it has a place." —Aaron Cohen

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Mingus Big Band

Gunslinging Birds
Dreyfus Jazz 36575

★★★★

Bold and brawny, the Mingus Big Band roars in ways that would please its late namesake, composer and inspiration—the bassist whose necessary absence, with that of drummer Dannie Richmond, are the ensemble's only real regrets.

Too-seldom-acclaimed keyboardist Kenny Drew Jr. is the rhythm-section star in this 15-man orchestra, rather than the keystone bass-drum combination behind the original Mingus band. Mingus and Richmond simply left giant shoes to stand in, impossible ones to fill. Bassist Andy McKee and drummer Adam Cruz do nothing wrong: it's just that rhythmic lift and propulsion rather than striking originality and the ability to make things change from underneath—now!—are what the circumstances dictate, and what these two deliver.

Drew is also among the heaviest soloists in this edition of the big band—he has many surprises up his sleeves and makes each gesture twist and turn with apparent ease. Same with full-bore trombonist Ku-Umba Frank Lacy and tenor saxist John Stubblefield, who dispenses his seasoned wisdom in surging, vocal-like choruses. These players have something to say. Mingus would approve.

Recorded in France at the end of a European tour, *Gunslinging Birds* also features the prepossessing skills of tenorists Craig Handy and Chris Potter, baritonist Gary Smulyan and trumpeters Randy Brecker and Philip Harper. Altoist Steve Slagle is fleet and flexible—really riled up on “Faubus” and credible evoking Eric Dolphy’s solo from an earlier “Celia.”

Slagle effectively arranged the bulk of a book so the strong sections blend their iridescent colors with precise timing. Overall, the recorded sound is less up-close, textured and tense—more glossy—than the Baron achieved on his similarly constituted *Impulse!* albums, and admirably clearer than his grand but murky *Let My Children Hear Music*.

“Please Don’t Come Back From The Moon” and “Noon Night,” drawn from *Epitaph*, are arranged by Gunther Schuller to emphasize their composer’s darkness and his love of

Ellingtonian sonority; “Started Melody”—also from *Epitaph*—as arranged by Ronnie Cuber, expands on Mingus’ Latin jazz affinities. The title track, “Lovebird,” “O.P.,” “Jump Monk” and Jack Walrath’s lowdown “Hog Callin’ Blues” are all fast and hard, brightly detailed, city-smart and bluesy.

Having seen this band at its Manhattan homestead, I can attest their record is further proof that Mingus’ sound is indomitable. Over time, his music has not lost an iota—instead, it’s gained hefty measures—of relevance and resonance, wit and grit. —Howard Mandel

Gunslinging Birds—*Gunslinging Bird*; *Reincarnation Of A Lovebird*; *O.P. (Oscar Peterson)*; *Please Don’t Come Back From The Moon (Pinky)*; *Fables Of Faubus*; *Jump Monk*; *Noon Night/Celia Medley*; *Hog Callin’ Blues*; *Started Melody*. (71:11)

Personnel—Randy Brecker, Philip Harper, Ryan Kisor, trumpet; Jamal Haynes, Earl McIntyre, Ku-Umba Frank Lacy, trombone; Gary Smulyan, baritone saxophone; Craig Handy, John Stubblefield, Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; David Lee Jones, Steve Slagle, alto saxophone; Kenny Drew Jr., piano; Andy McKee, bass; Adam Cruz, drums.



Anthony Braxton

Charlie Parker Project 1993
hat ART 2-6160

★★★★

With this Bird tribute, Braxton continues a little tradition that started with *In The Standards* (both volumes) and continued with his tributes to Monk (*Six Monk’s Compositions 1/1987*) and Lennie Tristano and Warne Marsh (*Eight 1+3/1 Tristano Compositions, 1989: For Warne Marsh*). A two-disc, live/studio set, Braxton & co. often make mischief of Bird without sounding flippant, playing it crooked as well as “straight.”

Predictably, the form of bebop—playing the changes; straightahead, generally uptempo grooves; and chops, chops, chops—does not dictate Braxton’s reading of Bird. Rather, implications of bop as well as Bird’s musicality are explored. An almost-ambient “Scrapple From The Apple,” for example, invites one to listen for any connection to the well-known bop anthem as Braxton’s contrabass clarinet gently winds its way in and around pianist Misha Mengelberg’s equally gentle chords, the duo using the “Scrapple” theme as a peri-

odic reference point. Likewise, Miles Davis’ “Sippin’ At Bells,” also played ever so delicately, features Paul Smoker’s ethereal muted trumpet shadowed by Braxton’s contrabass clarinet with bassist Joe Fonda’s edgy arco mungings surrounding them both.

“Koko,” on the other hand, is given a relatively straight reading, played at a typically uptempo pace with everybody getting into the act, blowing against the changes. A tad less conventional than “Koko,” but more the setting for chops, is the 19½-minute swinger “An Oscar For Treadwell.” “Oscar” serves as an occasion for some serious inside-outside soloing all around: Ari Brown’s impassioned tenor work (recalling a younger Archie Shepp), Smoker’s parched and fiery meditations, drummer Han Bennink (heard only on the live set) swinging his ass off on brushes and sticks, Mengelberg’s tantalizing fence-dancing (complete with tuneful single lines and banging chords) and, of course, Braxton stopping and starting everybody, getting Bennink to do a little hand-drumming, and giving us a little raucous funk and blues expression, this time on alto. In all, a kind of bent bop, but bop nonetheless.

As for the band’s two versions of Dizzy’s “A Night In Tunisia,” no sooner does that familiar head traipse its way into your ears than the sextet heads out to de/recompose the tempo and theme, Braxton (on soprano and/or contrabass clarinet) and Brown (tenor and/or soprano) joining Smoker in a simultaneous exploration of the song’s key tonal centers in an unmetered middle section. Yet another approach is taken on Bird’s “Passport.” Here, the swing feel of bop is maintained as are the chord changes, but this medium-tempo rendition chooses to stay closer to the melody and not just to passing chords. With its light, arid feel and bent pitch, Braxton’s playing on “Passport” alludes as much to Warne Marsh as it does to Parker.

While the music may drag or wander at times, with improvising that lacks the potency of a Parker solo, and the band may sound as if they’re straining to hit notes with a swing feel that suggests everybody’s attached to a bungee cord (expanding and contracting depending on the band’s exertion level), the spirit of Bird is here. The absence of a macho bravado, chops-flexing and overly clever quotes that’ve made postmodern bebop a cliché to many raises the question: must an authentic Bird tribute adhere strictly to the form of bebop? Braxton’s unorthodox salute to the alto legend answers with a hearty “no” vote. In this 75th-anniversary year of Parker’s birth, a recreation of his music is the *last* thing we need. In Braxton’s hands, thankfully, Charlie Parker’s music is birdseed in the best sense: namely, source material for further birdflights into uncharted skies. After all, Bird’s music was meant to be messed with. —John Ephland

Charlie Parker Project 1993—*Hot House*; *A Night In Tunisia*; *Dewey Square*; *Klactoveesedstene*; *An Oscar For Treadwell*; *Bebop*; *Bongo Bop*; *Yardbird Suite*; *A Night In Tunisia*; *Passport*; *Klactoveesedstene*; *Scrapple From The Apple*; *Mohawk*; *Sippin’ At Bells*; *Koko*. (65:00/65:13)

Personnel—Braxton, alto saxophone, soprano, contra-bass clarinet; Ari Brown, tenor and soprano saxophones, flute; Paul Smoker, trumpet, flugelhorn; Misha Mengelberg, piano; Joe Fonda, bass; Han Bennink (1-5), Pheeroan AkLaff (6-15), drums.



Milt Jackson

Burnin' In The Woodhouse Qwest 45918

★★★½

Just an impression, but am I seeing more passing-the-torch sessions these days? In this attractive CD, legend Papa Milt Jackson, 72, pairs with an elegant little band from a fresh generation of players not yet enshrined. What we get is a May-December musical romance in which youth and experience find comfort in one another on common 12- and 32-bar ground.

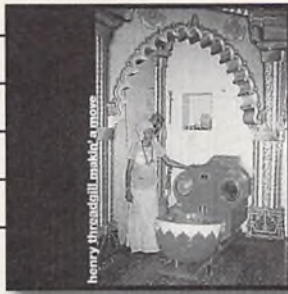
Producers Sandra and Chyrise Jackson have brought in trumpeter Nicholas Payton and saxophonists Jesse Davis and Joshua Redman to join the Jackson Quartet on two blues and one song. The music is loose and warm, especially Davis' alto, with businesslike bookend ensembles and volumes of well-studied solos in between. "Bop Ag'in" flows with an easy, contented swing in which one can hear how these players have subtly resolved the tensions between the music that is their model and the music they came of age in.

The other five tracks are straight-down-the-middle quartet gems marked by Jackson's cool attack and elegant turns of phrase on ballads such as "The Masquerade Is Over." There are brief contrasts in time signatures and a stop-time theme on his own "In The Woodhouse." But Jackson seems forever impatient to swing and tends to brush aside such artifice with a break as soon as the proportions of form permit. Benny Green accompanies with a quick ear and confident solo turns.

—John McDonough

Burnin' In The Woodhouse—Bop Ag'in; The Masquerade Is Over; They Can't Take That Away From Me; Brother K; A Bell For Bags; It Only Happens Once; In The Woodhouse; Soulmates. (55:34)

Personnel—Jackson, vibraharp; Nicholas Payton, trumpet (1, 5, 8); Jesse Davis, alto saxophone (1, 5, 8); Joshua Redman, tenor saxophone (1, 5, 8); Benny Green, acoustic piano; Christian McBride, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.



Henry Threadgill

Makin' A Move Columbia 67214

★★★½

On *Makin' A Move*, Henry Threadgill's second outing for Columbia, the composer and altoman offsets a batch of tracks by his funky working band Very Very Circus with chamberesque pieces featuring cellos, acoustic guitars and piano.

Threadgill has long had a penchant for hodgepodge lineups and exotic instrumentation—listen back to his 1979 Arista date *X-75, Volume 1*, which featured a huge range of wind colors and four bassists. *Makin' A Move* starts out with a startlingly vivid expression of timbre called "Noisy Flowers." The unusual instrumentation here is the same as "Over The River Club" on *Song Out Of My Trees* (1994, Black Saint): Myra Melford's beautiful piano lurks behind the brittle textures of an acoustic guitar quartet, with Ayodele Aubert and Brandon Ross on nylon strings (the latter on soprano guitar) and Ed Cherry and String Trio of New York's James Emery on steel strings (ditto). Sharp harmonics and flamencoid ornamentation gradually solidify into a dramatic proces-

sion of chords, with portentous, typically Threadgillian bass figures by Melford.

"Refined Poverty" finds the composer threading his alto saxophone between the lines of three cellos, one manned by Threadgill Sextett-alum Diedre Murray. Like other parts of the record—most notably, the horns on the cuts with VVC—this track suffers from a terrible mix, though the basic material is compelling. "The Mockingbird Sin" combines the guitars and cellos in a composition that unfolds in sections, through a hard, metronomic guitar jamboree into a more placid, late-romantic chromatic blues.

The addition of Pheeroan AkLaff to VVC makes its deliberately weird drums and two-tubas rhythm section (Threadgill sure does love his bottom end!) into a devastating machine. No disrespect to former drummer Gene Lake, but AkLaff is one of the most versatile stickslingers around, and he's an absolutely killer off-kilter funksketeeer. Threadgill's compositions and arrangements are, as always, fantastic—playful, droll, ingenious, surprising. But my problem with VVC is that, while I love the tunes, I don't think they really work as blowing vehicles, which is unfortunately what they become. For example, listen to the uninteresting solos of Ed Cherry and Mark Taylor over the relaxed oddball blues march of "Official Silence." And yet, Threadgill is able to transcend this in his own alto solos; on "Like It Feels" he reaches through the murky mix for deep honks, riding his own exotic arrangement like the wind, anticipating its quirky transitions with brilliant flair.

—John Corbett

Makin' A Move—Noisy Flowers; Like It Feels; Official Silence; Refined Poverty; Make Hot And Give; The Mockingbird Sin; Dirty In The Right Places. (64:25)
Personnel—Threadgill, alto saxophone; Mark Taylor, french horn; Brandon Ross, Ed Cherry, James Emery (1, 6), Ayodele Aubert (1, 6), guitars; Edwin Rodriguez, Marcus Rojas, tubas; Pheeroan AkLaff, drums; Myra Melford, piano (1); Michelle Kinney, Akua Dixon Turre, Diedre Murray, cellos (4, 6).

THE HOT BOX

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| ANTHONY BRAXTON <i>Charlie Parker Project 1993</i> | | ★★★★ | ★★★★ 1/2 | ★★★ 1/2 | ★★★★ |
| MILT JACKSON <i>Burnin' In The Woodhouse</i> | | ★★★ 1/2 | ★★★ 1/2 | ★★★★ | ★★★ |
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Hargrove/McBride/ Scott Trio

Parker's Mood

Verve 314-527-907

★★★★

Goldberg/Schott/ Dunn/Wollesen

Junk Genius

Knitting Factory Works 160

★★★★

Eliminating the sentimental and historical trappings of iconography ain't exactly easy. But hero worship also has its practical functions, like establishing standards and prodding novices to work toward a goal. The seven players creating the music on these two discs are righteously in awe of Charlie Parker's creative faculties. Yet interpreting the prickly lyricism of Bird and the bebop he sired, they diverge drastically. The first band stresses grace; the winsome phrasing at work in the trumpet/bass/piano setting generates a refined atmosphere that borders on chamber music. The second group emphasizes mischief; nettlesome points underscore an inventive irascibility. Each makes a creative statement with the material.

The *Junk Genius* crew, skilled outcasts from the Bay Area (and a Brooklyn drummer), bring works by Bud Powell and Dizzy Gillespie into the fray, using the heads as springboards to boisterousness. Elbows are thrown, and the search for each piece's friction point inspires much of the blowing. "Koko" is wonderfully gnarly, alive with dissent and generating constant reactions. Best of all, it's surprisingly precise. In their effort to upend the status quo (a heroic task at times), some leftists fall prey to the doldrums of haphazardness. Here, even the most rambunctious phrases of clarinetist Ben Goldberg and guitarist John Schott agree upon a meeting place. Orthodox swing crops up and fades away as well, used when necessary to provide moments of groovy pleasure. Pith, an element missing from Anthony Braxton's new Bird essay (see p. 38), is a plus. It assures a welcome sense of arrangement.

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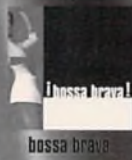
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CD REVIEWS

With antecedents in John Zorn's *News For Lulu* dates, *Junk Genius* is up there in esthetic quality with the inspired glee that Misha Mengelberg, Han Bennink and Steve Lacy had during their romp through Herbie Nichols and Monk several years ago.

Accuracy is an element shared by both agendas, though the better-known ensemble of Scott, Hargrove and McBride make an altogether different point on *Parker's Mood*. Using the fat tone of Hargrove's trumpet and McBride's earthy bass sound, the trio casts the music's tensile passages in an aura of luxuriousness. Crazy expeditiousness is eventually smoothed out, like a fist working a worry stone to alleviate pressure. "Dewey Square," a solo by Hargrove, utilizes the blues, but skirts around its dangerous side.

There is lots of exhaling in this music, with down-shifted tempos helping to explain the reason behind the new personas of these 16 curt pieces: bop had its delicate side. Scott glides through "April In Paris," and on "Chasin' The Bird" we're reminded that nobody with Chris McBride on his side is going to do without swing. By the time "Bongo Beep" rumbas on by, a formidable case for agility has been rendered. No, neither ensemble breaks from character on these discs—the moves they both make are expected. But, happily, both are quite clever. Quite clever, indeed. —Jim Macnie

Parker's Mood—Klactoveesedstene, *Parker's Mood*; Marmaduke; Steeplechase; Laura; Dexterity; Yardbird Suite; Red Cross; Repetition; Laird Baird; Dewey Square; Card Board; April In Paris; Chasin' The Bird; Bongo Beep; Star Eyes. (64:37)

Personnel—Roy Hargrove, trumpet, flugelhorn; Christian McBride, bass; Stephen Scott, piano.

Junk Genius—Tempus Fugit; Koko; Confirmation; Wail; Shaw Nuff; Hot House; Cheryl; Bebop; Hallucinations; Donna Lee; Un Poco Loco; Tempus Fugit. (53:35)

Personnel—Ben Goldberg, clarinet, bass clarinet; John Schott, guitar; Trevor Dunn, bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums, toy piano.

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Baikida Carroll

Door Of The Cage
Soul Note 121123

★★★★

The last time we heard Baikida Carroll, he was a first-call trumpeter for the likes of Muhal Abrams, David Murray and Jack DeJohnette, a fluid player who resisted distinc-

tions between "inside" and "outside" playing. Ronald Reagan was president. Since then, Carroll has devoted himself to theatrical works while recovering his chops after illness. (Several of these tunes were written for, and road-tested in, plays and films.) Carroll's regained his pure tone and phrasing, though he sounds most comfortable on the moody ballads and mid-tempo numbers that give *Door Of The Cage* its after-hours atmosphere. With "Against Your Warmth" and "I Need," he expresses heartache of Milesian proportions.

"Legacies" and "Door Of The Cage" demonstrate Carroll's gift for writing challenging, sophisticated compositions with insistent hooks. On tenor saxophone, Erica Lindsay is an idea foil for the trumpeter as they wind through the intricate melodies of "At Roi" (for the late Julius Hemphill) and "King." Her flexibility and sensitivity on tenor recall Wayne Shorter. Pianist Steve Adegoke Colson is well-attuned to the complexities of Carroll's writing, and drummer Pheeroan AkLaff is showcased on the raucous closer, "Spade Hearts In Clubs," where Carroll cuts loose with his most aggressive playing of the session.

—Jon Andrews

Door Of The Cage—*Door Of The Cage; King; At Roi; Against Your Warmth; Speak; Legacies; I Thought You Knew; Hannah Pearl; I Need; Spade Hearts In Clubs.* (61:09)

Personnel—Carroll, trumpet; Erica Lindsay, tenor saxophone; Steve Adegoke Colson, piano; Santi Debriano, bass; Pheeroan AkLaff, drums.



Karl Denson

Chunky Pecan Pie
Minor Music 801041

★★★★½

On his third date as a leader, young Californian saxist Karl Denson dishes out a disc as delish as its title makes it sound. Denson's got the edge on many of his mainstream contemporaries in that he's not only a strong player, but he can write, too. On tenor, he emphasizes control rather than flamboyance: listen to the plaintive, pop-tinged tone on his anthemic opening to "Heart Of The Wanderer," his solid straightahead solo on Dexter Gordon's "Fried Bananas" and the meaty blues bout with Pee Wee Ellis on "Blue-Eyed Peas."

The heavy-hitting rhythm team of Holland and DeJohnette is ideal here, with the drummer slicing hard enough to draw blood, and the bassist's fat tone the perfect salve for the wound. Denson uses his (slightly less distinctive) soprano effectively on his own sweet, simple melody "Is It A Bell?" while Holland dives into a driving groove with the authority of a sprint swimmer; later, he holds up a sparse, funky riff against DeJohnette's totally wired solo. In fact, the trio manages to suggest gritty funk often without getting too obvious about it—a real feat. Gust Tsilis' marimba gives "Banana Boy" an appropriate Island feel, and the opening "Waltz For Leslie" sports a truly beautiful tune and the kind of involved tenor trek at which Denson excells.

Chunky Pecan Pie is good for you. Don't just nibble, eat it up!
—John Corbett

Chunky Pecan Pie—*Waltz For Leslie; Is It A Bell?; Fried Bananas; Heart Of The Wanderer; Blue-Eyed Peas; Banana Boy; In Order To Form A More Perfect Union.* (60:10)

Personnel—Denson, tenor and soprano saxophones, flute; Dave Holland, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Gust Tsilis, marimba (6); Pee Wee Ellis, tenor saxophone (5).



Mark Whitfield

7th Ave. Stroll
Verve 314 529 223

★★★★★

Woody Allen would love *7th Ave. Stroll*: It would be hard to find a tribute to New York with more enthusiasm for the city's energy or its potential for romance. With this sophisticated collection, Mark Whitfield has surpassed the high standard he set for himself on *True Blue*, his 1994 Verve release.

One aspect of Whitfield's strength as a leader is in choosing rhythm sections that suit him so well. Whitfield alternates between two groups—the youthful crew of Scott, McBride and Hutchinson, and veterans Flanagan, Holland and Foster. The first trio offers a more physical approach; say, in Hutchinson's bursts of power on the bouncy title tune. It's impossible not to bob along to this effervescent Whitfield original.

The finesse of the second group is thrilling in a quieter way. From Tommy Flanagan's years of experience as an accompanist, he has developed a subtle way of weaving around

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another player. "Autumn In New York," a duet, is a dance between perfectly attuned partners. Whitfield's seductively stretched-out opening solo sets the mood for getting completely wrapped up in the song.

Most of the selections are originals, and they reveal Whitfield's sure feel for a good melody. Whitfield owes a lot to Wes Montgomery in his fondness for horn-like lines, and he pays homage to the guitar master on his tune "Headin' To The Wes' Side." This tune has the sound of a classic, fueled by bop lines that he flies through no matter how dense. McBride and Scott are equally fast-fingered on "Washington Square Thoroughfare," another Whitfield tune. It's something special to come across a disc that offers such a close, vibrant meeting of musical minds. —Elaine Guregian

7th Ave. Stroll—*Washington Square Thoroughfare; Harlem Nocturne; 7th Ave. Stroll; A Brooklyn Love; Businessman's Bounce; Spring In Manhattan; Sunday In New York; The Bowery Blues; Sunset At Waterside; Headin' To The Wes' Side; Autumn In New York.* (63:24)

Personnel—Whitfield, guitar; Stephen Scott, piano (1, 3, 4, 8, 10); Christian McBride, bass (1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10); Gregory Hutchinson, drums (1, 3, 4, 8, 10); Tommy Flanagan, piano (2, 5, 9, 11); Dave Holland, bass (2, 5, 7, 9); Al Foster, drums (2, 5, 7, 9).



Paul Bley/Evan Parker/Barry Phillips

Time Will Tell
ECM 1537

★★★★

Evan Parker/Barry Guy/Paul Lytton Trio

Breaths And Heartbeats
Rastacan 019

★★★★★

Time Will Tell is a particularly significant album, not only because it's a brilliantly conceived trio that had never worked together before, but because it will bring London's Evan Parker—one of the most important saxophonists of the last three decades—his widest listening public yet. However, this is atypical Parker: the reverberant room, Steve

Lake's ECM-style production and Bley's predilection for impressionism brought out a florid side of the reed innovator.

On the bittersweet title track and "No Questions," Parker reveals his deeply romantic, tonal side; I never thought I'd feel a reference to Paul McCandless well up regarding Evan, as it does on "Above The Tree Line." The Parker/Bley duet "Clawback" finds the pianist plucking and scrabbling at the strings, while the sax is treated to an excess of pillow echo. (Lake should get player credit for this track, just like engineer Walter Prati does when he electronically treats Parker.)

Parker's tremendous soprano sound is more characteristic on "Sprung," where his combination of sharp harmonics and sheer speed is countered by crystalline high-register flashes from Bley. Phillips is superb throughout, laying down a burning figure under Parker's thrilling, rolling tenor boil on "Vine Laces" and playing elegant arco on yet another bass/sax duet, "Instance." "Marsh Tides" is one of Bley's drowsy blues (with a nod to Warne Marsh) and the pianist is in full form on the forward-moving duet with Phillips, "You Will, Oscar, You Will." But the disc's most rewarding outing is the 17-minute opener, with Phillips' ideal bass sound (depth of wood, pinch of steel), Bley's harmonic subtleties, and Parker's wool-toned softness and bursts of metallic tongue articulations. Toward the end, a pointy section is commenced as Phillips taps strings with bow, Bley damps low notes, and Parker pops the reed and makes sounds close to the mouthpiece. Together, they build a wonderful, rickety mechanical toy before a mutual hum finishes the cut off.

Parker has recently expressed growing disinterest in one-off settings, preferring long-term groups like his 12-year-old trio with Guy and Lytton. *Breaths And Heartbeats*, the group's American label debut, shows the uncanny level of communication and unique group language it has created. After years of mutual play, the locus of improvisation moves from initiation-and-response to new realms of anticipation, support, prodding and adventure. They've structured this record so that each piece starts with a single shared percussion gesture ("Breath"), which leads directly into their deep jungle of manipulated sound ("Heartbeat"). Lytton contrasts rapid flourishes on matte drums with the pinging of bright metal objects, while Parker and Guy often shape swooping lines together.

There's so much going on in this dense brush, it's futile to try to describe it. But hearing it, you'll recognize why this group is perhaps the premier working ensemble in free improvisation. —John Corbett

Time Will Tell—*Poetic Justice; Time Will Tell; Above The Tree Line; You Will, Oscar, You Will; Sprung; No Questions; Vine Laces; Clawback; Marsh Tides; Instance; Burlesque.* (67:15)

Personnel—Bley, piano; Parker, soprano and tenor saxophones; Phillips, bass.

Breaths And Heartbeats—*Breath And Heartbeat 1-11; Breaths and Heartbeat.* (65:15)

Personnel—Parker, tenor and soprano saxophones, percussion; Guy, bass, piccolo bass, percussion; Lytton, drums, percussion.



Chico O'Farrill

Pure Emotion
Milestone 9239

★★★★

Cuban-born composer/arranger O'Farrill made his name in post-World War II New York with dynamic Latin-jazz orchestrations for Benny Goodman, Stan Kenton, Machito, Dizzy Gillespie and others. Since then, he's written sporadically for everyone from Count Basie to David Bowie while earning a living from commercial jingles. *Pure Emotion* is his first album as a leader since 1965, and except for the up-to-date percussion and state-of-the-art recording, it almost sounds like it was cut 30 years ago.

Music that once jangled on the edge of panic is now practically mellow; riffs and arpeggios that were daringly progressive now seem tamely antique. But even at their campiest, the charts here are models of fine craftsmanship—sophisticated, sonorous and consistently delightful—and the star-studded big band assembled by O'Farrill and producer Todd Barkan bathes the material in the rich glow of something brighter than mere nostalgia.

The album's centerpiece is the 12-minute "Variations On A Well-Known Theme"—the theme being the hoary Mexican revolutionary anthem "La Cucaracha." Applying influences that range from Ellington and Stravinsky to Henry Mancini and Afro-Cuban *santería* chants, O'Farrill demonstrates how a gifted arranger can refresh even the stalest tune. Yet, this sow's ear never becomes a silk purse, and the overall impression is that of a *Pink Panther Goes Latin* film scene. More effective are originals like the driving rumba "Igor's Dream" or the luminous ballad "Pura Emoción," where O'Farrill manages to keep his tongue out of his cheek. Soloists like Mario Rivera, Papo Vasquez, Michael Mossman and Pablo Calogero improvise adeptly in a mainstream mode, while the rhythm section, including Ft. Apache Band members Steve Berrios and Jerry and Andy Gonzalez, keeps a contemporary beat without violating the mambo-era spirit of the music.

But it's the ensemble passages—filled with brawny section work, vivid counterpoint, arresting stop-time breaks and dazzling climactic chords—that capture the imagination and validate O'Farrill's reputation as a Latin-jazz pioneer.

—Larry Birnbaum

Pure Emotion—*Igor's Dream; Pura Emoción; Pianitis; Campiña; Variations On A Well-Known Theme; Get Me To The Church On Time; En La Oscuridad; Perdido; Chico And The Men; El Loco Blues.* (49:45)

Personnel—O'Farrill, conductor; Mario Rivera, Bob Franceschini, tenor and soprano saxophones, flute, clarinet; Lenny Hambro, Rolando Briceño, alto saxophone, flute, clarinet; Pablo Calogero, baritone saxophone; Gerald Chamberlain, Papo Vasquez, Robin Eubanks, Earl McIntyre, trombone; Victor Paz, Michael Mossman, Jim Seeley, Dan Collette, Tim Ouimette, trumpet; Jeffrey Scott, Sharon Moe, french horn; Arturo O'Farrill Jr., piano; Andy Gonzalez, bass; Manny Oquendo, bells, bongos; Jerry Gonzalez, congas; Steve Berrios, drums, quinto, percussion, chorus; Elizabeth Monder, chorus.



John McLaughlin

After The Rain
Verve 314 527 467

★★★★½

The easy take on *After The Rain* is that it's a continuation of John McLaughlin's 1993 return to high-powered jazz with the guitar-organ-drums format. True, but this studio recording actually improves on last year's *Tokyo Live* album by having the great Elvin Jones taking over for funky strongman Dennis Chambers on the traps and by having inspiring investigations of the Coltrane canon replace merely good playing on a program dominated by McLaughlin compositions. In a fashion, the guitarist's now following through in a big way on what he started with the Trane tribute song "Do You Hear The Voices You Left Behind?" on his 1978 album *Johnny McLaughlin: Electric Guitarist*.

McLaughlin plays with a dazzling sense of time and resourcefulness, ordering the notes just so in testimony to the acuity of his musical reasoning. When the tempos pick up, this world-class guitarist easefully crams bristling phrases into small spaces à la Trane, yet he's equally adept at mounting creative thoughts on passages that take their time unfolding. On Trane numbers "Crescent," "Naima" and "After The Rain," especially but not exclusively, his improvisations seem to ride on a strong spiritual bond with the past saxophone master. Even on the selections from outside the Trane realm, including Carla Bley's "Sing Me Softly Of The Blues" and his own "Encuentros," there's a certain piety to his playing, measured and unobtrusive, that appears to emanate from deep inside.

DeFrancesco, despite being more in his element playing Bobby Timmons and Irving Berlin than sizing up Coltrane, handles himself

stirring in many B-3 drones and discourses. Elvin Jones is Elvin Jones is Elvin Jones: His superb playing is shaped by firsthand experience with Trane and his music, of course, and he's an emphatic presence all over his kit, always creative to the highest degree and an inspiration to his two colleagues on the session.

Let the friendly arguments begin on whether or not *After The Rain* stands as the next pinnacle of McLaughlin's artistry after his brilliant album *Extrapolation* back in '69.

—Frank-John Hadley

After The Rain—*Take The Coltrane; My Favorite Things; Sing Me Softly Of The Blues; Encuentros; Naima; Tones For Elvin Jones; Crescent; Afro Blue; After The Rain.* (57:15)

Personnel—McLaughlin, electric guitar; Joey DeFrancesco, Hammond B-3 organ; Elvin Jones, drums.



Bill Holman

A View From The Side
JVC 2050

★★★★½

Without the slightest ceremony or introduction, *A View From The Side* gets down to business with Bob Enevoldsen's valve trombone against a simple sax riff on "No Joy In Mudville." But things don't remain simple for long. Bill Holman, whose arrangements have left their mark on most of the better postwar big bands from Kenton to Rich, charts his way through an array of tempo shifts, stop-time breaks, ensemble-percussion fours and some old-fashioned call-and-response riffing wrapped in an astringent dissonance. The variety sets the tone to come in this good big band session.

Six of the nine pieces are by Holman, who plays his cards like a man who knows how to keep his musicians interested and engaged. "Petaluma Lu" brokers a stylish marriage between Bill Perkins' soprano and Ron Stout's flugelhorn. "I Didn't Ask" is a blues that finds Stout in brief dialog with some charmingly futuristic, creepy-crawly ensembles. And "Make My Day" seems inspired, perhaps subliminally, from Joe Zawinul's "Birdland."

When working with standard repertoire, Holman exercises the arranger's inalienable right to make the material his own. Jimmy Rowles' "Peacocks" is framed in woodwinds and gives Bob Efford's stately bass clarinet ample probing space. "But Beautiful" feels like

a hip, bouncy waltz in the hands of Pete Christlieb. And "Tennessee Waltz" is a waltz, whatever the time signature, though stripped of all sentiment as it makes way for Lanny Morgan on alto.

The brass occasionally sound undermixed on this over-mic'ed session. Don't tell me the trumpets don't sound artificially suppressed 1:30 into "Mudville," to offer one example.

But Holman is never less than interesting and almost always alert to dodge the oncoming cliché with a clever twist. His writing is smart in the way the best musicians' music is. He gives us much to admire here, but somewhat less to love. University bands will likely be playing some of these charts soon.

—John McDonough

A View From The Side—No Joy In Mudville; Any Dude'll Do; But Beautiful; Petaluma Lu; I Didn't Ask; Make My Day; The Peacocks; A View From The Side; Tennessee Waltz. (61:00)

Personnel—Carl Saunders, Frank Szabo, Ron Stout, Bob Summers, trumpet; Jack Redmond, Bob Enevoldsen, Andy Martin, Kenny Shroyer, trombone; Lanny Morgan, Bill Perkins, Pete Christlieb, Ray Herrmann, Bob Efford, saxophones; Rich Eames, piano; Doug MacDonald, guitar (4, 5); Dave Carpenter, bass; Bob Leatherbarrow, drums.



Clarke/Di Meola/ Ponty

The Rite Of Strings

I.R.S. 34167

★★★½

These three guys are already shoe-ins for the jazz/fusion hall of fame. Here, they join together for the first time as a trio and do the "unplugged" thing. With a relaxed, grounded feel and emphasis on respect and support more than showing off, they make a dream musical match.

Al Di Meola has ventured successfully into acoustic and world-beat circles since playing with Clarke in Return To Forever. On "Indigo," the guitarist anchors, supports and drives the music all at once—in a previous time he would be more interested in simply dazzling. Di Meola's tunes seem to inspire the band the most. "Chilean Pipe Song" is a zesty, classy ensemble tour de force, featuring the lyrical beauty of the violin line, and "Morocco" is a lesson in polyrhythms in motion as Clarke's combination of rhythmic control and harmonic

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wit makes it all feel good. Clarke and Di Meola had acoustic sections in their RTF shows, and still have an uncanny tightness, an ability to blend their instruments as one.

Ponty's "Memory Canyon" has a structure and pop sound reminiscent of his more sequencer-oriented later work, but this one has a real "band" sound. The trio goes way back to reprise a couple songs—"Renaissance," from Ponty's 1976 album *Aurora*, and "Song For John," a Clarke/Corea composition from the bassist's 1975 *Journey To Love*, here with foot-tapping included. On "Song For John" we have true liftoff! Ponty drives it with an accompaniment part, then takes flight for a soaring solo. Di Meola rips in with one of his trademark flurries, but then backs off to build the action again. This first effort shows off the musical maturation of each player. We can only hope that they make this band a regular occurrence.

—Robin Tolleson

The Rite Of Strings—*Indigo; Renaissance; Song To John; Chilean Pipe Song; Topanga; Morocco; Change Of Life; La Cancion De Sofia; Memory Canyon.* (55:52)

Personnel—Stanley Clarke, acoustic bass; Al Di Meola, acoustic guitars; Jean-Luc Ponty, acoustic violin.



Howard Alden/ Ken Peplowski

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Concord Jazz 4654

★★★★

This collaboration has a gentle, old-fashioned quality from start to finish. Howard Alden and Ken Peplowski are well matched in their ability to make themselves heard without any fuss, like a statesman who is confident enough of his power to speak softly. A strong rapport between the duo comes across, and in this live setting the musicians sound well rehearsed without being over-produced.

For the most part, Peplowski plays clarinet, and he's more persuasive doing that rather than playing tenor. Noodling, Benny Goodman-style—say, on "It All Depends On You"—allows him to show off the purity of his tone and the flexibility of his technique. Alden also has a superior technique served by an active imagination. On "The Dolphin," he and Peplowski

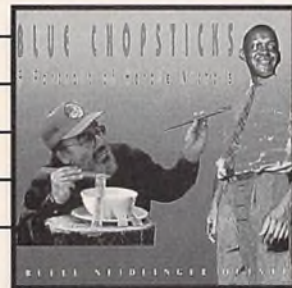
dip and sway to Alden's bossa rhythms in an utterly carefree way. There's an appealing innocence to "Since We Met," a Bill Evans tune with a pure simplicity that suits this duo. It's a preferable mood to "Wabash," where Peplowski's tenor doesn't build up quite the energy you expect.

Bassist Jeff Chambers and drummer Colin Bailey are good players who often stay in the background. The bebop lines of Lee Konitz's "Palo Alto" gain from their input. Generally, though, the most interesting tunes on this recording are the ones where Alden and Peplowski stand alone, weaving a nostalgic spell.

—Elaine Guregian

Live At Centre Concord Encore!—*It All Depends On You; Palo Alto; I Hear A Rhapsody; The Dolphin; Wabash; Fading Star; With Every Breath I Take; You.* (64:13)

Personnel—Alden, guitar; Peplowski, tenor saxophone (4, 6), clarinet (1-3, 5, 7-9); Jeff Chambers, bass (2, 4, 6, 9); Colin Bailey, drums (2, 4, 6, 9).



Herbie Nichols

Love, Gloom, Cash, Love
Bethlehem 20-30112

★★★

Buell Neidlinger

Blue Chopsticks:
A Portrait Of Herbie Nichols
K2B² 3169

★★★★

Herbie Nichols (1919-1963) was a very original and neglected non-bebop modernist who lived in New York and played mostly with dixieland and swing-era artists. He made only six sessions as a leader: *Love, Gloom, Cash, Love* is his last-known recording, and it is not his best. (It should be mentioned, however, that the sound quality is uniformly excellent, based on transfers from the original master takes.)

Stuck with an out-of-tune piano and having recorded many of his more accessible selections in better circumstances for Blue Note in 1955-56 (now sadly out of print), Nichols sounds chunky here. His solos reveal a strange mixture of Monk, Erroll Garner and Art Tatum, with melodic themes repeated, disso-

nant lines dropped in occasionally, chords struck with a hard touch and many phrase-ending glissandos à la Tatum. Some of his complex compositions, like "Portrait Of Ucha" and the title track, have a unique lyricism. Others, such as "Argumentative," have a density that is difficult to penetrate. Still, this release is of unquestioned historical value.

Nichols' compositions, thorny as they were with their catchy twists and turns, were made for orchestration; indeed, the pianist often imagined his pieces played by horns and strings. Buell Neidlinger, who worked with the

pianist, has taken the weightiness of his friend's work and both lightened it and given it zest with his unusual instrumentation. *Blue Chopsticks* packs punch, with all the instruments handling rhythm chores at one time or another. The album has a refreshing buoyancy, and a sense of verve and humor.

"Portrait Of Ucha" is now heard as a spirited German beer-hall piece, with Richard Greene's dancing violin backed by subtle horn howls, while "The Gig" is done as a hoedown. The title tune has a rhythmic urgency, showcasing Marty Krystall's Webster-Rollins-Ayler tenor

sax blend, which is uproarious but never brutal. Neidlinger's warm cello sparks "The Lady Sings The Blues," surely Nichols' best-known work. Hugh Shick's Bubber Miley-cum-Lester Bowie trumpet work adds flavor.

While hardly traditional fare, *Blue Chopsticks* is an exceedingly musical look at a deserving artist.
—Zan Stewart

Love, Gloom, Cash, Love—*To Close For Comfort; Every Cloud; Argumentative; Love, Gloom, Cash, Love; Portrait Of Ucha; Beyond Recall; All The Way; 45° Angle; Intuition Eyes; S' Crazy Pad.* (41:54)

Personnel—Nichols, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Dannie Richmond, drums.

Blue Chopsticks: A Portrait Of Herbie Nichols—*Blue Chopsticks; 2300 Skidoo; Portrait of Ucha; The Gig; Love, Gloom, Cash, Love; Cro-Magnon Nights; Step Tempest; The Lady Sings The Blues; Query; Nick At T's; Applejackin.* (62:53)

Personnel—Neidlinger, cello; Marty Krystall, tenor and soprano saxophones, bass clarinet; Hugh Shick, trumpet; Richard Greene, violin; Jimbo Ross, viola.

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Terrell Stafford, trumpet; Steve Wilson, saxophones; Tim Warfield, tenor sax; Steve Nelson, vibes; Mike Bowie, bass; Victor Lewis, drums



Cecil Payne

Cerupa
Delmark 478

★★★★

After making a splash in the original bebop era with Dizzy Gillespie and others, Payne slowly drifted into semi-obscurity. But *Cerupa*, recorded in Chicago with a dazzling rhythm section, finds the septuagenarian baritone saxist in peak form, his resonant, rough-edged tone as powerful as before and his creative edge sharper than ever. Bop may no longer shock, but in the hands of this mainly veteran cast, it can still surprise.

The long tracks—mostly uptempo, head-solo-head blowing vehicles—capture the electricity of a nightclub set without the ambient noise. Old masters Harold Mabern, on piano, and John Ore, on bass, team telepathically with drum phenom Joe Farnsworth; stoking rhythmic tensions to the kindling point, they spark the horn players to flame, including Freddie Hubbard, who crackles with all his former fire on "Be Wee." Eric Alexander plays tenor sax with cely agility, betraying his youth only with bald derivations from Coltrane and Dexter Gordon; but in this distinguished company, he barely holds his own. Payne, by contrast, never shows his roots; each phrase is a revelation, and the only problem with his brawny, know-

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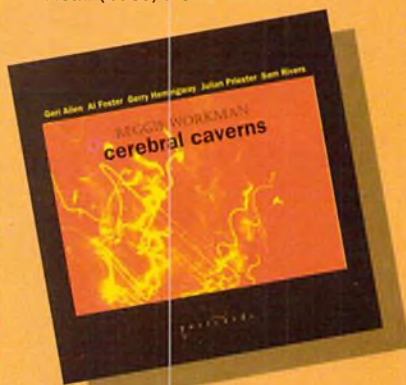
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ing, tender bari solos is that they're too short. There's a standard ("I Should Care"), a Latin tune ("Cuba") and a jazz waltz ("Brookfield Andante").

Payne plays flute on a couple of tracks, but he and the band seem most comfortable in a straight-ahead groove, mining new riches where others find only a played-out vein.

—Larry Birnbaum

Cerupa—*The Opening; Bolambo; I Should Care; Cerupa; Be Wee; Cuba; Bosco; Brookfield Andante.* (70:00)

Personnel—Payne, baritone saxophone, flute; Eric Alexander, tenor saxophone; Harold Mabern, piano; John Ore, bass; Joe Farnsworth, drums; Dr Odies Williams III (8), Freddie Hubbard (5), trumpet.



Ingrid Jensen

Vernal Fields
enja 9013

★★★★

Vernal Fields has the fresh energy and affirmation of a young artist in the act of discovering the outer reaches of her talent. It is Ingrid Jensen's first album, and she is ready.

The first cut is "Marsh Blues," and her open horn smacks us to attention, then skids and flutters away across bar lines. She sounds a little like Dave Douglas in her speed and her aslant relationship to a melody's denotation. The next piece is "Skookum Spook," and Jensen, muted, coils around Steve Wilson's soprano saxophone, periodically striking and stinging. The title track shows her flugelhorn, sweeter than her trumpet but not sentimental. (You hear some Art Farmer in her tenderness with each note.) There are six more tunes, none wasted.

Vernal Fields is more than a flashy individual debut. It is a collaborative statement by six strong voices. Steve Wilson is a hot new alto with a sound that is human and complex, yet pure. He is luminous and litling by himself on "Stuck In The Dark," and even better when he is glancing off Jensen's trumpet. George Garzone may be America's most accomplished non-famous tenor player. He is best on "By Myself," where he refuses to hurry despite the headlong tempo. Pianist Bruce Barth is a major factor throughout. He takes unexpected solos on every song, each one different. (It helps that this album was recorded at Systems Two in Brooklyn, the site of so many sonically

superior jazz projects. Each instrument in this sextet is in vivid focus.)

Watch for Ingrid Jensen. A trumpet player mature enough for the honest poignance of "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" and nervy enough for the frenzy of "By Myself" has a future.

—Thomas Conrad

Vernal Fields—*Marsh Blues; Skookum Spook; Vernal Fields; Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye; I Love You; The Mingus That I Knew; Stuck In The Dark; Christiane; By Myself.* (64:49)

Personnel—Jensen, trumpet, flugelhorn; Steve Wilson, alto and soprano saxophones; George Garzone, tenor saxophone; Bruce Barth, piano; Larry Grenadier, bass; Lenny White, drums.



The Grassy Knoll

The Grassy Knoll
Antilles 314 527 908

★★★

T.J. Kirk

T.J. Kirk
Warner Bros. 9 45885

★★★½

For all its bluster about cultural revolution, the new fusion (jazz/hip-hop, jazz-rock, jazz/funk-jazz/whatever) mostly offers glorified pandering to street chic. Popular idioms become accessories, a nifty pair of earrings or a cool tie, desperately trying to provide an edge to an otherwise dull ensemble. Fortunately, the Bay Area bands T.J. Kirk and the Grassy Knoll suffer no such problems on their eponymous debuts. Each has a distinctive and somewhat idiosyncratic voice, and each of the diverse elements in their mix gets equal priority.

The Grassy Knoll is the brainchild of art-school grad Bob Green, a lover of Public Enemy, Black Sabbath and Miles Davis (presumably his early '70s bands). This recipe yields dark, murky cinematic music by a band with a sax/trumpet/clarinet frontline backed by drums, tablas and turntables. The horns provide a raucous, squawking top over a driving rhythm. On their best tracks, they sound like the ideal support group for quirky rock singer Bjork's wails. Unfortunately, on several

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CD REVIEWS

tracks, the drumming becomes plodding with music that drifts off into monotony. At those times, it seems that Green is more content to announce his ideas rather than ignite them.

T.J. Kirk, a quartet devoted to the music of Thelonious Monk, James Brown and Rahsaan Roland Kirk (hence T, J and bright moments), sounds like a cross between The President's postmodern cool and Booker T. and the MG's Memphis funk. Despite the band's unusual makeup, three guitars (including Charlie Hunter of the Charlie Hunter Trio) and drums, it is proudly cheesy. The band teases the lis-

tener by dancing on the edge of novelty without ever stumbling in. In other words, they connect their influences seamlessly at no cost to the energy in their play.

Whereas The Grassy Knoll may have a limited constituency, T.J. Kirk is the sort of jazz record that should be pushed toward the pop marketplace; not since Us3 have jazz classics sounded so accessible. It speaks well of the San Francisco alternative jazz scene that it can support two bands this different.

—Martin Johnson

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The Grassy Knoll—*Culture Of Complaint; March Eighteenth; Unbelievable Truth; Altering The Gates Of The Mind; Conversations With Julian Dexter; Floating Above The Earth; Less Than One; Low; Evolution #9; The Beauty Within; Illusions Of Peace; Spirit Slips Away; Left Becomes Right.* (62:31)

Personnel—Bob Green, tape-loop samples, other instruments; David Revelli, drums; Jonathan Byerly, saxophone; Chris Grady, trumpet; Beth Custer alto and bass clarinets; Baba Duru Demetrius, tablas; DJ Quest, turntables.

T.J. Kirk—*Soul Power; Teo; Bemsha Swing; Shuffle Boil; You Can Have Watergate Just Gimme Some Bucks And I'll Be Straight; Volunteered Slavery; Serenade To A Cuckoo; Freaks For The Festival; Cold Sweat/Rip Rig & Panic; Humph; Epistrophy; I Got To Move/In Walked Bud; Jackie-ing.* (52:27)

Personnel—Charlie Hunter, 8-string guitar, bass; Will Bernard, John Scott, guitar; Scott Amendola, drums, percussion.



Garrison Fewell

Are You Afraid Of The Dark?

Accurate 4701

★★★★

Garrison Fewell's mainstream guitar sound goes back through Grant Green and Jim Hall to the instrument's beginnings in Les Paul. Each note is a warm, moist, glistening globule of equal size.

Some might find the sound too pretty for the jagged, existential textures of our troubled era. But only Fewell's tone is retro. His active imagination is restless; his musical intelligence is acute; his standards are high. *Are You Afraid Of The Dark?* has prettiness with plenty of brains and balls.

It opens like a late-night album. The title track and "X-Ray Vision" have a nocturnal inwardness stirred by the impatience of the rhythmic subsurface. Cecil McBee's bass and Matt Wilson's drums pull against the guitar's

meticulous linear process. Fewell always discovers where he's going just in time, his bright forays unexpected, then inevitable. For those of us who sort of remember the '60s, "Song Of Her" will make old synapses fire. Cecil McBee wrote it for an album that helped define a counterculture in 1966, Charles Lloyd's *Forest Flower*. The arrangement here is identical. Fewell takes Lloyd's part, curving and crying like a saxophone. "Journey To The East" is an exotic blend of bells and twitching bass ostinatos through which Fewell and pianist Laszlo Gardony wind like camel caravans. "Alto Blues" is a backbeat shuffle, as dirty as Fewell's natural elegance will allow. But even when this band digs in, Fewell's lyricism is introspective. The final track, "The Tower Of Kazimierz," returns us to the opening night mood.

The four threads of this quartet are closely interwoven. Gardony is the pianistic reflection of Fewell's impressionism. McBee is the ensemble's ever-shifting center, and his solos go deep.

The Accurate label is performing a valuable service by presenting world-class Boston musicians who are not well-known outside New England. But the audio quality here is not entirely consistent with the label's name. Music as finely crafted and intimate as Fewell's deserves more detailed resolution.

—Thomas Conrad

Are You Afraid Of The Dark?—*Are You Afraid Of The Dark?*; *X-Ray Vision*; *Song Of Her*; *Journey To The East*; *The Silk Road/Statue*; *The 3/4 Suite*; *Homage A Ravel/Crossing The Border*; *Ten Directions*; *Alto Blues*; *The Tower Of Kazimierz*. (52:13)
Personnel—Fewell, guitar; Laszlo Gardony, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Matt Wilson, drums.



Tribal Tech

Reality Check

Mesa BlueMoon 92549

★★★

Some call Tribal Tech the "bad boys of fusion," as much for their take-no-prisoners approach as for the seeming irreverence

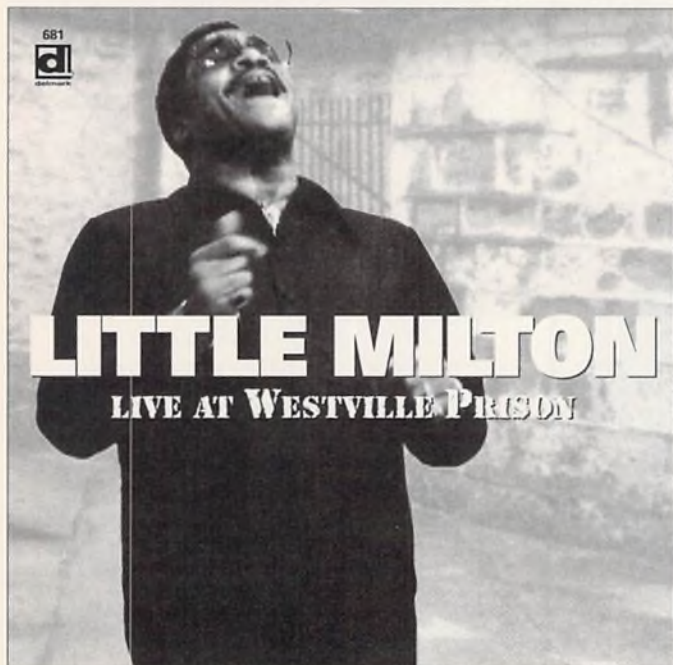
in which they sometimes conceal their considerable musical abilities. Scott Henderson and Gary Willis, along with different sidemen and women, have been pumping out hardcore fusion for nearly a dozen years now. Their music is still intense, they certainly haven't lost any chops—let's hope they're not losing their sense of humor.

"Stella By Starlight" is an impassive, intentionally misleading opener, which is a growing Tribal Tech tradition. They'll try to lull you to sleep, get you moving toward the "next" button, before kicking into gear. The next "Stella" is more in character—the animals are turned loose and the playing is ferocious, although they seem betrayed by the uninspiring head. On "Susie's Dingsbums," bassist Willis wisely "stays home" while the guitarist and drummer rip. Henderson kicks on the "pedal of doom" at the end, hearkening back to the salad days of fusion when it was fun to stretch. "Jakarta" shows real growth and taste from Henderson as composer—it's a sparse rhythm track, not a trite world-beat fusion, with a fascinating noise gate sound on percussion.

Willis' "Hole In The Head" leaves space for all to space, and after 12 minutes he still tacks on a false ending. Now that's funny. Willis is becoming increasingly important in Tribal Tech, as composer and shaping instrumentalist. His composition "Speak" seems to pay tribute to each member of Weather Report, and

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"Premonition" has engaging ensemble parts and room for the bassist to adventure out boldly. "Nite Club" has a winning groove, loose-but-solid funk, and some nice Beck-ish searchings from Henderson, but fake applause detracts more than it adds to the real action.

—Robin Tolleson

Reality Check—*Stella By Starlight; Stella By Infra-Red; High Particle Neutron Beam; Nite Club; Speak; Worlds Waiting; Susie's Dingslums; Jakarta; Hole In The Head; Foreign Affairs; Premonition; Reality Check.* (65:21)

Personnel—Scott Henderson, guitar; Gary Willis, bass; Scott Kinsey, keyboards; Kirk Covington, drums.



Mark Murphy

I'll Close My Eyes

Muse 5436

★★★★

Young & DeAndrea

I Thought About You...

Ambitious Records

★★★

Mature crooners have a narrower path to follow than bloods wilding all over the map. Among the more prominent rules: choose good repertoire, enunciate your words, hold the pitch, pace the set, explore your feelings. Jazz crooners must take it to the brink—and beyond.

Eldée Young comes late to singing, but he played bass for Joe Turner and Joe Williams before better-known stints with Ramsey Lewis and his Young/Holt Unltd. Young's voice has good things going: smooth delivery, an Aaron Neville quiver, a Nat Cole soft belly, and an Eckstine bottom line to make a point. His vibrato gets overworked on this all-ballad set, the only medium-tempo tune being the title track. His lightweight band rarely reaches beyond straightlaced charts, though trumpeter Schenck and pianist Sliwka have moments. And bandleader/drummer Ruben DeAndrea offers subtle support throughout. Young achieves intimacy and warmth at points (check out the one ringer, "This Is All I Ask"), but this perfectly pleasant date plays it too safe.

Likewise a mainly ballad set, Murphy—a lifelong cruiser of the sublime lyric and hip idea—never plays it safe; he tightropes, spins, gyrates, lays it on the line. Lifelong research tells the story behind each song. Murphy and the late Carmen McRae have led the pack in ferreting out underheard beauties that work for them. Super-slow tempi ("Eyes," "Reason") find him just tak...ing his sweet time. He doesn't need to scat to rewrite the melody; he tags acid wit to Howlett Smith's wry lyric on "Ugly Women." And the band of New York crackerjacks opens sweet spots for Roditi's trumpet and Rebillot's piano. —Fred Bouchard

I'll Close My Eyes—*I'll Close My Eyes; If, Happyin'; Miss You, Mr. Mercer; Small World; There is No Reason Why; Time On My Hands; Ugly Woman; Not Like This.* (37:31)
Personnel—Murphy, vocals; Claudio Roditi, trumpet; John Basile, guitar; Cliff Carter, keyboards; Pat Rebillot, piano; David Finck, bass; Peter Grant, drums; Sammy Figueroa, percussion.

I Thought About You—*Nice And Easy; The Very Thought Of You; Fools Rush In; You Go To My Head; I'm Confessin'; I Can't Get Started; I Thought About You; I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face; Angel Eyes; Everytime We Say Goodbye; This Is All I Ask; Our Love Is Here To Stay.* (58:30)

Personnel—Eldée Young, vocals; Bob Centano, baritone saxophone; Steve Schenck, trumpet, flugelhorn; Dick Curtis, guitar; Marcia Labella, harp; Peter Sliwka, piano; Douglas Loftstrom, bass, synthesizer, arranger; Ruben DeAndrea, drums, percussion, co-leader.

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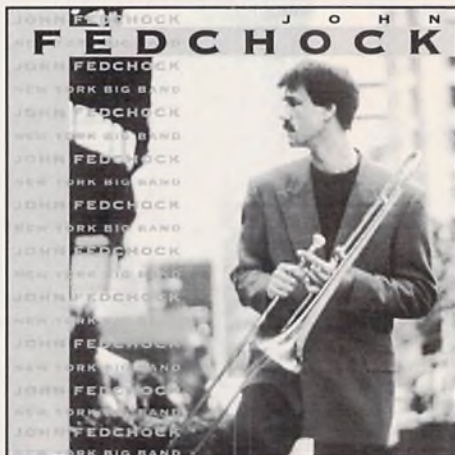
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Jack McDuff

The Heatin' System
Concord Jazz 4644

★★★

Winston Walls

Boss Of The B-3
Schoolkids 1516

★★★

Jack McDuff, a member of the second wave of B-3 virtuosos, reprises the concept of his '60s group that featured George Benson on *The Heatin' System*. The title track, which includes a brief quote from "Take The 'A' Train," serves as a solid lead-in to McDuff's and alto saxist Andrew Beals' duet on "In A Sentimental Mood," which, in turn, reaffirms McDuff's mastery at manipulating the stops of the B-3 to coax jazzy chords from its bowels. Dick Oatts supplies some guest flute work on two of the more rhythmically complex tracks, offering an intriguing and rarely heard juxtaposition of the deep, wood-toned sounds of the B-3 with the metallic airiness of the flute.

McDuff effectively dresses up the B-3 in some sophisticated jazz accessories on *The Heatin' System*, but longtime friend and rival Winston Walls just wants to wail on his first release as a leader. *Boss Of The B-3* is a live recording pairing Walls and McDuff in a comfortable cutting session. The contrasts in their styles, essentially Walls' low-down approach versus McDuff's more uptown method, are highlighted in their interaction, but McDuff allows Walls to bask, however belatedly, in the spotlight most of the time.

There are no barriers broken, but some deliciously deep grooves are dug, courtesy of Walls' fluid funk and a no-nonsense rhythm section featuring Motown session star Pistol Allen on drums. Walls' signature tune, strangely enough McDuff's "Rock Candy," gets his fingers flying and the pedals pumping in fine fashion. Some jocular jiving between numbers helps personalize the session, and Walls' occasional vocals serve to infuse some of the B-3's r&b legacy into the proceedings.

Walls also provides a graphic example of the B-3's musical split personality, segueing out of Saturday night party time and into Sunday

morning church service with the closing tunes, the down-and-dirty blues jam "SerenGeti Blues" and an extended pull-out-the-stops rendition of the gospel classic "How Great Thou Art." It's an insightful exhibition of the sacred/secular dichotomy of the instrument's heritage, but, more importantly, it's also eminently entertaining music.

—Michael Point

The Heatin' System—601½ North Poplar St.; *Put On A Happy Face; Sundown; Mr. T; The Heatin' System; In A Sentimental Mood; Fly Away; Theme From The Pink*

Panther; The Playoff. (59-40)

Personnel—McDuff, organ; Andrew Beals, alto sax; John Hart, guitar (1-5, 7-9); Jerry Weldon, tenor sax (1-5, 7-9); Rudolph Petschauer, drums (1-5, 7-9); Larry Grenadier, electric bass (3, 7, 9); Dick Oatts, flute (3, 7).

Boss Of The B-3—*Winston's 100; Georgia; Rock Candy; I Want To Thank You Baby; Canadian Sunset; Lucille's Lament; What A Difference A Day Makes; SerenGeti Blues; How Great Thou Art.* (57-01)

Personnel—Walls, organ, vocals; Jack McDuff, organ; Gene Parker, tenor saxophone; Chris Buzelli, guitar; Pistol Allen, drums.

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Jerry Granelli & UFB

News From The Street
Intuition 2146

★★★

In this confounding age of saying the "right thing," is it permissible to call UFB's music fusion? Contemporary jazz is more like it, eh? At any rate, veteran drummer Jerry Granelli feels the need to take a breather from his

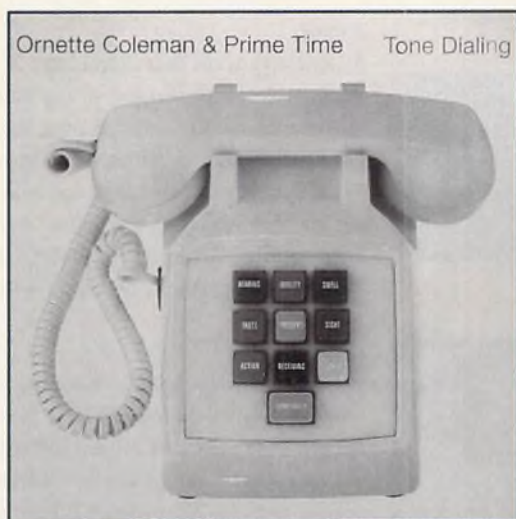
Berlin teaching duties and his adventurous jazz exploits with Jane Ira Bloom to join three young Germans (probably his students) in blending some jazz, blues, funk and rock.

UFB's main incentive seems to be simple exaltation: precise playing is its own reward, and whatever the careful listener can glean of complicated emotions is an unexpected bonus. These adept musicians put either a tasteful and lively or a tastefully reserved spin on everything from Monk ("Brilliant Corners") to a straightforward Texas blues ballad ("Sad Hour") to a Jimi Hendrix sonic meditation ("Little Wing") to several Granelli tunes. The band's intensity has a formal, methodical feel, not unlike that of an art/rock band or fusion group in years past. The charming, pastoral serenity they evince has a similar stylization to it. Wit takes a far back seat to propriety. Grit and tension, unfortunately, don't as a rule hang out on the UFB street corner. Fortunately, though, Granelli and friends only take a full misstep into the void one time—the culprit's group composition "Blue Spanish Eyes," which has ethereal wordless singing appropriate to a film on unicorns—and, otherwise, make every measure of music on this album speak of the intelligence they bring to their brand of electric jazz. —Frank-John Hadley

News From The Street—Honey Boy; Big Love; Rainbow's Cadillac; The Swamp; Sad Hour; Akicita; Ellen Waltzing; Brilliant Corners; Blue Spanish Eyes; News From The Street; Little Wing. (62:39)

Personnel—Granelli, drums, percussion; Kai Bruckner, Christian Kogel, electric and acoustic guitars; Andreas Waller, bass; Rinde Eckert, vocals (9).

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Andrew Lamb

Portrait In The Mist
Delmark 479

★★½

Wonder what tenor saxophonist Andrew Lamb could do with a stronger repertoire.

On *Portrait In The Mist*, the tenorman displays the kind of warm, voluminous tone that could easily make you overlook the slightness of his originals, but only until you're halfway through them. Most of the tunes here average about nine minutes, a length that becomes a liability once Lamb's free-bop inspiration begins to wane, which usually happens after about six minutes or so.

It's too bad because the quartet Lamb has assembled is a potential earthshaker. Like

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CD REVIEWS

him, they're quite capable of melding the inside with the out (check out Wilber Morris on "Air & Ear Painters") and really sinking into a ballad ("Bohemian Love Affair"). But the whole thing doesn't quite gel. It just shows that even when your musicians are enthusiastic and accomplished, if the goods aren't there, then everyone just ends up overcompensating.

—K. Leander Williams

Portrait In The Mist—Air & Ear Painters; *Negretta Mia; Light Of The Whirling Dervish; Bohemian Love Affair; Portrait In The Mist; Eccentricity; Morning Of The Black Swan.* (62:54)

Personnel—Lamb, tenor saxophone; Warren Smith, vibes, gong, percussion, drums (5); Wilber Morris, bass; Andrei Strobert, drums.



Greg Osby

Black Book

Blue Note 29266

★★★★

Guru

Jazzmatazz Volume II:

The New Reality

Chrysalis/EMI 8 34290

★★★★½

The Last Poets

Holy Terror

Rykodisc 10319

★★★★½

It just won't go away, this jazz-rap thing, no matter how much jazz puritans would love to see it fizzle. (Remember swing lovers demonizing bebop?) But as young upstarts explore their own brand of musical revolution steeped in the African-American musical tradition, the jazz/hip-hop cross-pollination is gaining strength. While there's been a proliferation of so-called new jazz adventurism in the last few years, scant few hip-hop experiments have been successful.

That's why Greg Osby's *Black Book*, the follow-up to his well-received *3-D Lifestyles*, is so

important. This forward-looking disc is arguably the best example to date of how radiant jazz and buoyant hip-hop make such a darling couple. Freestyling rappers, a scratching d.j., a groove-conscious rhythm section and Osby himself working overtime on wheeling out complementary alto sax ideas combine to create a thick, bubbling stew of sound. Osby calls these street-jazz pieces "oral holograms," an apt term given the three-dimensional nature of his music, where the pulsing rhythmic undergirding provides fertile ground for the poetic musings that are entwined by the leader's probing sax tendrils.

While many jazz-rap dates put the jazzers in supporting roles, Osby makes sure his musicians share center stage with the poets. Most of the time, the alto saxist himself is in the spotlight. But on the largely instrumental "Intuition," he and pianist Mulgrew Miller dance and converse with gusto while the bass/drum team of Calvin Jones and Bill McClellan star on "Brewing Poetry," a steaming cauldron of funky beats. Socially charged tunes like "Pillars Of The Community" and "Brother And A Token" give the collection its relevant, poignant edge.

Gangstarr rapper Guru comes up just short on his second cross-generational volume of flowing *Jazzmatazz* numbers. While his poetry is fueled with a relaxed wisdom, Guru offers lightweight musical support, relegating his all-star cast of Branford Marsalis, Kenny Garrett, Freddie Hubbard and Ronnie Jordan to low-in-the-mix supporting roles. Only Ramsey Lewis on the scratch-filled "Respect The Architect" and Donald Byrd on "The Traveler" get opportunities to stretch. Still, in using the Solsonics as the house band for his four "jazzaludes" and keeping the proceedings in the cool soul-jazz realm, Guru is heads above other rappers integrating jazz into their music. Plus, his latest foray into jazz-rap territory continues to inform younger audiences about the old school.

Speaking of old-timers, the Last Poets—the Harlem-based street griots from the late '60s who are acknowledged as the forefathers of politically conscious rap—pick up where they left off a generation ago with their new Bill Laswell-produced project, *Holy Terror*. Like Guru, their poetry is great with Umar Bin Hassen's shining exuberance and preacher-like exclamations and Abiodun Oyewole's muscular delivery. But while the funky undercurrents drive the tunes, there's not much room for musical interaction except on "Illusion Of Self," where Bernie Worrell follows in Hassen's poetic wake with brilliant organ exaltations. Worrell also gets to jam at the close of "Homesick," the number that's so vibrantly urgent it gets treated to a remix with George Clinton and Don Babatunde along for the ride.

—Dan Ouellette

Black Book—*Pillars Of The Community; Mr. Freeman; Rocking Chair; Buried Alive; Poetry In Motion; Black Book; Smokescreen; Brewing Poetry; Intuition; Fade To Black Medley; Brother And A Token, In A City Blues, Urbanite Kodes.* (56:19)

Personnel—Osby, alto sax, keyboards; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Calvin Jones, bass; Bill McClellan, drums; DJ Ghetto, scratches and cuts; Sha-Key, Mustafa, micro-

phone: *The Bêtnix* (Taj McCoy, Riva Parker, Bernard Collins, Jr.), Markita Morris, poetry.

Jazzmatazz Volume II: The New Reality—Intro (*Light It Up*) *Jazzlude 1 New Reality Style*; *Lilesaver*; *Living In This World*; *Looking Through Darkness*; *Skit A (Interview)* *Watch What You Say*; *Jazzlude II Defining Purpose*; *For You*; *Insert A (Mental Relaxation)* *Medicine*; *Lost Souls*; *Insert B (The Real Deal)* *Nobody Knows*; *Jazzlude III Hip Hop As A Way Of Life*; *Respect The Architect*; *Feel The Music*; *Young Ladies*; *The Traveler*; *Jazzlude IV Maintaining Focus*; *Count Your Blessings*; *Choice Of Weapons*; *Something In The Past*; *Skit B (Alot On My Mind)* *Revelation*. (73:18)

Personnel—Guru, raps, vocals; various artists, including Donald Byrd, trumpet, piano (8, 15); Kenny Garrett, saxophone (7); Rhodes (14); Freddie Hubbard, trumpet (19); Ronnie Jordan, guitar (20); Ramsey Lewis, piano, synthesizer (12); Branford Marsalis, saxophone (5); Courtney Pine, saxophone, flute (18); Me'Shell N'Degeocello, vocals, bass (7); Solsonics (Jez Colin, bass; Willie McNeil, drums; Kevin Williams, vocals; Derrick Davis, flute, alto saxophone, Mark Antoine, guitar; Mike Bolto, Rhodes; Shawn Lee, drum) (1, 6, 11, 16); Chaka Khan (5); Ini Kamoze (8); Patra (3), Sweet Sable (3); Kool Keith (14); Mica Paris (4), vocals.

Holy Terror—*Invocation*; *Homesick*; *Black Rage*; *Mentality*; *Pelourinho*; *Funk*; *If We Only Knew*; *Illusion Of Self*; *Talk Show*; *Black And Strong (Homesick)*; *Last Rite*. (62:21)

Personnel—Umar Bin Hassan, Abiodun Oyewole, Grandmaster Melle Mel, raps, vocals; Bootsy Collins, guitars, bass; Bernie Worrell, organ, piano, clavinet, synthesizer; Bill Laswell, bass, beats, samples, loops; Aiyb Dieng, Don Babalunde (10), percussion; George Clinton, vocals (10).



Michael Wolff

Jumpstart!
Jimco 9501

★★★

After five and a half years as musical director for the late, lamented *Arsenio Hall Show*, pianist Michael Wolff has realized a longstanding dream of doing a straightahead jazz recording. For Wolff, 43, the move is less a reinvention than a return to his roots. He began his career a quarter century ago with Cal Tjader. Stints with groups led by Airtio Moriera and Flora Purim, Cannonball Adderley and Nancy Wilson (with whom he served as music director) followed before Wolff hit the small screen.

Jumpstart! is more than your usual vanity project. For one, his bandmates bassist Christian McBride and drummer Tony Williams are not the sorts who tolerate complacency. Also, Wolff's repertoire is challenging;

it includes three Wayne Shorter compositions, "Pinocchio," "Fall" and "Nefertiti," as well as two standards and five originals. Wolff's playing is more fluid and elegant—often reminiscent of Herbie Hancock circa *Maiden Voyage*—than his background might lead one to expect. He balances sparkling runs and pensive austerity to highlight the Shorter tunes; McBride, in particular, is a standout, deepening the groove on "Fall." Wolff's romantic flourishes help the standards.

Things slow down a bit on some of the originals, where his playing becomes a tad predictable, tempting one to overlook the leader in favor of his stellar support. Nevertheless, Wolff has created an absorbing vehicle to carry him back into the jazz fold.

—Martin Johnson

Jumpstart!—*Pinocchio*; *Ballade Noir*; *Cannonblues*; *Little M*; *Fall*; *Shades Of Gray*; *Nefertiti*; *Jumpstart*; *I Fall In Love Too Easily*; *All Of You*. (53:02)

Personnel—Wolff, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Tony Williams, drums.

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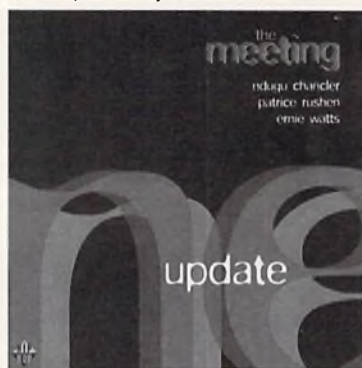
PATRICE RUSHEN:

(piano, synthesizers, flute, guitar, bass & organ) is a well respected keyboardist probably best known for her 1982 hit single "*Forget Me Nots*" on Elektra Records. What some may not know is that she is a gifted composer and arranger with television and film composition and score credits that include four *Robert Townsend's HBO Specials*, his well-received feature film "*Hollywood Shuffle*" and *Oprah Winfrey's "Brewster Place"*



ERNIE WATTS:

(Entire saxophone and flute families and oboe, English horn & clarinet). Besides being a two time *Grammy* Winner (1985 - *Best R&B Instrumental "Musician/Album"* and 1982 - *Best Pop Instrumental "Chariots Of Fire"*), his expertise as a musician has led him to become one of the most active session musicians in film and television. He has lent his incomparable talents to soundtracks from "*The Fabulous Baker Boys*," "*Another 48 Hrs.*," "*Ghostbusters*" and "*The Karate Kid*" just to name a few.



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Houston Person
The Lion And His Pride
 Muse 5480

★★½

Person has long been consigned to the organ-jazz ghetto or pigeonholed as an accompanist to singer Etta Jones, but here his big-toned, bluesy tenor sax is showcased on a ballad-heavy mainstream session with a

prominent group of youthful neo-boppers.

The idea must have looked good on paper, but on this date the young lions play like toothless old cats, stodgier and more hidebound than Person's regular working band. Person himself plays with soulful panache even on the most hackneyed material, but he seldom gets enough solo space to work up a head of steam. Instead, the long tracks drag on with predictable, textbook-dry sequential sideman solos, including a plodding bass or drum spot on virtually every cut.

Trumpeter Philip Harper frequently takes the lead, playing a pastiche of familiar hard-bop licks, while his brother Winard, on drums, and Christian McBride, on bass, keep flat-footed, almost metronomic time. Pianist Benny Green is similarly foursquare, showing little rhythmic or dynamic variation as he rummages through a grabbag of historical stylings. Person, never one to sidestep a cliché, nonetheless breathes soulful passion into balladic warhorses like "Dear Heart" and "Our Day Will Come." And when he finally gets to cut loose on the gospelly "Captain Hook," his honking, wailing command of the blues transcends the band's blandness and lifts the music to old-master level. —Larry Bimbaum

The Lion And His Pride—Dig; *I Remember Clifford*, *Dear Heart*; *Sweet Love (Theme From Black Orpheus)*; *You Are Too Beautiful*; *Like Someone In Love*; *Our Day Will Come*; *Captain Hook*. (60:47)

Persannel—Person, tenor saxophone; Philip Harper, trumpet; Benny Green, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Winard Harper, drums; Sammy Figueroa, percussion.

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**Joe McPhee/
 Lisle Ellis/
 Paul Plimley**

Sweet Freedom—Now What?
 hat ART 6162

★★★★½

Few CDs challenge, provoke and question the listener on so many levels as *Sweet Freedom—Now What?* Led by Joe McPhee on reeds, this trio invites you to reflect on Max Roach's achievements as a composer (without benefit of drums), ponder the distinction between improvisation and composition, reconsider the political implications of "free jazz,"

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- Jimmy Weinstein Group

and meditate on society's progress in the years since the civil rights movement. Hope you're up to it—*Sweet Freedom—Now What?* rewards the time and effort.

McPhee, bassist Lisle Ellis and pianist Paul Plimley work primarily from Roach's *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite* (Candid) and *Percussion Bitter Sweet* (Impulse!), each recorded between 1960 and 1961 and featuring fierce vocals from Abbey Lincoln. As its title suggests, *Sweet Freedom—Now What?* deconstructs rather than recreates songs like "Mendacity," as the musicians selectively borrow elements to create something new and personal which carries the spirit of the original. On tenor and soprano saxophones, McPhee assumes the role of Lincoln's passionate vocals. As "Driva' Man" and "Triptych" progress, McPhee's playing becomes increasingly emotional, sounding frayed and abstract. On "Lift Every Voice And Sing" and "Garvey's Ghost," he's spiritual and soulful, signifying both dignity and struggle.

The project is a true collaboration, as Ellis and Plimley contribute arrangements and share timekeeping and rhythmic responsibilities in the absence of drums. Ellis, in particular, sounds liberated in this spacious setting, playing numerous roles. Plimley is also versatile, suggesting the fury of Cecil Taylor on "Triptych" and "Driva' Man," and expressing the melody of "Mendacity" and "Garvey's Ghost." The music contained in Roach's original suites cannot be separated from political content. In these performances, the musicians are mindful of the social ills that fueled the rage and pain of *Freedom Now Suite*. In contrast, the predominate mood 35 years later is more subdued, leaving the listener with more questions than answers.

—Jon Andrews

Sweet Freedom—Now What?—Mendacity; Driva' Man; Roost 2; Self Portrait/Lift Every Voice And Sing; Singing With A Sword In My Hand; Roost 1; Garvey's Ghost; Approaching The Smoke That Thunders; Triptych; (Prayer/Protest) Prolepsis; Mendacity; A Head Of The Heartbeat; The Persistence Of Rosewood Roost. (72:34)

Personnel—McPhee, tenor and soprano saxophones, alto clarinet; Ellis, bass; Plimley, piano.



Andy Narell

The Long Time Band
Windham Hill 01934 11172

★★★

Caribbean Jazz Project

The Caribbean Jazz Project
Heads Up 3033

★★★

On the auspicious debut album by the Caribbean Jazz Project—an impressive trio of frontline players consisting of alto saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera, vibist Dave Samuels and steel-pan virtuoso Andy Narell—there's plenty of inspired soloing, savory rhythms and exotic melodies. It's just too bad

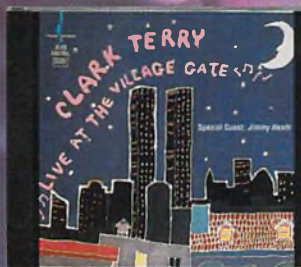
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you have to wade through the tepid waters of some standard contemporary jazz numbers flavored with Latin and Caribbean fragrances to find the treasures.

The collection doesn't get untracked until the third tune, Narell's "Carousel," which, like its name implies, is a festive spin-and-twirl delivered with glee by the group. Sandwiched around the rousing Latin cooker "Paco & Dave" are the two beauties of the bunch, "Como Un Bolero," a slow, sultry dance with

D'Rivera taking the lead on clarinet, and "Valse Triste," a gracefully swinging waltz. After a stretch of soft-toned Latin jazz fare, the band closes with "Afro," another tempo-shifting excursion, and "Café España," a haunting melody the leaders delicately caress.

Narell's seventh solo recording for Windham Hill likewise suffers from pockets of gently breezy music, including "Jenny's Room" and "Play One For Keith." Counterbalancing that are zesty tunes like "Bacchanal," a scorch-

ing spree into the spirit of Carnaval, and "You The Man," which bursts out of a relaxed Latin groove with a hot peppering of Luis Conte's percussion. Narell's sparkling pan melodies make this a bright-islands jazz outing, but what turns the party into a true fiesta is soca great David Ridder. He energizes Narell's zouk-charged "Groove Town" with his celebratory vocals; but his biggest contribution comes on his own composition, "Da Long Time Band," which is so invigorating you don't want it to end. For the tune, which gets reprised at the end of the collection, Narell plays an old tenor pan, which has a wonderful, rootsy, wooden tone instead of the ethereal sound of modern steel drums. —Dan Ouellette

The Caribbean Jazz Project—*One For Tom; Abacadabra; Carousel; Como Un Bolero; Paco & Dave; Valse Triste; Latin Quarter; Todo Aquel Ayer; Three Amigos; Afro; Café España.* (58:59)

Personnel—Paquito D'Rivera, alto saxophone, clarinet; Andy Narell, steel pans; Dave Samuels, marimba, vibes; Dario Eskenazi, piano; Oscar Stagnaro, bass; Luis Conte, congas, bongos, timbales, percussion; Mark Walker, drums.

The Long Time Band—*Bacchanal; Jenny's Room; De Long Time Band; You The Man; Play One For Keith; Groove Town; Dance Class; Canboulay; De Long Time Band (conclusion).* (62:00)

Personnel—Andy Narell, steel pans, acoustic piano, keyboards; Steve Erquiaga, electric and acoustic guitars, cavaquinho; Keith Jones, bass; Luis Conte, congas, bongos, timbales, bata drums, percussion; Paul van Wageningen, drums; Jackie Rago, cuatro (3, 9); David Ridder, vocals (3, 6, 9); Larry Baliste, Sandy Griffith, D'Layna Huguez, background vocals (6).

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Gerry Hemingway Quintet

The Marmalade King
hat ART 6164

★★★★½

Slamadam
Random Acoustics 012

★★★★★

With this quintet, drummer Gerry Hemingway has developed the perfect vehicle for his music. Wisely recruiting three of the best names in Dutch jazz—trom-

bonist Wolter Wierbos, cellist Ernst Reijseger and saxophonist/clarinetist Michael Moore—and fellow New Yorker Mark Dresser on bass, Hemingway assembled an ensemble capable of spanning the full range of approaches, from unique individualism and group improvisation to hammerdown chart-work. Like the greatest of the early jazz bands, this crew is tight enough to hang way loose.

The Marmalade King is a very good place to catch up on Hemingway's mature compositional style. He's a super scribe, mixing parallel lines, colors, tempi and tonalities with sophistication and whimsy. Based, in part, on his experiences as a new father, the disc consists of an extended suite built of five autonomous, but complementary, sections, each with names like the first line of a children's story. (Hemingway's a very good writer of words, as well as scores; his liner notes are especially illuminating, and it's nice to have a work so well articulated by its author.) The pieces of the story sometimes have a chamber-jazz sensibility, but more often they pull together brilliant improvisational skills of the players with neat, tandem support rhythms and melodies.

On "The Breeze Spoke Swiftly...." Moore and Reijseger sketch out the tune in morse code while Wierbos solos over the top; then Wierbos and Dresser begin a counterline, all somehow moving independently and together at the same time. At one point, they all move into high harmonic territory, Hemingway lightly grazing the textured surface of his cymbals. "The Checkerboard Laughed..." kicks in with a two-note bass pattern, Hemingway swinging hard with brushes; in separate solos, Moore plays soft, explorative clarinet (he's a master!) and Wierbos contrasts with his bright, fat, flexible-flyer tone. The trombonist's transition solo from that piece into the next is a dazzling study of buzz and wah. Reijseger, too, takes an unreal solo (pizzicato to make you gasp) at the outset of "As The Stars Faded...." before that composition's great horn parts and propulsive rhythm-section groove take over and Moore's Middle Eastern clarinet foreshadows his intense, soulful alto sax solo. My favorite panel of the story, though, is "Having Wandered This Far." Gentle pulsing luminescence, it's a field of lightning bugs with Moore's radiant bass clarinet.

Slamadam consists of live recordings made between '91 and '94, including one track without Reijseger (who dropped off a tour with back trouble). All the compositions, save the quartet piece "Pumbum," have appeared on the quintet's various records since 1987. But there's good reason for Random Acoustics to have released this—given these tunes and these players, the paradoxical looseness and tightness grow that much more concentrated with time. Clichéd references to cheese or wine are actually relevant in this case; the pieces are second nature, completely a part of the group, and the emphasis shifts from how to play them to what to do with (or to) them. Compare the title track with its counterpart on last year's *Demon Chaser* (hat ART); it's a new piece, taken to another level altogether. Of course, a smokin' live set like this just reminds

us that the real deal is had when they take it to the stage. —John Corbett

The Marmalade King—*Everyone Had Gathered For The Celebration; The Breeze Spoke Swiftly On The Cliffs That Night; The Checkerboard Laughed And Eluded Everyone; Having Wandered This Far; As The Stars Faded And Dawn Began. Nothing Quite Looked The Same.* (54:00)

Personnel—Hemingway, drums; Michael Moore, alto saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet; Wolter Wierbos, trombone; Ernst Reijseger, cello; Mark Dresser, bass.

Slamadam—*If You Like; Waltz Anywhere; Slamadam 2; Threnody/Taftia 2; Pumbum.* (61:39)

Personnel—Hemingway, drums, steel drums; Moore, alto saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet; Wierbos, trombone; Reijseger, cello; Dresser, bass.

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CD REVIEWS



Stanley Turrentine

T Time

MusicMasters 65124

★★★½

Three Of A Kind

Three Of A Kind Meets Mr. T.

Minor Music 801043

★★★★

Stanley Turrentine has been a sort of musical chameleon in a professional career dating back almost 45 years. Over the decades he's seemed more at home playing

r&b and pop rather than jazz. Recording for the MusicMasters label in the '90s, though, Mister T.'s been reaffirming the ardor for bop, swing, blues and ballads instilled in him by his father back in his formative years.

Turrentine's mature tone on tenor, its rugged intonation and quality of earthy sexiness, is in evidence throughout *T Time*. His phraseology is terse, trim, direct and modestly inventive, speaking of heartfelt emotions without rhetoric or superfluous gambits outside standard harmony. On the ballad "I Haven't Got Anything Better To Do," he sculpts each line to address yearning and regret—only a backdrop of weepy synthesizer rings false. Devilish fun in conjunction with unerring musical logic propels the self-penned "Terrible T." and an interpretation of Marvin Gaye's "Don't Mess With Mr. T." The gospel blues in his horn, note "The Island" in particular, is an integral part of Turrentine's personality. Only when his capable yet unremarkable sidemen take solos—Trane's "Impressions," especially, is too much of a democratic romp—and electronic keyboards intrude on the music does *T Time* pass s-l-o-w-l-y.

Turrentine's meeting with Three of a Kind, exempt from any pop concessions whatsoever, is a very enjoyable one. The venerable tenor player's improvisations on old favorites like "I'm Luv' A Lucky So-And-So" and "You And The Night And The Music" hold the essence of sensuality and exemplify his understated artistic authority. He's also comfortable essay-

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ing "Backporch Overlooking Heaven" and "Monkey See Monkey Do" from the swinging pen of trio pianist Peter Madsen, imbuing them with an immense amount of feeling.

This session, like all notable jazz get-togethers, celebrates cooperation among the participants. Turrentine has simpatico friends in Madsen (known for his work with Charles Mingus Big Band, Sonny Fortune, Ralph Moore, countless others) and drummer Bruce Cox (just recently on a global tour with J.J. Johnson) and string bassist Dwayne Dolphin (also heard on *T Time*). Little if anything is lost in continuity and creativity when Turrentine drops out for a short rest period or even for an entire song, "What's Left For The Children." It's not too fanciful to think of Ben Webster with the Oscar Peterson Trio in the late 1950s.

—Frank-John Hadley

T Time—*Don't Mess With Mr. T.; A Little Sweetness; I Haven't Got Anything Better To Do; Impressions; Terrible T.; The Island; Touching; Side Steppin'.* (48:39)

Personnel—Turrentine, tenor saxophone; Kenny Drew, Jr., piano, B-3 organ, keyboards; Dave Stryker, guitar; Dwayne Dolphin, acoustic and electric basses; Mark Johnson, drums; Alfredo Mojica, percussion (2, 6).

Three Of A Kind Meet Mister T.—*On The Trail; I'm Just A Lucky So-And-So; My Shining Hour; Backporch Overlooking Heaven; You And The Night And The Music; Beautiful Friendship; Monkey See Monkey Do; Malcolm's Mood; What's Left For The Children; You're My Everything.* (72:28)

Personnel—Turrentine, tenor saxophone; Peter Madsen, piano; Dwayne Dolphin, acoustic bass; Bruce Cox, drums.



Jane Siberry

Maria

Reprise 9 45915

★★★★½

Canadian (pop?) artist Jane Siberry delivers music that takes an acquired taste. Her past five albums have borne witness to her penchant for launching into unpredictable flights of musical fancy and composing gorgeous, although at times, long-winded melodies. So, old fans won't be surprised by her latest songwriting experiments: a jazz-drenched improvisational project—no demos prior to the laying down of the basic tracks—that was originally intended to be a hip-hop album.

How Siberry arrives at her final destinations is always a mystery—even to herself—but how she morphs from beat-happy rapper to cool diva doesn't much matter. What's important is that the quirky songsmith puts her soul into these expressionistic tunes of emotional and spiritual yearning and has the wherewithal to enlist a simpatico jazz band, including Joshua Redman's rhythm team of drummer Brian Blade and upright bassist Christopher Thomas (also a Betty Carter alum), pianist Tim Ray (Lyle Lovett) and trumpeter David Travers-Smith.

Siberry exercises a dynamic vocal range, elegantly and whimsically moving from hushed musings to a soaring excitation. Her band is perfectly attuned to her spontaneity, gently caressing her voice on "Maria," bouncing along with her restless exuberance on "See The Child" and "Lovin' Cup," and dipping into a blue groove on "Honey Bee." While Ray and Travers-Smith stretch on several tunes, they don't blow outside the songs' parameters, instead following the lead of Siberry's emotive ebb and flow. Never one to stay in a predictable zone too long, Siberry switches gears for the final track, the 20-minute "Oh My My," which is separated from the rest of the tunes by two minutes of silence. The dreamy, sometimes meandering suite-like epic showcases Siberry ruminating on paradise-lost themes.

While she plays the role of chanteuse here (even delivering a jazzified "Mary Had A Little

enja 95

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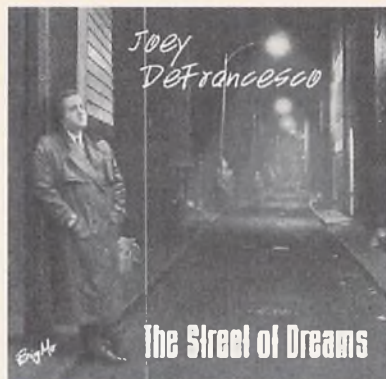
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Lamb" to introduce her band), don't expect Siberry to go in this direction on her next recording. She's too much of an adventure-seeker who's looking for a style of music that works best as a vehicle for expression. Jazz this time. What next? Who (not even Siberry) knows?
—Dan Ouellette

Maria—*Maria; See The Child; Honey Bee; Caravan; Lovin' Cup; Begat Begat; Goodbye Sweet Pumpkinhead; Would You Go?; Mary Had...; Oh My My.* (69:13)

Personnel—Siberry, vocals, guitar; Tim Ray, piano; Brian Blade, drums; Christopher Thomas, bass; David Travers-Smith, trumpet; Ian McLaughlan, percussion; Ritesh Das, tabla (10); George Koller, esraj (10); the Cullen Singers, vocal choir (10).



Masahiko Togashi

Song Of Soil

Take One Record 1501

★★★★½

Colour Of Dream

Take One Record 1502

★★★★

Isolation

Take One Record 1503

★★★★

Precious little has been written in English about the history of jazz in Japan. In the eyes of many Americans, the land of the rising sun is recognized as a major consumer of the music, but a fascinating tradition of Japanese jazz musicians exists, extending far beyond the smattering of recognized names like Toshiko Akiyoshi and Sadao Watanabe.

Drummer Masahiko Togashi in fact worked with Watanabe before the saxophonist came to the States to study at Berklee in the early '60s. In '61, Togashi had a group called Jazz Academy with the (unfortunately little-known) guitar innovator Masayuki Takayanagi and pianist Masabumi Kikuchi. In 1969, an accident left Togashi in a wheelchair, disrupting his career as a drummer. But through the tragedy he persisted, shifting to a more percussion-heavy style, becoming more active as a composer, and along the way working with a cross-section

of the '70s heaviest players.

Isolation must have been recorded just before the accident, in December, 1969. In this period, many Japanese players were actively exploring high-energy free jazz, mixing it with a hefty amount of shimmering, colorful percussion, redolent of Asian traditional music. In two extended improvised duets with saxophonist Mototeru Takagi, the extent of Togashi's imminent loss becomes evident. On kit, he had remarkably integrated foot/hand interplay, building wonderful sock-cymbal shapes and punching confidently with his kick-drum; at one point in his solo on "Isolation I," Togashi plays a (literal) pedal tone beneath sensitive cymbals using only his limber bass drum. Takagi brings the power and kerosene of post-Aylerites like Peter Brötzmann, ripping into rapier overblowing that could have landed the recording on the ESP label, if they'd only been listening. "Isolation II" is a spacious jam, reminiscent of the open investigations of Sun Ra, who was, himself, a fairly serious Orientalist. Togashi swishes cymbals, bangs gongs, dings chimes and vibes, while Takagi plays bass clarinet. One of them overdubs echoey wood flutes; can't tell which, cause (like all these discs) the liners are in Japanese.

Colour Of Dream and *Song Of Soil* were both recorded in Paris over the course of a single week in 1979. Ten years down the line, we find a very different, but equally engaging drummer, and with Takashi Kako's somewhat Paul Bley-like piano, the quartet featuring J-F Jenny Clark and Albert Mangelsdorff gives a good impression of Togashi's prowess as a composer. Delicate, sparse, tuneful writing is seamlessly interspersed with scuttling improvisation. "Orange" has a joyous, playful quality, while "Snow" (a duet between Togashi and Mangelsdorff) gives the German trombonist room to strut his multiphonic stuff. As always, Togashi plays with lots of bright metal, utilizing a huge array of bells and cymbals. With Ornette Coleman partners Don Cherry and Charlie Haden, Togashi moves in a more pulsive direction, copping malleted polyrhythms directly from Edward Blackwell's bag (check the two percussion features "Word Of Wind"), but giving them his own uniquely Asian splash and splash. Haden is recorded beautifully, his enormous resonant instrument right up front with the percussionist, and Cherry sounds fantastic, shooting little melodic cornet fragments from Codona into "Rain," which sadly fades out just as he really gets moving. —John Corbett

Song Of Soil—*June; Words Of Wind (Part I); Oasis; Song Of Soil; Words Of Wind (Part II); Rain.* (38:13)

Personnel—Togashi, drums, percussion; Don Cherry, trumpet, cornet, bamboo flute, percussion; Charlie Haden, bass.

Colour Of Dream—*Crystal; Orange; Acting; Snow; Rêve Merveilleux; Ballad.* (40:43)

Personnel—Togashi, drums, percussion; Albert Mangelsdorff, trombone; Takashi Kako, piano; J-F Jenny Clark, bass.

Isolation—*Isolation I; Isolation II.* (35:56)

Personnel—Togashi, drums, percussion, vibes; Mototeru Takagi, saxophones, bass clarinet.

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Joe Maneri Quartet

Get Ready To Receive

Yourself

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★★★★

How wed are you to the tempered scale? If you're a fan of jazz and blues, with the premium they place on blue notes and personal intonation, then you already like microtones of some sort. Boston's Joe Maneri may push you to examine the threshold of your own temperament. He's been exploring the minutia of intervallic interstices for decades, playing the glissing reed musics of Greece, Turkey and Armenia, working as a jazz musician and writing compositions using microtonality.

At 68, Maneri is poised to make a splash with his unique reed vocabulary. His second release as a leader, *Get Ready To Receive Yourself* features his son Mat. Well attuned to Joe's tonal eccentricities, Mat frequently lays down gentle support tones and chords for his dad, utilizing the edgy sound of his slightly amplified six-string violin. On "One Track Minds" and "Anton," violin is more in the fore, introducing the tracks with introspection. The very unstandard version of "Body And Soul" finds the fiddler taking a deft, bluesy solo.

Joe started out on clarinet, and he's got a startling touch, heard to particular advantage on "Evolve" and "Anton." But the title track's tenor work is probably the place to turn for the prime example of his incredible interrogation of standard scale. In a single line, he'll combine vocalizations, slurs, straight tones and half-swallowed notes, all bearing the mark of some *crazy* kind of embouchure. Randy Peterson isn't afraid of dead space, but then momentum clearly isn't the goal of his interactive, dialogical drumming. The best tracks are the ones with bass; Lockwood fills out the bottom, lending stability to the wonderfully wobbly edifice.

It might take a few listens, but Joe Maneri is dead set to stretch our ears. —John Corbett

Get Ready To Receive Yourself—Snake Time; Pres; One Track Minds; Skippin' Thru The Turnips; Evolve; Anton; Be-hop; Body And Soul; Get Ready To Receive Yourself; Don't Look Now. (51:01)

Personnel—Maneri, alto and tenor saxophones, clarinet; Mat Maneri, violin; Randy Peterson, drums; John Lockwood, bass (1, 3, 5, 8-10).

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T.S. Monk: *The Charm* (Blue Note 89575; 56:30; ★★★½) T.S. Monk runs a tight, disciplined ship. His band emphasizes speed, precision and swing, sacrificing some warmth in the process. The horn arrangements featuring trumpeter Don Sickler are immaculate, the drumming is hyperactive, and *The Charm* includes delightful compositions from Buddy Montgomery and Clifford Jordan. Soloing is uniformly good, with pianist Ronnie Mathews featured most often.

Kahil El'Zabar's Ritual Trio: *Big Cliff* (Delmark 477; 64:37; ★★★★★) Augmented by returning violinist Billy Bang, El'Zabar's versatile group shapeshifts to accommodate different styles. Ari Brown swings from piano to tenor, and El'Zabar alternates congas, thumb-piano and drums, with Bang's sky-scraping violin and Malachi Favors' bass the only constants. Favors brings cohesion, emphasizing the r&b roots of "Another Kind Of Groove," and anchoring the groove of "Blue Rwanda."

Simon Phillips: *Symbiosis* (Lipstick 8936; ★★★½) Long associated with rock groups, Phillips' solo debut recalls his work with guitarist Jeff Beck. *Symbiosis* delivers energetic jazz-rock fusion, with an emphasis on rock, updating (slightly) the vintage '70s style of Return to Forever, Lifetime and Mahavishnu. Guitarist Ray Russell is well-schooled in post-Hendrix guitar, and Phillips contributes a crisp, rock-inflected beat.

Ralph Peterson Fo'tet: *The Reclamation Project* (Evidence 22113; 59:24; ★★★★★) Peterson's revived Fo'tet brings back underrated vibraphonist Brian Carrott, adding Steve Wilson on soprano sax. *The Reclamation Project* represents a more personal statement than Peterson's previous CDs. There's a new maturity and melodicism in compositions like "The Long Journey Home." The drummer is dynamic, always full of ideas and very musical.

Steve Hobbs: *On The Lower East Side* (Candid 79704; 65:26; ★★★) Vibraphonist Hobbs surrounds himself with first-class sidemen, including Kenny Barron and Victor Lewis. Although Hobbs and Barron



Shaping the groove for her soloists: Marilyn Mazur

work well together, *On The Lower East Side* lacks consistency. Often bright and upbeat, the program is divided into Hobbs' promising originals, which energize the quartet, and several standards, which sound perfunctory.

Bill Stewart: *Snide Remarks* (Blue Note 32489; ★★★★★) Bringing Joe Lovano on board is a smart way to launch a solo career. Resurgent trumpeter Eddie Henderson's sharp, brassy tone complements Lovano well as they articulate Stewart's punchy, hard-bop melodies. Stewart contributes a book of darkly swinging tunes with influences including Miles and Monk. He has the ideal presence for a drummer, creating tension and adding accents and color, but never intruding.

Marilyn Mazur & Pulse Unit: *Circular Chant* (Storyville 4200; 54:09; ★★★½) Pulse Unit gives Mazur a broad palette for her compositions, including Nils Petter Molvaer's Nordic trumpet. Mazur's drums and percussion shape the grooves for her soloists. She uses Per Jorgenson's voice as an additional color on several pieces, but the wordless vocals are often distracting. The most successful tracks feature Mazur's gongs, hand drums and balophone in smaller settings.

Okay Temiz: *Magnet Dance* (enja/Tiptoe 888819; 63:13; ★★★½) Temiz is best known in the U.S. for his work with Don Cherry. Like Cherry, he has a global perspective, incorporating European and South American influences into his Turkish/Middle Eastern themes. Temiz's eclectic percussion sparks the Magnet Band as it spins and whirls through this frenzied 1994 concert with Hasan Girnataci's fluid clarinet a featured voice.

William Hooker: *Armageddon* (Home-

stead 223; 50:09; ★★★) Aggressive and uncompromising, Hooker's forceful, cathartic improvisations don't fit comfortably within jazz or any other genre. *Armageddon* matches Hooker with a variety of collaborators on squalling guitars, saxophones and turntables, and most get steamrollered. You want to hear him with musicians who will stand up to his daunting music.

Andrew Cyrille: *X Man* (Soul Note 121262; 61:06; ★★★★★) Half of *X Man* is given to Cyrille's creative trio with flutist James Newton and bassist Anthony Cox. Cox's "5:05" and Newton's "X Man" allow ample room for exploration and interaction. Add guitarist Alix Pascal to the mix and the group chemistry changes considerably. Pascal brings buoyance and a sunny disposition to the group, drawing out Newton's melodic side.

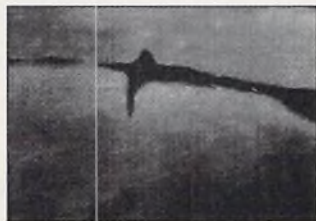
Sebastian Whittaker & The Creators: *The Valley Of The Kings* (Justice 204; 55:19; ★★★½) Whittaker draws inspiration from John Coltrane and Elvin Jones, circa *A Love Supreme* and *Crescent*, for this soul-searching, often tormented music. Fast and furious tunes alternate with spiritual meditations like "Hear My Prayer." While Whittaker thunders and crashes, tenor saxophonist Shelley Carroll Paul plays with a lot of feeling and a yearning tone.

Jon Hazilla: *The Bitten Moon* (Cadence 1058; 45:44; ★★★½) This sleeper CD from an under-recorded drummer ingratiates itself with repeated listenings. Hazilla leads his inventive, well-balanced trio (with bassist Ray Drummond and pianist James Williams) through a straight-ahead, no-gimmicks session that includes intricate, colorful drum solos, some intriguing covers and Hazilla's charming, waltz-like title track.

DB

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THE SEA**

Ketil Bjørnstad David Darling
Terje Rypdal Jon Christensen
The Sea

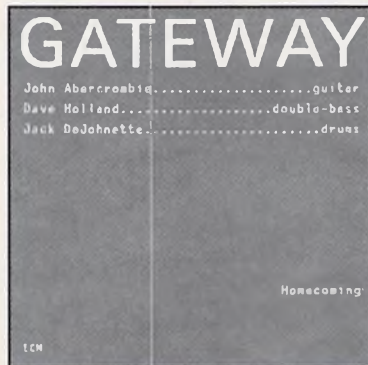


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B E Y O N D

African Relations

by Larry Birnbaum

The African diaspora spawned much of the world's pop music, not to mention jazz. Shaped by isolation or outside contact, African music and its overseas offshoots evolved in various directions. Some styles, like soul and salsa, achieved worldwide popularity, while others, like Cape Verdean *morna*, remained obscure until now. Today's expanded world-music distribution makes it possible to trace musical migration routes in reverse, but the source is no longer pure, as Africans have long since absorbed the music of both their European colonizers and their American cousins.

Cesaria Evora: *Cesaria Evora* (None-such 9 78379-2; 58:00: ★★½) Modern Cape Verdean dance music sounds like Caribbean zouk, but the island's most distinctive genre, *morna* (from the English "mourn"), is its most European, similar to Portuguese *fado* but with a gentle African lilt. Evora, the queen of *morna*, bears comparison with Billie Holiday or Edith Piaf, her warm, dusky contralto brimming with melancholy nostalgia as she croons the Creole poetry of Cape Verde's finest composers. Her accompaniment—on violin, piano, guitar and ukulele-like cavaquinho—is flawlessly supportive.

Kante Manfila: *Ni Kanu* (Hemisphere 32865; 56:27: ★★★★★) Singer/guitarist Manfila's latest Parisian solo recording, augmented for U.S. release with three tracks from a previous album, is a beautifully polished amalgam of high-tech pop and Mandinka soul, with synthesizers sleekly complementing Manfila's traditionally flavored compositions. Manfila's grainy, heartfelt voice, buoyed by a superb female chorus, may lack Keita's majestic power, but his guitar, twining kora-style lines or wailing psychedelic runs, is riveting, and the rich, percussive textures undulate with sweet, stately melodic hooks.

Hassan Hakmoun: *The Fire Within* (Music of the World 135; 48:07: ★★½) Hakmoun, playing exclusively in the Gnawa tradition, sings to the spare accompaniment of castanets, chorus and his own *sintir*, a three-stringed, guitar-like instrument with a deep, woody tone. His trance-inducing healing songs unmistakably evoke the blues with urgent shouts reminiscent of field hollers and throbbing *sintir* riffs piled jerkily atop one another like a hip-hop deejay's scratch effects. The music is harsh and dry, but the jagged rhythms and jumpy scraps of melody have the hypnotic intensity of Delta blues at its starkest.

Sam Mangwana: *Maria Tebbo* (Stern's Africa 3011; 58:18: ★★★★★) The record-



Cesaria Evora: brimming with melancholy

ings here are taken from Mangwana's first solo I.P.s in the late '70s, shortly after he left the trailblazing bands of Rochereau and Franco. With his own African all-Stars, including guitar stars Syran M'Benza, Bopol Mansiamina and Pablo Lubadika, Mangwana spread the springy *soukous* sound throughout Africa, incorporating a host of international influences. Songs like the landmark "Maria Tebbo," with its irresistibly glorious refrain, remain classic today.

Vocal Sampling: *Una Forma Mas* (Sire 61792; 42:17: ★★½) The youthful members of this Cuban a cappella vocal sextet, now living in Belgium, don't just outfit Cuban forms like the rumba, *son montuno* and bolero with jazzy, Manhattan Transfer-style harmonies, they also create a full band's worth of instrumental backup—percussion, bass, even horns—strictly by mouth. The results range from gorgeous to plain goofy, but even when the vocal tricks have little more than novelty value, they're always entertaining. Classics like Los Muñequitos' "Congo Yambumba" and Beny Moré's "Dolor Y Perdon" come off almost as parodies, but on originals like "Exclusiva" and the title track, the group's technical wizardry makes a serious, though never solemn, impression.

The Great Rhyming Singers of the Bahamas: *Kneelin' Down Inside The Gate* (Rounder 5035; 45:06: ★★½) Bahamian and African-American music share a partly British heritage, and the connection comes through on this collection of mostly a cappella, mainly spiritual Bahamian folk songs recorded in the mid-'60s. Performed here by various small groups of elderly men, including the late, legendary Joseph Spence, these semi-improvised, semi-traditional tunes include several shared by stateside gospellers, including "I Met My Mother This Morning." But the rough-and-ragged Bahamian harmonies, set off by groaning bass singers, have an antic charm.

DB

REISSUES

Boxed-Set Champ

by Jim Macnie

There are several young, and, if you count Charles Lloyd, not so young, tenor players in training these days. John Coltrane's legacy is immense. So are the vaults of the labels for which he recorded. With a wealth of titles cropping up at once, one thing's certain: the sound quality of the music below is superior to that of the original CDs. Though most of it has been readily available before, it's these attractive upgrades that should prove optimal once in the disc player.

The Heavyweight Champion: The Complete Atlantic Recordings (Rhino/Atlantic Jazz Gallery 71984: 71:05/62:00/65:56/71:11/72:04/68:06/68:52: ★★★★★) The individual titles herein have all been previously reissued on disc. Some moldy figs thought them initially arcane—the first steps toward a drastic excursion. But history has withered such opinions, assuring that eloquence and passion were buddy/buddy with Trane's muse during this era. With the momentous music he recorded from January of '59 to May '61, he gave notice that the sideman in him was becoming a thing of the past. A leader, with all the qualities the position demands—foresight, certitude, audacity—had emerged.

The saxist still had some venerable characters around him for the kickoff date, however. Milt Jackson and Hank Jones gave the bluesy blowing session—released a couple years later as *Bags And Trane*—a trad feel (disc 1). But when the saxophonist went back for round #2 a tad over eight weeks later, the esthetic landscape had drastically shifted. One listen to the graceful rampage that makes up "Countdown" (2) assures that the well-known virtuoso was emerging as a conceptualist. The *Giant Steps* material, including "Spiral," "Cousin Mary" and "Mr. P.C.," advanced notions recently sown on *Kind Of Blue* by colleague/boss Miles Davis, who used modal strategies to fuel tantalizing melodies. Miles' version was delicate. Trane's was bold. The brusqueness of hard-bop had found a new way to present itself, as Lewis Porter's clearheaded notes in the record's bound booklet explain. An alarm sounded in the jazz community.

Coltrane's subsequent adjustments to this charted course are what fill the remainder of these seven discs. He worked with different rhythm sections. Though cut a mere 11 months apart, check the differences between Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb on "Little Old Lady" (2) and McCoy Tyner, Steve Davis and Elvin Jones on "Mr. Knight" (4). The former unit is merely playing a tune (albeit with panache); the latter



Some of improvisation's most savored zeniths: Coltrane

has signed on for the search. By the time he broke out the soprano sax and turned a *Sound Of Music* ditty into an involved jazz excursion, change was the only expected element of his work. "My Favorite Things" (4) leapt out at listeners, sounding simultaneously familiar and foreign. The Middle Eastern drones that were employed to drive the solos worked effectively, and the snake-charmer timbre of Trane's straight horn added to the exotica. *The Avant Garde*, his record with members of labelmate Ornette Coleman's band (drummer Ed Blackwell, bassist Charlie Haden, trumpeter Don Cherry and, for one session, MJQ bassist Percy Heath, released in '66) was also a curt look/see into how other prog thinkers were developing their art.

The enclosed alternate takes, 11 in all, have been issued before on the initial Atlantic CDs, and remain important evidence of the options that the leader exercised. But what makes the box singular are the newly discovered reels of tape—almost 70 minutes worth—that capture the *Giant Steps* sessions in action (7). It's easy to understand how Trane was deemed a perfectionist while examining the takes he abandoned. Myriad incarnations of "Naima," "Like Sonny" and the title tune, among others, fell by the wayside; he always knew when things weren't right. It's a wise move to corral all the clipped episodes on one disc; the stop-start activity doesn't disturb the flow of the other sessions.

For the most part, however, this set reintroduces to us some of improvisation's most savored zeniths. Even those listeners mildly interested in the music's depth should grasp its value after being drenched by *The Heavyweight Champion's* tidal wave of ideas. The optimum work of some musicians warrants a detailed investigation. As Rhino tastefully asserts, with Coltrane, everything was essential.

John Coltrane And Johnny Hartman (Impulse! 157; 31:16: ★★★★★) The card-

board covers to these gorgeous GRP reissues exemplify the class that Trane's Impulse! dates have always exuded (and sure look sharper than the 1986 plastic edition). 20-bit Super Mapping eradicates almost all the hiss, underscoring the analog warmth of this 1963 *tête-à-tête* of unfettered soul. At one point, the crooner lets "dedicated to youuuuuuu" trill from his throat. As if catching a leaf floating to the ground, the saxist reaches out and cups it in the bell of his horn, warmly blowing it on its way. On "My One And Only Love," the rhythm section of McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison and especially the usually splashy Elvin Jones proves its expertise as minimalists.

Ballads (Impulse! 156; 32:15: ★★★★★) "Too Young To Go Steady" and "Nancy" seemed like odd fare for the resolute searcher, but *Ballads*, recorded in '61 and '62, has always been about the celebration of pith and melody. The band—same as on the Hartman disc with Reggie Workman on bass for "It's Easy To Remember"—hadn't played any of the tunes prior, but its proficiency leaned toward perfection. Audiophiles should be impressed that the superior remastering process makes Tyner's piano much less stiff than on the initial CD release.

A Love Supreme (Impulse! 155; 33:03: ★★★★★) With the power of prayer fueling its invention, half the universe's choice for desert-island disc still sounds novel, especially in this immaculate edition (the sound of which only augments the musical thrust of the band). The spiritual and sonic envelopes that Tyner, Jones and Garrison began pushing with later effusive entreaties began with *A Love Supreme*, the 1965 apex of their intrasemantic empathy. It's also the place where Trane's roiling discourse managed to be simultaneously menacing and sublime, especially on the aptly named "Resolution." For years after, ardor seemed as crucial a jazz imperative as chops. **DB**

BLINDFOLD TEST

NOVEMBER 1995

Dianne Reeves

by Zan Stewart

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

In her almost 15 years on the jazz horizon, Dianne Reeves has become a most individual song stylist. Like two of her favorites—Cassandra Wilson and Joni Mitchell—she puts an inimitable mark on her renditions, particularly those where she crafts her own words, as she does on "Smile" and "Nine," from her latest Blue Note album, *Quiet After The Storm*.

The native of Detroit was raised in Denver, where she currently lives. In between, there were several years of residence in Los Angeles, where she worked with the likes of Sergio Mendes, establishing herself as an artist. But she really calls the world her home, traveling regularly to Europe and other climes. "I haven't been home but a few weeks this year," she says. "It feels natural to work this hard. I don't miss being home."

Quiet After The Storm represents a new plateau for Reeves. "I feel with this album I have become a *real* storyteller," she says. "It was done with a great deal of ease, because I have an understanding of a lot of life-related things, and it's easy for me now to translate that into music and tell a story. I'm very comfortable with Dianne the singer, and Dianne the person."

This is Reeves' first Blindfold Test.

Sarah Vaughan

"Frazier (The Sensuous Lion)" (from *Send In The Clowns*, Columbia Jazz Masterpieces) Jimmy Rowles, composer; Johnny Mercer, lyrics.

I love *that!* I never heard that! *Unbelievable!* Sarah's my favorite singer. She was multifaceted and she inspired me by showing me that you can cross lines, you can do anything, sing any kind of piece. But this shows a whole other acting side that I didn't know she had. If she sang gospel, it was gospel, if she sang pop, it was pop. This is definitely not a jazz piece, but she just stepped in and made it hers. She was committed to the song and the story. I didn't know that this kind of thing existed inside of her. I've got to get this. 5 stars.

Etta James

"The Nearness Of You" (from *Time After Time*, Private Music, 1995) Cedar Walton, piano, arranger.

I liked it because I liked that *blues* in there. I don't think that everybody can sing a melody straight and still give you all the information that they want you to hear. Certain inflections that she has in her voice, and that blues, make it very real and personal. The most important thing to me is that there's a story coming across, and I got that. Who is that?

ZS: Etta James.

Hah! That's great. Just right in, sang the song and there it is. I really had no idea who it was. 5 stars.

Carmen McRae

"What A Little Moonlight Can Do" (from *For Lady Day*, Volume 1, Novus).

Well, she's the master swinger. 5 stars. A great musician, a great interpreter of many people's music. One time she did a review in *USA Today* where she talked about how I scatted at the end of this tune, and I heard her: the most important thing is to just sing the song. Just make the statement and leave it alone. And for a lot of young singers, that's really hard. Because for us to use



R. ANDREW LEPPLEY

our voices and improvising and all these new kinds of things, we feel that's important. But the most important is to make the statement. That's something she could do with no problem. When she finished, it was divinely inspired. Here, she was just at one with the music. Second nature. That's what I'm working toward, where you don't have to think about it. Just go out and do it.

Joni Mitchell

"Sunny Sunday" (from *Turbulent Indigo*, Reprise, 1994) Mitchell, guitar, vocal; Wayne Shorter, soprano saxophone.

[Music starts] I love this record. [She sings along intermittently.] 5 stars, first of all. The thing that I love most of all about Joni is that the poetry comes first, yet the harmony and the colors are very important to what she's singing. She doesn't use traditional chord changes. The music flows just like her words. She has this way of saying very simple things that we talk about every day. She gets to the point. She has this angelic voice. There are a lot of personal things on this record, and she just had to say them. To me, she's like one of those great treasures, like Sarah. You try to own your music like she does. Have it so that it is an extension of your life so that it just pours out of you. To me, this is a very special record. I know that Wayne has worked a lot with her in the past, but he just comes in and puts it down, like he's part of the landscape, creating an atmosphere and feeling.

Billie Holiday

"Some Other Spring" (from *Lady Sings The Blues*, Verve).

5 stars. When I was young in high school, and my uncle played Billie Holiday for me, I couldn't begin to understand why he liked her. Then later, I'd find that when things would happen—my joy, my pain, whatever—she had a song for me. She had this natural ability to move her life into her songs, no matter where she was. A lot of songs on my new album are about specific things in my life, so when I go back and listen to Billie, I hear her with new ears. Whatever the song, she put that little something into it that said she understood what she was singing. People loved her then, but so many young people love her now, and I wish she could feel all that love. When you are true to what you do, it lasts forever. She's one of those people. We get to rediscover her...constantly.

DB