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THE BERKELEY BOYS

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& Benny Green

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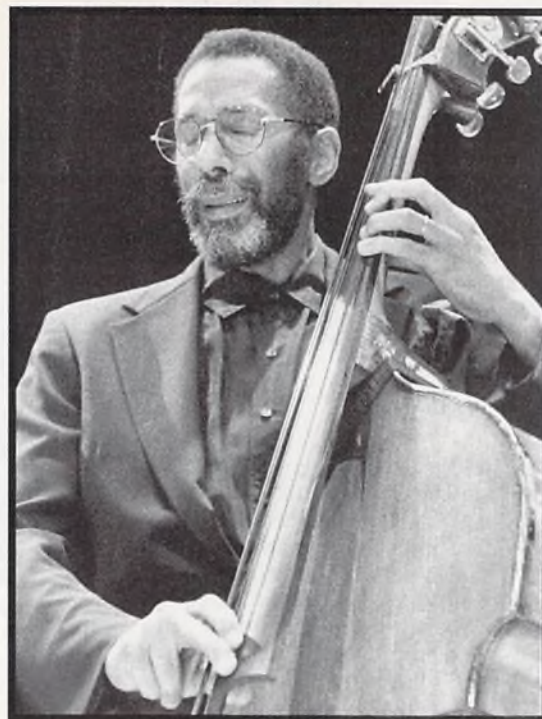


16 Joshua Redman & Benny Green

The Berkeley Boys

They grew up in the same town, went to the same high school (years apart) and have become success stories in jazz. Saxophonist Joshua Redman and pianist Benny Green come together to celebrate their lineage, their good fortune and the future of jazz. By Dan Ouellette.

Cover photograph of Joshua Redman and Benny Green by Jeff Sedlik. Grooming by Wallet, for Koko. Location provided by Yoshi's.



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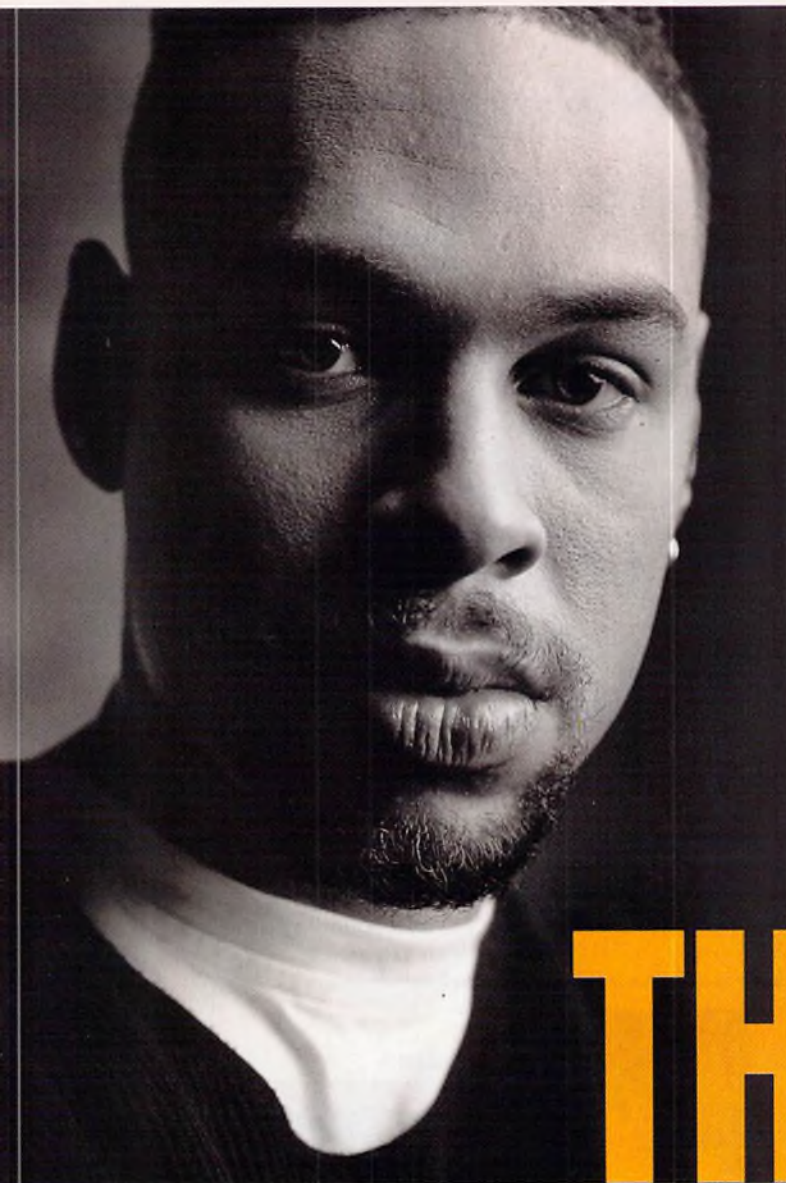


Branford & Ellis Marsalis



Conrad Herwig

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REDMAN THE BERK

By Dan Ouellette Photos

It was a momentous welcome home for Berkeley High School alums Benny Green, class of '81, and Joshua Redman, class of '86. In late December, they returned to the San Francisco Bay Area for their first U.S. double-bill appearance at Yoshi's in Oakland. (In February of last year, they shared a date with their respective bands at the Blue Note in Tokyo.) Their hometown gig was a six-day, two-sets-per-night engagement, including a gala New Year's Eve bash broadcast live on National Public Radio. All the shows were sold out in advance, which pleased both homeboys—two of the most prominent grads of the Berkeley public school district's prized (though in recent years fiscally threatened) jazz education program. Both make their homes in New York these days.

Green, who earned his jazz stripes under the tutelage of Art Blakey and Betty Carter, has released seven albums as a bandleader, including five on the Blue Note imprint. His sixth Blue Note disc, featuring all original compositions played in trio and quintet settings, will be released later this year. The youthful pianist continues to perform regularly with the Ray Brown Trio.

Redman has come to enjoy what many consider to be a meteoric rise in commercial and critical success since he blew the rest of the saxophonists off the stage at the 1991 Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Competition. The son of tenor saxophonist

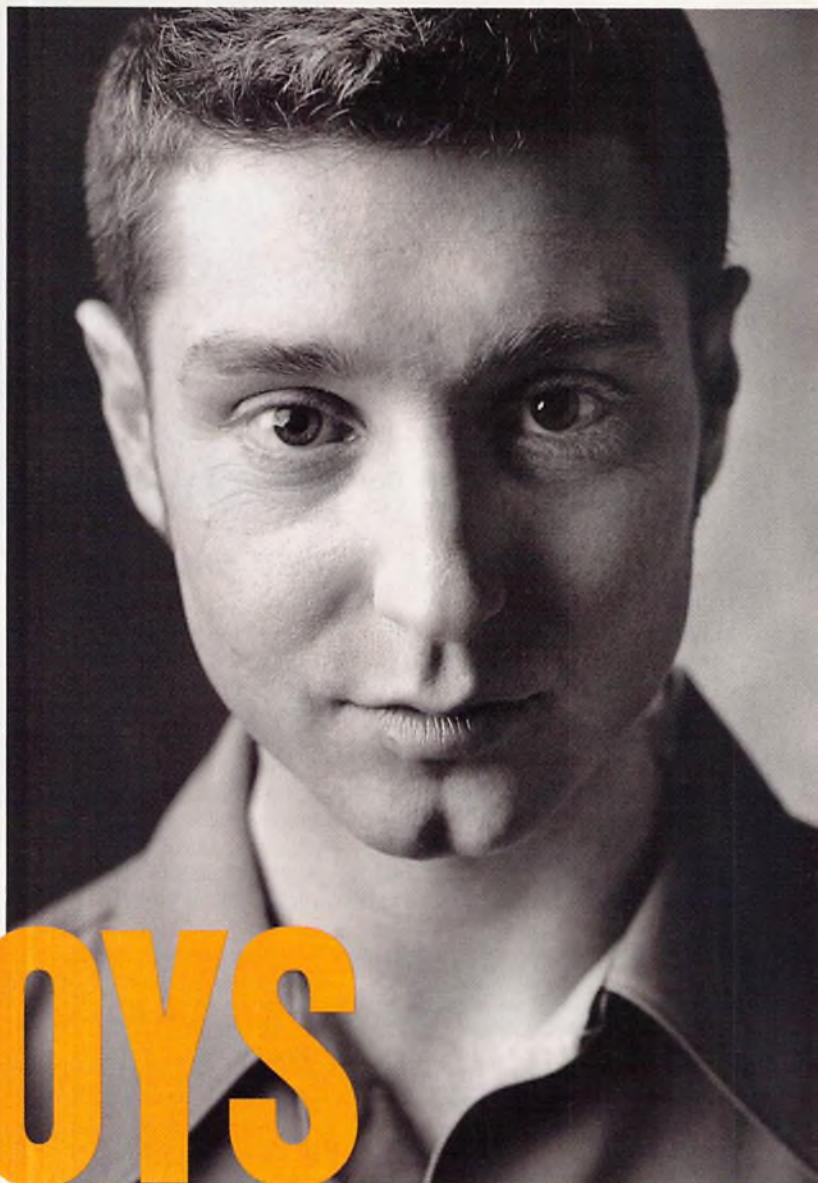
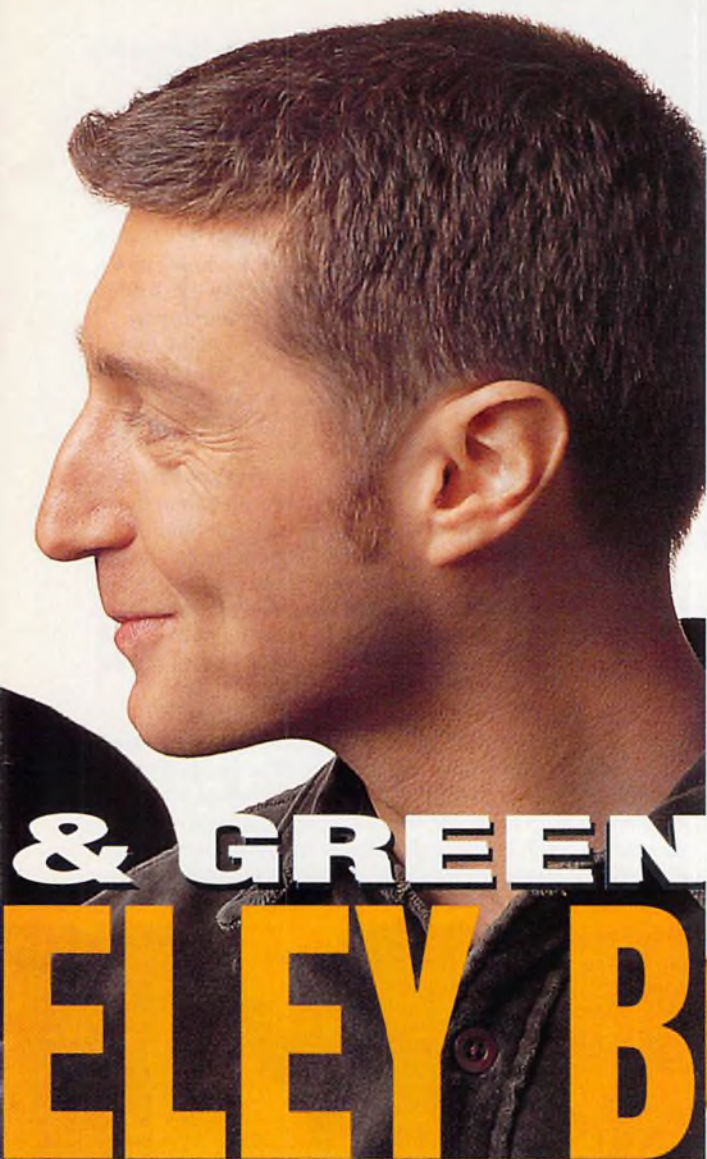
Dewey Redman, Joshua has proven to be a marketplace phenom—his first two discs sold over a quarter of a million copies. In addition to his hectic schedule as a leader, Redman recently played the role of Lester Young in the movie *Kansas City* (see **DB** March '96) and has been heard on projects with Ray Brown, Milt Jackson and Dave Brubeck. He will be recording with Chick Corea later this year.

The afternoon after opening night, Redman and Green met in an upstairs room at Yoshi's to talk about their lives as successful jazz musicians—their similar backgrounds as students of the idiom, their different career trajectories, their passion for the music, and their frustrations in coming to grips with the rigors and perils of fame. They were relaxed and animated, despite the fact that they were both nursing colds and a tad tired from catching up with family and old friends.

DAN OUELLETTE: *You guys are staging quite a doubleheader Berkeley homecoming. What's it been like?*

JOSHUA REDMAN: *(laughs)* This has been Benny's hometown for a little longer than me, so he can go first.

BENNY GREEN: *(mocking a protest)* Hey, not that much longer. Well, it's very gratifying to get all this support. A lot of these people, particularly the older crowd that remembers Joshua



& GREEN ELEY BOYS

ography By Jeff Sedlik

and me when we were youngsters, have watched our development. I feel it's important to deliver something meaningful.

JR: I feel the same way. I love coming home. It's a great feeling to see friendly faces, share my music and interact with the community where I developed as a musician. At the same time, no matter where I perform, I try to treat each gig with the same specialness and intimacy. I want every show to be like a homecoming.

DO: *Josh, you're 26, and Benny, you're 32. Did you have any contact with each other when you were growing up?*

JR: I definitely knew about Benny. He was playing in the Berkeley High jazz band when I first picked up the tenor saxophone. I was 10 or 11 at the time. The jazz ensemble was something for us to aspire to. It had all the positive elements of a sports team. To perform in it was like making the varsity football team. People like Benny, Peter Apfelbaum and Craig Handy were heroes and role models.

BG: I can remember growing up and going to concerts by the older guys. They were playing at such a mature level. I felt all those emotions one feels when listening to jazz played at its best. Like Joshua, I hoped one day to be up on that stage strutting my stuff. When I was in junior high, I was asked to fill in for the jazz

ensemble's regular piano player at a gig. That was like getting a call from Miles Davis.

JR: Yeah, Miles, Coltrane, Charlie Parker and Sonny Rollins were like distant gods, something completely inaccessible and unreal. But the performers in the high school jazz ensemble were tangible heroes. They were almost in your grasp. People like Benny made the experience of jazz more real to me.

DO: *Josh, you also excelled in academics and were the class valedictorian. What kind of musical aspirations did you have?*

JR: I definitely did not want to be a professional musician. From the moment I was born, I loved music. From the moment I touched an instrument, I loved playing. It was always something more than a hobby. Music was dear to my heart and close to my soul. But during high school, my whole life was geared toward being anything but a jazz musician. I wanted to be a doctor. ... I thought about going to law school. I was very interested in addressing the social problems of the city—poverty, racism, homelessness. I thought being a lawyer would give me the best background to make a difference. But that's another dream. Right now music is my life.

BG: Joshua, I want to tell you that because you have such a positive attitude and so much intelligence you can do anything you will yourself to do. I'm just glad you decided to play the mess

out of the saxophone. We're all thankful for that. I think people relate to the humanity in your music. They feel your attitude. That's something we have in common. We love this music, we're grateful for having the opportunity to be paid to play, and we want to give back.

DO: *You've both had very different career paths. Joshua, after a solid year of gigging with others, you experienced a meteoric rise in popularity as a leader, while Benny, you did a lot of sideman work before leading your own band.*

BG: Without question, some musicians ascend quickly, professionally speaking. But I think it's a diversion to see if someone has more food on their plate. Getting caught up in an analysis of other people's career paths can draw you away from honing your instrumental skills and improving your ability to communicate. All of us have the responsibility to carry on the jazz tradition, and I don't mean repeat what people have done before us. We need to be concentrating on extending the jazz language.

JR: I agree. Your career path is something over which you have very little control and other people have a lot of control. Your calling is distinct from and sometimes stands in contradiction to what happens in your career. I've been very lucky. At the same

You have to find a way to go



beyond your body's limitations, let

the spirit of the music manifest.

time I've made choices that have gone against the conventional wisdom of building a successful career. By some people's estimations my decision to do side gigs may have held back my career as a leader. But I think it's important for me to strike a balance between presenting my own personal vision as a leader and getting as much knowledge and inspiration as I can working with the masters.

When it comes to jazz, you have to separate the music from everything else. The music business is completely volatile. It's not

a meritocracy. It's based on a lot of factors that don't have much to do with the music. I don't believe in being a martyr. I've had good luck and great opportunities. But ultimately you have to serve the music.

DO: *What have you both learned from your gigs as sidemen?*

BG: Betty Carter and Art Blakey both taught me the importance of finding a level of performance consistency. Whether you're tired or distracted emotionally or psychologically, when you're on the bandstand in front of people who paid good money to hear you, you have to reach inside and deliver something meaningful. You have to find a way to go beyond your body's limitations and

*Just when
you thought jazz
had lost the
power to
move you . . .*

**Pharoah
Sanders** message from home



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let the spirit of the music manifest.

JR: It's hard for me to pinpoint lessons. Music is such an intangible force. Sure, I can say that from working with Jack DeJohnette I learned to play over the bar line, or with Milt Jackson I developed a better sense of blues feeling, or with Pat Metheny I got a stronger hold on lyricism. But there's more. If you come together and make music honestly, you gain an insight into an artist's soul and spirit, their emotions, their perception of the world. I take a piece of that home with me.

DO: *I assume being successful must make life difficult, especially when it comes to having enough reflective time.*

JR: Because my career has progressed so rapidly, it's been hard for me to live a full, well-rounded life. I've been working so much I haven't had the time or the energy to pursue non-musical interests and just enjoy life. But that's exactly what I need to inspire my music. Ironically, with my career pace, I haven't had much time to devote to honing my craft.

DO: *I hear that was your New Year's resolution.*

JR: (laughs) And the year before, and the year before that, too.

BG: There's no question that both Joshua and I—I'm speaking for the both of us because we've discussed this to a certain extent—have our time compromised. Last night, for example, I had to decide whether I was going to get some sleep or play the piano. I felt like I needed to practice, but my body needed sleep, too.

JR: (laughing) My problem is I always opt for the sleep.

DO: *So, Benny, what did you do?*

BG: I got some sleep, but I'm frustrated again today because I've had very little time to touch the piano.

JR: I also feel like I've been compromising my time too much these days. I have to figure out a way to live and enjoy my life as well as live and enjoy my music. I'm grateful people are so

interested in me and my career. But I have to learn how to draw the line, so that ultimately I can sustain myself as a musician.

BG: I agree. I'm happy people are listening and supporting us. They let us know that what we're playing is touching deep places in their hearts. That means the world to us. However, in recognizing that responsibility, I've been distancing myself more so that I can spend quality time with my instrument and give audiences better performances.

JR: Ultimately, you have to ask people who want contact with you after a show, do you want good music or a good autograph? I spend one, two, sometimes three hours after shows interacting with fans. I love to do that, but it takes me away from practice, food, sleep, whatever. I don't believe in being stand-offish. I'm just trying to find a balance.

DO: *You're both on a roll careerwise. What kind of hard knocks have you experienced?*

BG: I think it's fair to say that both Joshua and I haven't had many. We're thankful for that. But there have been painful times when I've felt a lack of brotherhood from my peers. It's my deepest feeling that as musicians we all have a lot in common as creative people working toward developing our own sound and voice. I wish certain powers that be wouldn't separate us by citing stylistic differences.

JR: I've been incredibly fortunate. I haven't experienced nearly the kind of hardships as a jazz musician that my predecessors did. My hardest knocks are self-inflicted. It's almost impossible for me to live up to my vision of what it takes to be a great jazz musician. When I'm on the bandstand, it's pure joy. But when I listen to what I've played, I'm hard on myself. Since I committed myself to being a jazz musician, there have been times when I've felt so insecure I've considered quitting.

As for what Benny said about negative forces in the jazz

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community, I noticed it immediately when I moved to New York. There were cliques along the lines of style, race, gender and age. That shocked me coming from a community like Berkeley where there was very little racial tension. Playing in the school band was about coming together for the music. Plus, it didn't matter what stylistic camp you came from. It wasn't about if you played bebop, post-bop, free, modal. It was, let's play music.

I think the barriers are beginning to come down now and people are becoming more communal. But there will always be those pressures to erect barriers. It comes from the musicians themselves but also from the media that categorizes music and pegs people into different camps.

DO: And also stirs up controversies, which brings up that media-generated feud between you and James Carter. I'm thinking of an article on Carter that appeared in a recent issue of New York magazine.

JR: I saw that. If you want me to address this topic, one thing I'd ask you to do is avoid taking sound bites.

First of all, as far as I'm concerned, there is no feud, no controversy. I think James Carter is an amazing saxophone player. I have the utmost respect for him as a musician. Listening to him

From the moment I was born, I loved music.



I touched an instrument, I loved playing.

Sic. From the moment

is inspiring to me. Things are cool with us. James called me immediately when the article came out. He let me know that a lot of things written in that article were flagrant misrepresentations, and I've accepted that.

I think you have to be careful what you say on record because people will distort your meaning or take things out of context. It's not that these writers are bad people, but it's the nature of the media game to excite and titillate readers with controversy. I think James and I both learned lessons from this.

What bothered me the most about that article was not the stuff that was said about me but the downright lies about my fiancée. There were gross misrepresentations and at least one downright falsehood about me, but that comes with the territory. As a public figure you've got to be prepared for that. Hey, I've been both hyped and knocked down in the media. Both perspectives have been exaggerations, caricatures of the real me. I can accept that. But bringing my girlfriend into it, that crossed the line. I found it offensive and uncalled for.

BG: I had something similar happen to me. I was thrust into an article about racial prejudice that appeared in a jazz magazine. A publicist who knows where I stand on that topic asked me to put

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my two-cents worth in to perhaps shed some light. Well, this writer quoted me out of context to support a particular slant he had. The implication was that I was just another white jazz musician who, after being helped by black jazz musicians, then refused to give other black musicians an opportunity to perform in my bands. That's ridiculous. Any musician who's ever been in contact with me—whether it's been performing or just talking with me—knows who I am. I'm not into racial divisions.

JR: Anyone who looks at Benny and me and sees our musical associations recognizes that the one thing that matters to us is the music. We select the musicians we play with based on our bonding with them as human beings and our ability to make music with them.

BG: Anyone who studies the history of this music knows that jazz is a black American art form and is a gift to the entire world—to all generations and all cultures. I love this music dearly and, like the veterans who have helped me, I'm committed to its future. Ray Brown has nothing but time for me if I have a musical question. It's the same with Oscar Peterson. It's because they've dedicated their lives to jazz and they know, for better and for worse, that we're the ones who will be carrying it on. I'd love to see more brotherhood between musicians. It's my firm belief that as we listen to each other, support each other and exchange ideas, jazz will continue to flourish.

JR: I believe wholeheartedly with Benny. Jazz is in a position today to be perceived by the public as a living, breathing element in the musical spectrum. It's not a historical artifact but a style that moves you in the same way that classical, soul, hip-hop or funk inspires you and satisfies your soul. I'm not talking about changing, altering, tailoring, diluting or compromising the music. The future of jazz is secure. It's as creative and diverse as it's ever been. Jazz is strong and alive. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Benny Green's pianos of choice are Steinways. However, he says, "I have had many positive experiences with Bosendorfer, Yamaha and Baldwin pianos."

Joshua Redman plays a Selmer Balanced Action tenor saxophone with an Otto Link nine-star mouthpiece and Vandoren 16 reeds, 3 1/2s. He also blows a Yamaha Custom soprano sax with a Bari mouthpiece and Hemke 3 1/2 reeds.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Joshua Redman

(For additional listings, see **DB** June '93.)
SPIRIT OF THE MOMENT: LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—Warner Bros. 945923
MOODSWING—Warner Bros. 945643
WISH—Warner Bros. 945365
JOSHUA REDMAN—Warner Bros. 945242

with various others

YOUNG LIONS & OLD TIGERS—Telarc 83349 (Dave Brubeck)
Q'S JOOK JOINT—Qwest/Warner Bros. 945875 (Quincy Jones)
BURNIN' IN THE WOODHOUSE—Qwest/Warner Bros. 945918 (Mill Jackson)
GETTIN' TO IT—Verve 314 523 989 (Christian McBride)
WITH THE TENORS OF OUR TIME—Verve 314 523 019 (Roy Hargrove, Joe Henderson, Branford Marsalis, Stanley Turrentine, et al.)
TENOR LEGACY—Blue Note 827014 (Joe Lovano)
BOSS ORGAN—Criss Cross 1080 (Melvin Rhyne)
SOULMATES—Criss Cross 1074 (Mike LeDonne)
I-BOP—Soul Note 121196 (Eric Felten)

other projects

KANSAS CITY (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack)—Verve 314 529 828
STOLEN MOMENTS: RED, HOT & COOL—GRP/IMPULSE! 9794 (w:Us3)

Benny Green

(For additional listings, see **DB** Nov. '93.)
THE PLACE TO BE—Blue Note 29268
THAT'S RIGHT—Blue Note 84467
TESTIFYIN': LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—Blue Note 98171
GREENS—Blue Note 96485
LINEAGE—Blue Note 93670
IN THIS DIRECTION—Criss Cross 1038
PRELUDE—Criss Cross 1036

with various others

ALL FOR YOU—GRP/Impulse! 182 (Diana Krall)
SEVEN STEPS TO HEAVEN—Telarc 83384 (Ray Brown)
SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS ARE...
THE PIANO PLAYERS—Telarc 83373 (Ray Brown)
THE NEXT GENERATION—Columbia 468387 (Mingus Dynasty)
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Anchor

By Howard Mandel

principal in Dolphy/Byard/Waldron, Bags/Benson/DeJohnette/Hubbard/Turrentine, and Hancock-Hubbard-Shorter-Williams studio circles and an anchor of Miles Davis' far-reaching, deservedly hailed mid-'60s quintet. Hear Carter's bass pulse open time and inspire Miles and company from the audacious start of "All Of You"—first tune of the second set, Dec. 23, 1965 (*The Complete Live At The Plugged Nickel 1965*) on through to their Coltranesque climax on "So What" some 50 minutes later. Hear his deft, rich cello run apace to the groupings of winds, piano and rhythm on *Out There, Far Cry, The Quest* and his composer/leader debut *Where?* (collected on *Eric Dolphy: The Complete Prestige Recordings*). Check out *Mr. Bow-tie*, his latest, with Gonzalo Rubalcaba among emerging talents.

Carter's a link in the chain of virtuosos starting with Jimmy Blanton, continuing through Ray Brown, Oscar Pettiford and Paul Chambers. He's a standard bearer, along the lines of Milt Hinton, and probably the most recorded bassist/leader in jazz; in that sense, he's comparable to Mingus. A full-scheduled international freelancer and palpable New York presence, Carter's also an educator, a member of the jazz faculty at City College of New York for 14 years. At age 59, he's in his prime, hardly touched by time, eager as ever to meet new music and challenges.

"I practice weekly—that's with two 'e's," he says—as close to a joke as he comes during an hour at the dining-room table of his art-filled but uncluttered Manhattan apartment. Just back to winter after two weeks with his quartet (Stephen Scott, piano; Steve Kroons, percussion; Lewis Nash, drums) in temperate Brazil, on his day off before a Village Vanguard gig in Kenny Barron's trio with Ben Riley, Carter's fighting a cold. "I'm not sure I'm ever comfortable with my skill level," he

attests. "Technique's something you develop all the time.

"Intonation's a constant problem for bass players. Finding the right notes is a constant battle. To be able to play in tune with an out-of-tune piano is an ongoing fight. Satisfied is not always the word that applies to me. Looking for the best set of notes with the best pitch and best sound, yes—I still try to do that."

He's been doing that since graduating in the late '50s from Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., and gaining a spot with Chico Hamilton. He'd played a decade by then, having begun cello at 10 and double-bass while in a Detroit high school. Carter's pro experience and rep grew through stints with Cannonball Adderley (playing bass when Sam Jones played cello two tunes each night) and Herbie Mann, Bobby Timmons and Randy Weston, Wes Montgomery and Jim Hall, Betty Carter, Art Farmer and Red Garland. In 1963 Carter took Miles' call as "the next order of progression." Progress didn't stop him from continued self-analysis.

"I knew there were certain notes I played that were kind of different from anyone else's, but unless you find a way to make them work all the time, in different environments, their value is minimal. Because you can't have the same impact all the time," he instructs. "You're relying on happenstance, a lucky stroke, to make them work.

"Well, luck is part of it. Even when you know what you're looking for, there's luck involved in the factors falling into place—as well as musicianship, character, style. But if you can understand why your notes work—or don't—you have a better chance of making them acceptable, maybe stunning.

"My approach is to ask, 'What led up to this measure? What notes preceded this note in question?' And then, 'What notes followed that note?' One note may catch

your attention—maybe it's supposed to do that. If you can go back in your head, or play a record over again, you'll see what's powerful in this note preceded by a certain order of notes, and the notes that follow the note in question, there's an order to them, too. Become aware of overview to see what makes a given note musical, meaningful—that's what's really going on.

"You know, we might speak of the eighth note to focus on an issue—but it's not just the length of the note, it's the rhythm, whether it's played on the bass high or low, as harmonics or on an open string," Carter continues. "And to remember where you've been as well as where you're going, keeping track of everybody else at the same time—that's what a bass player is supposed to be able to do.

"For me, the bassist has always been the focal point; if the band used different changes for the tune, or the chords started ascending or descending, the bassist was responsible for it all. And things I saw in George Duvivier, Milt Hinton showed me what it's all about. They were professional, read music well, were on time for gigs or early, dressed well, cared about the music and the bass' effect on the band."

This last is especially pertinent to Carter's success: He's never been taken only by the bass.

"I shy away from the notion of 'influence,'" he says, "but I was 'influenced' by Cecil Payne, who had a sound apart from all the baritone players of his time who sounded like Harry Carney or Leo Parker—who had something else in his ear and was determined to play the sax as it sounded to him.

"J.J. Johnson also 'influenced' me: He seemed to play a million notes and never go past the bell. He knew his instrument and the overtone series it involved so well he didn't need to go way out and back, and I thought, 'If it's possible on trombone, it

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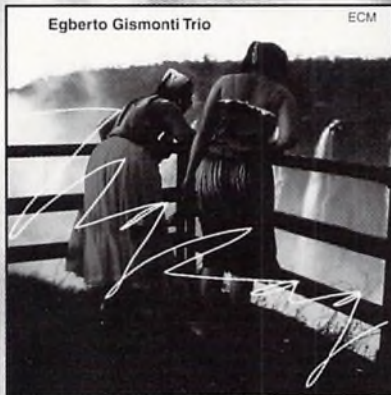
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must be possible on bass—to play a series of notes that work without having to go up and down the neck—what I call 'playing vertically.'"

That's certainly one skill Carter's developed: He typically places his long, tapered left hand four to six inches under the bass neck's head (for standard low register) or just above the neck's juncture with the body—then fingers swiftly, surely, across the strings (and back) for rare articulation—he slides on the strings rarely, only for very special effect. Though control of overall effect is Carter's aim, he knows total control is impossible.

"You have to know what range of your instrument will be able to complement different situations' demands," he says, "yet maintain something apart from the participating individuals' qualities." One thinks of the stylistic polarities he's balanced equally well, the timbral and attack differences of flutists Dolphy, Mann and Hubert Laws, for instance, or the amplified characteristics of guitarists Montgomery and Hall. Yet Carter claims he can't get overly concerned with acoustics. "When I listen back to old recordings, my self-criticism is usually about my choice of notes, my sequences. Some things I don't have much control over: The bass has its own mind, and on some days—if the weather's exceptionally cold, or hot, or humid, or air is blowing on it—it may not be able to do what it normally can. I may have great sound in the studio, but the record as mixed or mastered is not as good. I can't worry about that—all I can do is play honestly and search for all the right notes."

Is that what Miles did?

"Miles was caught up in the groundswell, the tide. He would pick the tunes, tempos and keys, but that was all. Whatever took place, he was caught up like we were. He would never come in and cut someone's throat off, but he would determine, 'Okay, enough of this tune, go on to something else.'"

"He made us all good leaders, able to do that, because we all tried to help the music take shape, whatever shape that was. After the gigs we'd talk—'Let's try this tomorrow night, if we can remember it.' 'It worked then, it might work again if we start it here'—sooner in the tune, later in the tune—or if we save it for the tags.' Sometimes we'd forget what we talked about, but there was a consciousness of remembering and developing ideas that started last week, last night, or during the course of the last tune in the last set. We thrived on that kind of memory bank."

He shakes his head in mild dismay. "Musicians don't do that so much anymore, they don't do four sets a night, they do a 40-minute set then go home. Besides there being fewer bands, fewer points of view to contend with, fewer

opportunities to try your approach in different contexts, musicians are missing the real experiences of having to play when you're tired, having to play to match the last two sets, when someone in the band isn't playing as good at 1 o'clock as they were at 9. Having to maintain the authority and intention you had at 10:30 at 3 in the morning. If more musicians could get to that zone, the progress of music would be astounding."

Carter knows where that zone is, and how to get there—in Barron's trio, as in so many "mutually representative" ensembles of the '90s, '80s, '70s and '60s, working to help each musician "play the notes he couldn't play in his house, didn't play on the last date, wouldn't play if I weren't here. I can work a year without a solo if I can help the soloist play a different pattern of notes, make the band more dynamically aware, more conscious of the tempo, more comfortable in keys they generally ignore.

"If I make those things take place, I'm complete, my job is done—I get a gold star. I got a house, man, I can practice in my house, I can solo all day there: For me, the real thing is to be able to accept responsibility for taking the music to the next level. I don't mind having the responsibility."

Of course, Carter's comfort with responsibility suggests he take the next steps into more fully fixed composition. Having introduced pieces since "Rally" on *Where?* ('61), including "R.I." on *E.S.P.* and some of the most memorable ostinatos of the '60s, the sidelong programs of *Uptown Conversation* from '69, hooky tunes for CII, diverse orchestral backgrounds for Milestone projects, and six tracks—the triste title, break-structured "Fill In The Blanks," Milesian "Nearly," Dolphyesque "Cut And Paste," tap dance "Waiting For The Beep," the easy blues "M.S.R.P."—on *Mr. Bow-tie*, he's only lately begun writing for non-improvising ensembles.

"I always wanted to be a composer," Carter admits, "write down a germ of an idea, say, 'Okay, what is this? What chords does it imply? What form does it lead to?' I've written a piece for cello quartet and viola, and a piece for string orchestra and trumpet. I'm learning to trust my judgment in giving every note I want to hear."

"When you hand somebody a lead sheet you're trusting whoever gets it, once they're past the melody, will play the kind of solo that relates to the tune. But it's out of your control. When you write every part for soloist and orchestra, you're on the mark. You're saying, 'Every note is mine, this is how the piece should be played, these are the best notes for it, and tomorrow night you'll hear the same notes—until I get tired of hearing them.'"

"Jazz musicians don't normally get to do that. They play differently every night,

caught up in the circumstances of the moment: the terrible piano, the drummer's late, the tune's too fast, this tune's too slow, and the piano player feels like this tonight, the horn player feels like that. Good as they play, you're at their mercy.

"I love the jazz language—the chords, harmonies that go somewhere else, melodies that represent each of us as we want to be represented, as individuals. But," Carter says with a slight grin—guilty pleasure?—"I like the other view, too." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

"I have a 95-year-old Zukek, the same one since 1959. It's on all the Miles records I made. I use a 7/8 French Tyrolean for a second fiddle, and I have a French piccolo bass, made about 1800.

"I use Labelle 7710 series strings, nylon-wound with a steel core, with a wrapping of silk. They have a real warm quality for me. With the piccolo bass I use the medium-gauge silver strings, which are lighter in weight, because the bass is smaller, and the strings shorter—I don't need the weight to make the bass work as much as for the bigger bass.

"I use a Steve Kurmann pickup attached to the soundpost, on the big bass and piccolo, too. And a GK 120MB, a great small amp I recommend to any bass player with a pickup who wants amplification that doesn't require a moving van."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

MR. BOW-TIE—Blue Note 35407
JAZZ, MY ROMANCE—Blue Note 30492
RON CARTER MEETS BACH—Blue Note 80510
PANAMANHATTAN—Evidence 22100
ETUDES—Discovery 71012
FRIENDS—Blue Note 89548
WHERE?—Original Jazz Classics OJC 432
SPANISH BLUE—CTI 45093 2
BLUES FARM—Columbia 40691
PEG LEG—OJC 621
PASTELS—OJC 665
UPTOWN CONVERSATION—Atlantic 521
ALL BLUES—CTI 6037
PICCOLO—Milestone 55004
A SONG FOR YOU—Milestone 9086
PARADE—Milestone 9088

with Miles Davis

THE COMPLETE LIVE AT THE PLUGGED NICKEL 1965—Columbia 66955
SEVEN STEPS TO HEAVEN—Columbia 48827
THE COMPLETE CONCERT—C2K-48821
E.S.P.—Columbia 46863
NEFERTITI—Columbia 46113
MILES SMILES—Columbia 48849
MILES IN THE SKY—Columbia 48954
FILLES DE KILIMANJARO—Columbia 46116

with Herbie Hancock

MAIDEN VOYAGE—Blue Note 46339
EMPYREAN ISLES—Blue Note 84175
SPEAK LIKE A CHILD—Blue Note 46136

with Eric Dolphy

THE COMPLETE PRESTIGE RECORDINGS—9PR
 CD-4418-2

with Wayne Shorter

SPEAK NO EVIL—74609

with Freddie Hubbard

RED CLAY—CTI 40809
FIRST LIGHT—CTI 450562
SKY DIVE—CTI 460838
IN CONCERT, VOLS 1 & 2—CTI 40688

with various others

LIVE AT VILLAGE WEST—Concord Jazz 4245 (Jim Hall)
DIZ—Blue Note 30490 (Gonzalo Rubalcaba)
SONNY ROLLINS & CO. 1964—Bluebird 66530
WHITE RABBIT—CTI 40685 (George Benson)

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 The New School



VAN

MORRISON
Jazz Revisited

So, in the words of Ira Gershwin, how long has this been going on? Van Morrison's new album for Verve—a raw-boned assortment of rhythm & blues, jazz and classic ballads—has prompted the same question from an awful lot of people. Everyone has heard of Morrison the Celtic visionary, the poet who weaves quotations from William Blake into his songs and organizes esoteric seminars on “the healing power of music.”

But when news broke that the Belfast-born singer had gone into London's Ronnie Scott's Club—arguably Europe's most prestigious jazz venue—to record with a group of Britain's outstanding jazz musicians, it surprised all those listeners who thought of him as a rocker, albeit of the more mystical variety. “Blues In The Night,” “Sack O' Woe,” “Centerpiece”—these are not the kind of songs that are immediately associated with the man who has been a cult figure to rock

audiences since the release of that vintage slice of psychedelia, *Astral Weeks*, way back in 1968. Of all the many artists to appear on Verve in recent years, he must have seemed the most unlikely recruit.

Morrison—who duetted with John Lee Hooker on the 1993 release *Too Long In Exile*—does not see it that way. In a rare interview, the normally media-shy star, renowned for stonewalling journalists with monosyllabic non-answers, was eager to explain that *How Long Has This Been Going On* marks a return to the traditions that inspired him to go into the music business in the first place, first with Irish showbands, and later with the r&b-inspired group Them. Even at the best of times, Morrison never exactly breaks into a torrent of words. But when he talks about his passion for Gil Evans, Jimmy Giuffrè or Hank Crawford's arrangements for the Ray Charles orchestra, the barriers, slowly but surely, start to come down.

“My father had a big record collection; and blues, jazz and gospel were all around me when I was growing up,” he says. “People like Mahalia Jackson, Sister Rosetta Tharpe and Lead Belly. I listened to a lot of big band stuff, too. The first vocalist that made an impression on me, apart from Lead Belly, was Ray Charles. After that, it was Sam Cooke and Bobby Bland. Later, when I started out, I got a chance to tour with Little Walter and Jimmy Reed.

“When I first went to New York [in the mid-'60s], I used to wander into the jazz clubs. I can remember hearing Roland Kirk at one—I can't remember its name now. There were only three people in the audience, but he went ahead with the show anyway.”

Singer/songwriter Mose Allison—who was originally slated to appear on the Ronnie Scott album but was unable to make the date—testifies to Morrison's

abiding passion. “I've known him since he lived in California in the '70s. He used to sit in with my trio, and I still see him almost every time I come to London. There's a whole lot of kids who've never heard of me who've heard my songs through him. The story about Van is that he's hard to talk to. A lot of people have been trying to get at him and he's had to become very protective of himself. But I've heard him talking about r&b history, and I'm astounded at how much he knows.”

How Long Has This Been Going On evokes the atmosphere of a hot, perspiring night on a '60s bandstand. In effect, it is a live album with no audience. Morrison's old friend and co-producer, British jazz stalwart Georgie Fame, occasionally takes time out from his Hammond B-3 and arranging duties to sing on numbers including “Early In The Morning,” and he adds his inventive brand of vocalese to a spirited setting of “The New Symphony Sid.” James Brown's longtime sideman Pee Wee Ellis—who is now based in England and often works with Morrison—also handles his share of arranging and playing tenor saxophone.

If the vocals sound ragged in places, it was mainly because Morrison was aiming to keep the session as loose and spontaneous as possible. “There wasn't a lot of emphasis on how it sounded,” he says. “It was more like, ‘Let's try it.’ Doing it in a room like that, there was a lot of leakage and stuff. You know you're not going to get the best quality vocals, but we just wanted to go for the live thing. What you lose at one end, you gain at another.”

The band—which features trumpeter Guy Barker, saxophonist Alan Skidmore, bassist Alec Dankworth, pianist Robin Aspland and the drummer Ralph Salmins—had previously worked with Morrison on a number of concerts. But, according to Georgie Fame, the decision

to cut an album of jazz and r&b material came out of the blue.

"He's always liked the music on the album, but he's never had much of a chance to play it. And being an alto player, he's always loved Cannonball [Adderley] and [Eddie] 'Cleanhead' Vinson. When I'm playing at Ronnie Scott's, he'll often pop in to listen, or sit in on one or two numbers. He just said one day that he wanted to do this record, so we cobbled together the tunes. He knows most of these melodies anyway, and I've heard him sing them in private. I got the band together, and we ran through some ideas one quiet afternoon at

the Bull's Head [a popular jazz venue in Barnes, southwest London]. That went very well, so Van said, 'Let's do it.'"

Guy Barker—who released his own acclaimed Verve debut last year—describes the impromptu mood. "When we'd played the concerts before, we'd have a set list, but it would only last as long as two or three songs. Then he'd yell at Georgie, who had an extra mic fixed up to communicate with him, and he'd pass the message along to us. The same kind of thing happened with the version of 'Moondance' on the record. We'd finished everything, and Van said, 'We ought to do this.'"

By all accounts, working with Morrison can sometimes be as stressful as interviewing him. Dr. John, another r&b veteran who produced Van's '77 "comeback" album *A Period Of Transition*, has described the frustration of dealing with the singer's mood swings and his constant shuffling and reshuffling of session musicians. As the good Doctor recalls in his autobiography, published in 1994:


"He's probably one of the few guys that I ever felt like punching out in the middle of a session, but I didn't do it—not because I didn't feel like it but because I respected his singing so much. ...

His music is powerful. He's a mystical cat, and I got to respect him in that."
—*Dr. John*

Morrison has often discussed the irony of starting out as a blues singer and later being hijacked by the pop imagemakers. Ironically enough, *Astral Weeks*, the so-called "sound of acid" album that essentially earned him his place in the rock pantheon, found him working with a number of New York's finest jazz musicians, among them the Modern Jazz Quartet's Connie Kay, bassist Richard Davis and Jay Berliner, guitarist on the Mingus masterpiece *The Black Saint & The Sinner Lady*. Executives at Warner Bros., then Morrison's record company, apparently thought that using topflight jazz players was one way of keeping a lid on the budget. In these days of endless overdubs, the very fact that the entire disc was completed in two days has itself entered rock lore.

Was it intimidating for him, a 23-year-old jazz buff, to be in the same room with the likes of Kay? "No, not at all. Some of the stuff that Connie played was like country—he was very broad-minded. It was very relaxed. We got it all done in a couple of days, but that's the way you did things in those days. I like spontaneity. At a certain point, with 24-track and all that, recording became a long, drawn-out thing. People now automatically play in stages. I find it's the engineers who want to do it that way. Everyone is geared to overdubs."

Some of Morrison's less-publicized jazz ventures are his occasional concerts with the Danish Radio Big Band, whose members performed on the 1985 Miles

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Davis/Palle Mikkelborg orchestral album *Aura*. Morrison first worked with the band a decade ago, and toured America with them in 1989. His last date with them was an open-air concert in Copenhagen last year.

Thinking of the saxophone gives him the excuse to enthuse over his early memories of Fathead Newman and the hard-driving soloists in the Bill Doggett and Bill Black bands. Coltrane is another personal favorite. Then there is the stylish Jimmy Giuffre, whose folkie hit recording of "The Train And The River" was the record that first inspired Morrison to take up the saxophone when he was a teenager.

The great attraction of Giuffre, for Morrison, was his economical style: "It was all about 'less is more,'" he explains. One reason that Morrison never took his own musicmaking too far in the direction of jazz seems to have been the old fear of losing his spontaneity. "I had a few lessons, but I didn't think, in the end, it would be for me. I thought I'd probably get very caught up in the technical side of things. I'd get lessons from people and they'd be doing other jobs. I thought that was odd, somehow. And I remember reading on the back of some LP that the guy who was playing was self-taught, so that kind of stuck in my head."

With the Ronnie Scott disc behind him, it would be encouraging to see Morrison making more of these full-scale returns to his roots. When the great singer/pianist Charles Brown made one of his rare visits to England, Morrison was in the opening-night audience at the Birmingham

franchise of Ronnie Scott's. Imagine a pairing between those two contrasting voices! In the meantime, Morrison is busy working through his store of unreleased tapes spanning three decades, a project that he first started, he says, about 15 years ago. "I got burned out with it that last time, but I keep going back to it, and now it looks like it's gonna happen. There's so much stuff, so many takes, it's mindboggling."

And what about the new, serene Van Morrison we keep hearing about in the press? The gossip columnists report that Morrison's more settled personal life

has brought a new, more extroverted dimension to his public performances. The old demons have been exorcised, or so we are told. As usual he has his own view.

"More extroverted? I don't think so. I thought I was more that way in the early '70s. I used to do more movement on stage; I was more dynamic. Now I'm aiming for more of a balance—not to be too extreme in anything—and to let the musicians play and just sit on that, rather than do a show. You give the musicians space and plenty of solos. That's why I like the jazz approach—that's where I'm at now."

DB

EQUIPMENT

Van Morrison plays a Les Paul Standard guitar along with a Fender Stratocaster and Yamaha FG400 acoustic. His strings are Ernie Ball Power Slinkys for the electrics and Ernie Ball Earthwoods for his acoustic.

Van's electronics include a Roland JC120 combo amp and a Shure Bullet mic. For his saxophone playing, he uses a Selmer Super 80 alto with a Dukoff mouthpiece and Rico Royal 2½ reeds.

Van plays Hohner Blues, Marine Band and Chromatic harmonicas as well as Lee Oskar harps.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON—

Verve 314 529 136

TOO LONG IN EXILE—Polydor 314 519 219

HYMNS TO THE SILENCE—Polydor 314 849 026

BEST OF VAN MORRISON, VOLS 1 & 2—Polydor 841970/517760

NO GURU, NO METHOD, NO TEACHER—

Mercury 830 077

THE INARTICULATE SPEECH OF THE HEART—

Warner Bros. 23802

A PERIOD OF TRANSITION—Warner Bros. 2987

IT'S TOO LATE TO STOP NOW—Warner Bros. 2760

MOONDANCE—Warner Bros. 3103

ASTRAL WEEKS—Warner Bros. 1768

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(Georgie Fame)

IRISH HEARTBEAT—Mercury 834 496 (The Chieftains)

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Lee Morgan

The Last Interview

By Michael Bourne

Lee Morgan's tragic death in February 1972 left Down Beat holding the trumpeter's last interview. The resulting feature story originally ran in our April 27, 1972 issue. We're reprinting it here in response to an abundance of reissue activity currently surrounding Morgan, including the four-CD/six-LP boxed set The Complete Fifties Blue Note Lee Morgan Sessions on Mosaic Records and the three-CD set Lee Morgan Live At The Lighthouse on Blue Note Records..

Interviewing Lee Morgan proved easy—not simply because he was loquacious, but because he knew his mind so well he would speak it without any hesitation, and do so with great insight and passion. We spoke of many aspects of music, but always in relation to one essential subject: the dilemma of jazz in America.

To Morgan, this dilemma was two-fold, or rather two-faced: lack of respect, and a lack of proportion between black American art and the general American culture.

Regarding the first lack, Morgan condemned indifference toward the music, reinforced by media tokenism, specifically the over-exploitation of Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong as representative jazz personalities. "Duke Ellington on the *Today Show* with the *Today* house band—that is not Duke Ellington; to have Duke Ellington without Cat Anderson, Harry Carney, all the people you associate with Duke. His band—that is Duke Ellington! And the same thing applies to Louis. Louis is gone now, and I think one of the main reasons why Louis died ... I saw him on his last engagement in New York, and he had to lay down between shows. The man had just had a heart attack; he shouldn't have been playing.

"This is the tragedy of the black artist: just to live halfway comfortably, he must keep on working! That's not to say they don't have any money—I'm talking about in perspective to their talent. These people should have shrines dedicated to them, just like they have shrines in Europe to Beethoven and Bach; Louis Armstrong especially and Duke Ellington as well."

About the second lack, Morgan noted the irony that jazz is revered internationally, and in fact is broadcast everywhere by the U.S. Information Agency, but is dismissed at home. "It's black creative music, but something that's not only black—it's American black! That's very important."

With better recognition, Morgan believed black artists might hope for a better economic perspective. In sports, Mickey Mantle and Willie Mays each earned \$125,000, because they were the best, regardless of black or white. But in music, such racial equality does not seem evident: Herb Alpert became a multi-

"Music is the only thing that awakens the dead man and charms the savage beast. Without it, this world would be hell."

millionaire in short time with "a nice little pop group," while great black genius has been comparatively unrewarded, even after decades of creating.

"I'm not trying to damn Herb Alpert, because it's beautiful. I'd just like to see an equal proportion ... I don't resent nobody for what they get, as far as they are equal. Frank Sinatra is worth millions; Frank Sinatra is a hell of a singer, that I won't deny. But at the same time, Betty Carter is starving to death because she refused to compromise, because she always wanted to sing jazz."

Morgan was committed to several means of awakening recognition toward jazz: as a member of a group of musicians negotiating to buy the Lighthouse club in California, and as a member of the short-lived Jazz & People's Movement protesting media ignorance and indifference to jazz artists—Morgan was among the first to interrupt the taping of the talk shows in 1970-'71.

Morgan was amazed by many responses to the JPM protest: that the networks considered a few black musicians in the studio bands sufficient recognition; that talk show hosts didn't know even established artists like the MJQ or Thelonious Monk; that the programmers tried any and all ploys to avoid commitment; and most shocking of all, that so many considered the JPM actions as only a personal hype.

"We're saying that if each show ([Johnny] Carson, [Merv] Griffin, [Dick] Cavett, [David] Frost) committed itself to use two artists a month, that would be eight different artists each month. And we're not talking about Thelonious Monk sitting down at the piano with Doc Severinsen's bass player—if you have Thelonious Monk, have Thelonious Monk's band! And then after he plays, sit down and talk to him! ...

"We tried to arrange conferences; none of them would talk to us. So we went in and took over the [Griffin] show. The next day they had the chairman of the board down there to see us! But it's unfortunate; as soon as you stop, if you don't do it again, they go right back. ... The only reason Griffin came out to see us was because we kept on blowing whistles, Rahsaan [Roland Kirk] and myself. He immediately tried to divide and conquer—he offered to have our two groups on!

"I told him I couldn't care less if he ever had me on; in fact, I would insist on not going on, at least not first, because right away, people have gotten so pessimistic that not only the public, but musicians as well thought we were just out there thinking about ourselves. I don't care if you never show me! Put Dizzy on, Horace Silver, Sonny Rollins, McCoy Tyner, Blue Mitchell, Herbie Hancock—put

somebody on!

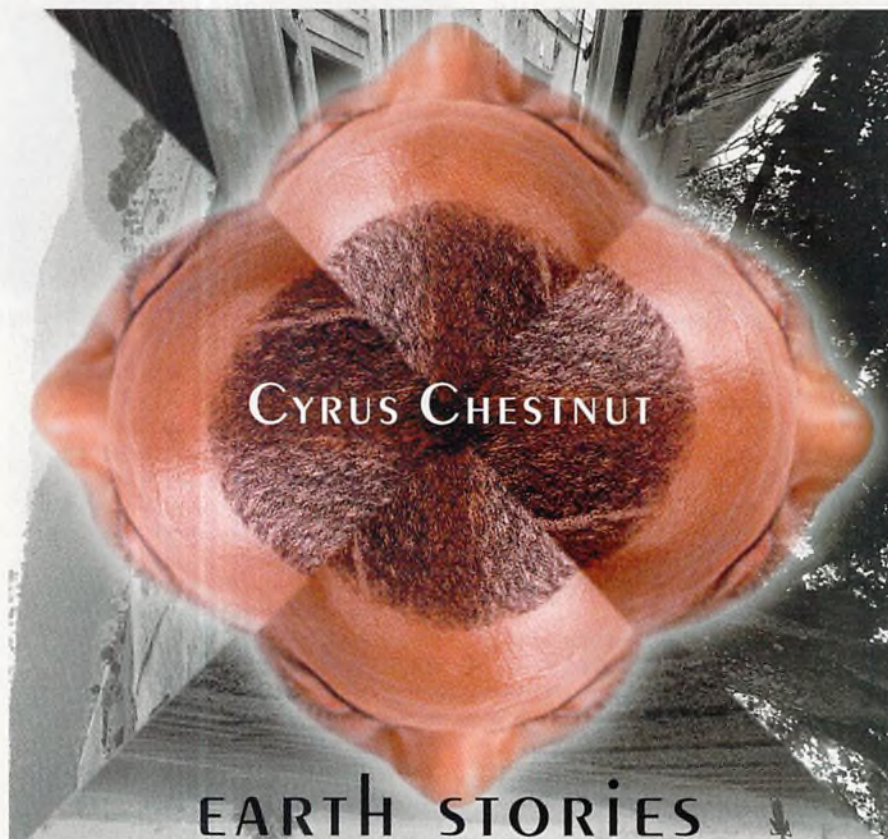
"And right away he came up with that regular thing: Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. And then he told me about James Brown, and right away we told him, look, we're talking about jazz! ... They insult the public, some of the stuff they put on. ... They spoonfeed the public bullshit, and they've given them so much I've found myself humming tunes that I hate!"

Whether the efforts of Morgan and others will ever succeed, whether the music will be finally respected and

granted proper due within American culture, is certainly still a question unanswered. But at least Lee Morgan knew the power of the music, even if unrecognized—and in that knowledge was a strength.

"If it wasn't for music, this country would have blown up a long time ago, in fact, the whole world. Music is the only thing that spans across all ethnic groups and all languages. Music is the only thing that awakens the dead man and charms the savage beast. Without it, this would be a hell of a world!"

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Stéphane Grappelli

Live At The Blue Note

Telarc 33397

★★★★

It's hard to hear this alternately lovely and ferociously swinging album and not consider, if you happened to know, that Stéphane Grappelli is the only remaining player in jazz whose name appeared prominently in the first Down Beat Readers Poll back in 1936 and the most recent one 60 years later. Now you know.

Musicians have found a lot of ways to swing a musical line over the years, and to each his own. But in the '30s there was really only one: tightly constructed patterns of eighth notes, played legato and welded to a pulse that was subtle but utterly incessant. Under the magisterial technique of Grappelli, Hawkins, Goodman, Christian and many others, it created a feeling of monumental velocity and power. All the best young players today can do it, and use it selectively.

On this album, though, we hear one of the original voices that squeezed out the last of the clunkiness and brought modernity to jazz rhythm. Grappelli's attack has not only remained rock sure and steady. It has remained deeply rooted and resistant to adulteration and influence. If the improvisations are harmonically unstartling, the rhythmic power is irresistible in its sleek simplicity. Like all the best early swing, it exists outside the reach of fashion in a bubble of eternal validity.

Any guitarist, of course, who plays with Grappelli invites comparison to the ghost of Django Reinhardt. And the wonderful Bucky Pizzarelli, who is master of all vernaculars, implants enough continental vibrato into "Django" and "I'm Through With Love" to tip us that he knows in whose shoes he's walking. But he's also a showman with a voice of his own who takes his solos across the full range of guitar capabilities from single notes to thundering orchestral climaxes. In between he matches Grappelli's lust for pure swing best on "Lady Be Good."
—John McDonough

Live At The Blue Note—All God's Chillun Got Rhythm; Night And Day; I Get A Kick Out Of You; It's You Or No One; I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart; Honeysuckle Rose; Medley: 's Wonderful, Someone To Watch Over Me, I Got Rhythm; Nuages; Daphne; Blue Room; Do You Know What It Means; Lady Be Good; Medley: I'm Through With Love, I'll Never Be The Same, I Can't Give You Anything But Love; Sweet Georgia Brown. (62:00)

Personnel—Grappelli, violin; Bucky Pizzarelli, guitar; John Burr, bass; John Pizzarelli, guest guitar.



Ralph Towner

Lost And Found

ECM 21563

★★★★

Towner's 16th album as a leader/co-leader for ECM, *Lost And Found* offers intimate quasi-chamber jazz with eloquent performances and more lovely, delightful writing. In other words, Towner's true to form. Recorded in May of '95, it combines solo, duet, trio and quartet pieces. Seven new songs by the guitarist are complemented by three from Towner, bassist Marc Johnson and/or reedist Denney Goodhew. In addition, Johnson and Goodhew each contribute two songs. "Mon Enfant," from 1973's *Diary*, is the lone chestnut from Towner's songbook. And along with Goodhew, drummer Jon Christensen returns to the Towner fold.

As with all Towner albums, there is an intimacy to *Lost And Found*, thanks not only to Towner's solo guitar pieces but bassist

Johnson's warm, steady presence. When compared to Towner's previous work with bassists (including duet recordings with Gary Peacock and Glen Moore), Johnson's style is perhaps most attuned to the guitarist's current measured, understated yet pointillistic approach; instead of being overly percussive, the bassist's playing rests comfortably on and slightly around Towner's rhythmic note and chord placements. Take "Summer's End," a wistful ballad piece featuring Goodhew on soprano. Johnson supports both Goodhew and Towner in the spirit of Scott LaFaro sans LaFaro's distinct counterpoint. Johnson's extensive trio work, including time with Bill Evans, comes in handy on a tune that has all the markings of a jazz standard. "Moonless," a serene and moody duet, finds the bassist enveloping the guitarist only to follow Towner's lead, eventually breaking off into his own form of gentle, simpatico counterpoint.

Amazingly, Towner sits out on three pieces—two solo bass recitals by Johnson (Towner and Goodhew are barely present on one) and one duet by Johnson and Goodhew—and plays the accompanist on "Summer's End." Hearing songs like the spritely, spirited "Elan Vital," one of three quartet numbers, I'm left not only with feelings of joy but a sense of wonder at what planet Towner is from, the music sounding not only cogent and playful but otherworldly. Here is music that swings in a contemporary sense without being facile, derivative or necessarily tinged with angst. Elsewhere, Goodhew's rich baritone sax can be heard on the swinging vamp of "Flying Cows," his serpentine soprano with Johnson's edgy arco on "Midnight Blue ... Red Shift." Like an orchestrator, Towner's various instrumental combinations tend to keep things off-balance, sometimes at the expense of flow or musical strength (his "Tattler" is a throwaway, "Soft Landing" and "Midnight Blue" a bit too atmospheric and formless). Despite all this variety,

THE HOT BOX

CDs	CRITICS	John McDonough	John Corbett	Howard Mandel	John Ephland
STEPHANE GRAPPELLI <i>Live At The Blue Note</i>		★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★1/2
RALPH TOWNER <i>Lost And Found</i>		★★★★	★★★★1/2	★★★★1/2	★★★★
GRAHAM HAYNES <i>Transition</i>		*	★★★★1/2	★★★★1/2	★★★★
HERBIE HANCOCK <i>The New Standard</i>		★★★	★★1/2	★★★★	★★★★1/2

however, the all-too-brief "medley" of solo classical guitar performances toward the middle of the program ("Mon Enfant" through "Scrimshaw") reminds that Towner's best playing comes when he's left to his own devices.

For some, Ralph Towner's music may be too precious. For others, much of his book has become one of jazz's strongest, least conventional works in progress. —John Ephland

Lost And Found—Harbinger, Trill Ride, Elan Vital, Summer's End, Col Legno, Soft Landing, Flying Cows, Mon Enfant, A Breath Away, Scrimshaw, Midnight Blue... Red Shift, Moonless, Sco Cone, Tattler, Taxi's Waiting. (58:12)
Personnel—Towner, classical (1-4, 8-10, 12, 14, 15) and 12-string (5-7) guitars, Denney Goodhev, bass clarinet (5), soprano (6, 11), soprano (3, 4, 15) and baritone (7) saxophones, Marc Johnson, double-bass (2-7, 11-13, 15); Jon Christensen, drums (3, 7, 15)

Transition

Antilles 314 529 039

★★★★½

Transition"—melody by Coltrane, boldly recast by Graham Haynes—opens with a woman's vowels, sampled and stretched, hip-hop scratching over emphatic backbeat, Vernon Reid's effortlessly stratospheric guitar, Lonnie Plaxico's phat bass lines. Then horns slink in like bad guys, smooth ones, who send shivers through the party. Something dangerous might, maybe *does*, happen.

Haynes starts a beguiling, understated trumpet story—around him menace bristles in dissonant syncopation. The parts jostle, lock in, then drop out; so tenorist Williamson enters loose and tough, riding a barebones beat that leads to a horn riff as simple as ever one was. Trane's motif is recalled—a flashback hot and ready, from the towers of North Africa to the streets of a dystopian capitol. So a new fusion is proposed, breeding high-tech, black rock and ancient (far from primitive) musical elements into a pan-global bitchin' brew.

This concept is dazzlingly realized in Haynes' third album as a leader, arrived at through hard work though prophesized by Miles' directions from *On The Corner* to his final *Doo-Bop*. Spacey sounds abound: the rhythmic rip of velcro, a water drums' plumb thump, sudden gusts of sonic wind, garbled radio signals. The transition to track two ("South Node") is a scrub, run backwards to

clear a path for sax, trumpet and laser-beam guitar (Reid's again: Bourelly typically draws on Chicago blues, Afro-Caribbean figures and psychedelic distortion; Ross is elusive, discrete, even self-effacing, but effectively atmospheric) to tumble in and out of phase.

Besides the guitarists, D.J. Kibler, sample programmer Lindhal and the percussionists contribute invaluable to the hypnotic grooves while Haynes and Williamson amble fairly through their solos or nip at the sketchiest "themes," nonchalant yet wary and decisive, like straight men with street smarts. We might want their statements to carry more weight, but we're distracted from the individual here, the significant detail, or any expectations bred of tradition: *Transition* is a work in progress, yet all-enveloping. James Brown pulsation meets Islamic melismatics; wah-wah trumpet skins vamps denser and thornier by the measure; leisurely cycles and quixotic explorations precede urgent or logical linear declaration. The vocal turns (Daisy Paradi, followed by Cheick Tidiane-Seck's keyboards, on "Wali-diya," and Vera Mantero's a capella closer "Com Que Voz") are unexplained, but grip us as sound-for-sound's sake, similar to Brandon Ross' intimations of purity on "Harmonic Convergence."

One may accept the gathering of such diverse materials and hope for their transformations via postmodern modalism, or regard the whole as just so much ripe exotic surface, or reject any appropriative assimilations as inherently disrespectful to the array of sources involved. To my ears, *Transition* is fresh, and



Graham Haynes

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The New Standard

Verve 314 529 584

★★½

fun, announcing Haynes and company have treasures aplenty in their trick bags, collected as the jazz musicians have encountered and embraced the greater world.—Howard Mandel

Transition—*Transition; South Node Of The Moon In Pisces; Walidiya; Mars Triangle Jupiter; Harmonic Convergence; Freestylin'; Facing The East. Com Que Voz.* (57:03)

Personnel—Haynes, cornet; Steve Williamson, tenor and soprano saxophones; Vernon Reid, Jean Paul Bourelly, Brandon Ross, guitars; Cheick Tidiane-Seck, keyboard (3); Amina, vocal (3); Daisy Paradi, sitar (3); Vera Montero, vocal, samples (8); D.J. Logic Jason Kibler, DJ; Daniel Moreno, Jorge Amorim, percussion; Lonnie Plaxico, bass; Catfish Fred Alias, drums; Marc Lindhal, samples programmer.



Herbie Hancock

The idea that a contemporary book of standards can be drawn from current pop hits isn't totally off-base—take Miles Davis' revamp of Cindy Lauper music as exhibit 1. But when Davis overhauled "Time After Time," he completely transformed it, shaping an already well-crafted pop tune into fodder for jazz invention. Herbie Hancock's *The New Standard* attempts the same with a set of familiar rock, funk, folk and pop songs from the last three decades (as well as one original). But where Miles proved that almost any pile of hay could be spun into gold through jazz alchemy, Hancock demonstrates that with slick gloss and facile treatment, even players as deep as Holland and DeJohnette can sound shallow.

Can't fault the rhythm section here, though—given half a chance they lay down grooves as durable as astroturf. Holland, especially, is unstoppable, particularly on more straightforward burners like Stevie Wonder's "You Got It Bad Girl" and the Don Henley-penned "New York Minute." (Indeed, on these tunes there's a great piano trio lodged in the otherwise boring pop casing.) How unfortunate, then, that Holland has to take first shift playing the overly familiar Lennon/McCartney melody line to "Norwegian Wood." Along with the other '60s timepiece, Simon and Garfunkel's "Scarborough Fair," this is the poorest choice of material on the date; it doesn't trans-

late from rock classic directly into choice jazz vehicle, but emphasizes how much of the song's initial impact came from its original delivery.

Peter Gabriel's "Mercy Street" sports clever string and brass touches, while other arrangements, like the version of Sade's "Love Is Stronger Than Pride," sound like Muzak for sophisticates. A novel moment finds Scofield grinding electric sitar on the Nirvana tune "All Apologies." Brecker's got the right tone for this job—his coarser sound helps offset the slinky Sco-tone, especially when they (often) play tandem melodic parts. And, for his part, leader Hancock solos confidently and adds unexpected shades with his comping; he gives (the artist formerly known as) Prince's "Thieves In The Temple" a Crescent City feel.

As skillfully designed, professionally executed pop-jazz, this serves its purpose. But for meaty new standards you can chew to the bone you'll have to look elsewhere. —John Corbett

The New Standard—*New York Minute; Mercy Street; Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown); When Can I See You; You Got It Bad Girl; Love Is Stronger Than Pride; Scarborough Fair; Thieves In The Temple; All Apologies; Manhattan (Island Of Lights And Love).* (72:06)

Personnel—Hancock, piano; Michael Brecker, tenor and soprano saxophones; John Scofield, acoustic and electric guitars, electric sitar; Dave Holland, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums, electric percussion; Don Alias, percussion; (woodwinds on 2, 3, 6); Sam Riney, William E. Green, flute, alto flute; Gary Herbig, bass clarinet, flute; Gene Cipriano, oboe, english horn; Lester Lovitt, Oscar Brashear, trumpet, flugelhorn; Suzette Moriarty, french horn; Maurice Spears, bass trombone; (strings on 2-4, 6); Lili R. Haydn, Margaret R. Wootn, Richard S. Greene, violin; Cameron L. Stone, cello.

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CD REVIEWS



Billy Harper

Somalia
Evidence 22133

★★★★

For most listeners, fervor is an expected element of jazz. But passion is a measurable commodity, and not all soloists feel the need to supercharge their soliloquies. Lee Konitz has spent a lifetime dazzling audiences while maintaining his composure. That tack isn't Billy Harper's way. Like Pharaoh or Gato or Ivo, Harper's ardent attack is key to his approach. He's got chops, sure. Extended stints with Max Roach and Gil Evans (as well as an ongoing gig with McCoy Tyner's big band) have demonstrated the harmonic ability and melodic resourcefulness that make his work compelling. But in Harper's world, zeal symbolizes commitment. And commitment is at the heart of *Somalia*.

A dedication to the wrecked humanity and persevering spirit of the East African nation, *Somalia's* music operates at a dramatic, life-or-death level. Harper's cadences are deep, his themes able to evoke roiling emotions (perhaps not surprising for a Manhattan resident). The smartest move on this date was to enlist two drummers. *Somalia's* strength is the tsunami of rhythm that Harper and trumpeter Eddie Henderson surf to sustain a 21-minute prayer like "Thy Will Be Done." The Trane modality references are obvious. But many of those who try to parallel the master's extended pieces come up short on steam. Here, the energy is overwhelming (aided by a gorgeous recorded sound). When the salutation of "Quest" begets its marching groove, it's like a drum & bugle corps dancing with a rose between its teeth: Harper conflates a tango and a waltz, burying their formal distinctions in a choppy sea of tenor and trumpet squalls.

The great part is, you can either drift along, or reach out for the life preservers this band heaves overboard every few minutes. The ever-powerful Harper (see p. 40) has gone for 23 years without a stateside release as a leader, and this is quite a "comeback." —*Jim Macnie*

Somalia—*Somalia: Thy Will Be Done; Quest; Light Within; Quest In 3*. (60-34)

Personnel—Harper, tenor saxophone, cowbells, voices; Francesca Tanksley, piano; Eddie Henderson, trumpet; Louie "Mbiki" Spears, bass; Newman Taylor Baker, Horacee Arnold, drums; Madeline Yayodele Nelson, shekere.



Ellis & Branford Marsalis

Loved Ones
Columbia 67369

★★★½

The success of Wynton and Branford Marsalis has meant higher visibility for their father, Ellis. Although the brothers have performed with their dad in a number of settings, *Loved Ones* marks the first duo recording by Branford and Ellis. The fact that Ellis' name appears first in the title points up his role as the anchor of this event. Ellis holds things together with a mature, neatly compressed style that fits within the mainstream tradition.

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CD REVIEWS

Branford's most consistent characteristic is still his ability to try on a style, wear it convincingly and then shed it for the next thing. Most impressively, he has absorbed many of the qualities of Coltrane's playing. His tenor work on "Stella By Starlight," for example, owes a lot to Coltrane's: the glissandi, the unadorned, sustained tones. Branford and Ellis' cohesion is never stronger than on this tune, where they think as one.

Ellis' finest moments come on "Miss Otis Regrets," where his somber solo playing serves Cole Porter's tragic lyrics faithfully. (For the record, the liner notes incorrectly add the word "Have" to the title.) "Miss Otis" typifies the wistful outlook Ellis frequently and successfully takes, as in his poignant reading of "Nancy," while the pianist turns around to show a more lighthearted side on his bouncy rendition of Duke Ellington's cheerful "Angelica." Here, Branford (heard on nine of the 14 tracks overall) contributes such perfectly chosen soprano lines you wonder how the

same person could offer up such soupy playing on Leonard Bernstein's "Maria."

—Elaine Guregian

Loved Ones—*Delilah (Delilah's Theme); Maria; Lulu's Back In Town; Miss Otis Regrets (She's Unable To Have Lunch Today); Angelica; Stella By Starlight; Louise; Bess You Is My Woman; Liza; Nancy (With The Laughing Face); Laura; Alice In Wonderland; Sweet Lorraine; Dear Dolores.* (75:23)

Personnel—Ellis Marsalis, acoustic piano; Branford Marsalis, soprano (2, 5, 8, 11–13) and tenor (3, 6, 9) saxophones.



Bobby Shew Quintet with Carl Fontana

Heavyweights
Mama 1013

★★★½

It could very easily be said that this is a good, old-fashioned session with plenty of familiar standards performed by a group of talented musicians who enjoy playing with each other, and let it stand at that. But there is something more, as it must be when you combine the consistently beautiful horns of trumpeter Bobby Shew and trombonist Carl Fontana.

The rapport the two veterans establish on

"The Night Has A Thousand Eyes" is a constant throughout the album, and Shew's approach is mainly straightahead, free of frills but not trills or thrills. Fontana proves to be a most adept collaborator, matching his sidekick's aplomb with a steady concoction of sweet passages that are invariably freighted with snatches of other tunes. While this is not a distraction, it is contagious, and pianist George Cables does it most seamlessly when he interpolates sequences of Gershwin's "Love Is Sweeping The Country" during his imaginative solo on Rodgers' "My Romance."

"But Not For Me" has been around the block a few times, but not for Fontana and Shew, whose muted exposition makes Fontana's resonance all the more warm and embraceable. Their exchanges may be invested with but a modicum of daring; still, the end result is most pleasant and enjoyable. And this relaxed mood reaches its apex on "While My Lady Sleeps," which finds Shew at his sho' nuf best, and where his usual soft facility takes on an edgier quality.

A little more gutsy abandon might have stirred a rather sameness of mood and interpretation that brings the effort down just a notch to light-heavyweight.

—Herb Boyd

Heavyweights—*The Night Has A Thousand Eyes; My Romance; Bag's Groove; But Not For Me; Autumn Serenade; The Girl From Ipanema; Just In Time; While My Lady Sleeps; Night And Day.* (71:54)

Personnel—Shew, trumpet; Fontana, trombone; George Cables, piano; Bob Magnusson, bass; Joe LaBarbera, drums.



Dave Liebman

Return Of The Tenor Standards

Double-Time Jazz 109

★★★½

Conrad Herwig

New York Breed

Double-Time Jazz 108

★★★★

After 15 years of focusing on the soprano saxophone, Liebman has come back to the tenor, the horn on which he first established himself with Elvin Jones in the early '70s. He sounds good, and like himself, not the former Coltrane-like clone he was. His

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expansive, breathy sound, particularly in the low register, is appealing.

Operating with a no-rehearsals, jam-session format, Liebman and his five-year-old quintet—he sometimes breaks things down into quartets and trios—approach standards from anything but a “standard” viewpoint. A melody may be stated intermittently (“All The Things”), or may be played in two or more keys (“Secret Love”). Or it might be treated with care and persuasion: “Yesterdays,” “Lover Man.”

The improvisations can be fairly wild and woolly. Liebman has no qualms about sidestep-

ping harmonic structures, and playing lines that ring with melodic agreement along with those that bristle with dissonance. This he does judiciously at times, as on “Blackbird,” though on others his “outside” style tends to be a bit much, as on “Secret Love.” The tender treatment of “Yesterdays” is rich with lovely lines, and the Trane-like stance on a 3/4 version of “Summertime” is impressive.

Bandmates Juris, Markowitz, Marino and Haddad are not only fine supporting characters in this cast, they have their moments of expression, with Juris hewing more to in-the-pocket melodies while Markowitz follows Liebman’s manner of employing abandon.

Herwig’s session—which features Liebman on both tenor and soprano and a crack rhythm

section—is a more traditional, post-bop recording. Here, Liebman’s playing, while maintaining its integrity, is more reserved; he sticks closer to the harmonies.

Some songs here are done in quite a straightforward manner. Examples include the sumptuous Tyner classic “Search For Peace,” with the leader’s fat, buttery tone exposed gloriously; Trane’s blues “Cousin Mary”; and Shorter’s “Deluge,” which sways surely between tension and invigorating release. On the latter, Herwig, who has worked and/or recorded with Toshiko Akiyoshi, Eddie Palmieri and many others, displays his fast, clean technique. The trombonist triple-tongues some notes and concocts lines that find short bursts segueing to longer, complex strands. He is not adverse to playing passages that are rife with feeling, whether they be on the slow and evocative “Gatekeeper,” with its deliciously subtle Latin rhythmic undertone, or on the more robust “New Breed,” which Liebman wrote and recorded while with Jones.

Several of the numbers here are remarkably fresh. These include “For Heaven’s Sake,” done uptempo with a drastic reharmonization, climaxing with zealous spontaneous blowing from the trombonist and Liebman; and a dazzling reexamination of “I’ll Take Romance,” a medium-slow, thickly orchestrated exposition.

Piano master Beirach gets plenty of space, playing both aggressively and with reserve, and Reid and Nussbaum provide an essential and substantial bottom. —Zan Stewart

Return Of The Tenor Standards—*All The Things You Are; Bye Bye Blackbird; Lover Man; Secret Love; There Will Never Be Another You; Yesterdays; No Greater Love; Summertime; All Of Me.* (71:18)

Personnel—Liebman, tenor saxophone; Vic Juris, guitar; Phil Markowitz, piano; Tony Marino, bass; Jamey Haddad, drums.

New York Breed—*Code Mode; Search For Peace; Cousin Mary; For Heaven’s Sake; The Gatekeeper; 40 Bars; Deluge; In The Wee Small Hours; New Breed; I’ll Take Romance.* (65:37)

Personnel—Herwig, trombone; Liebman, tenor and soprano saxophones; Richie Beirach, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Adam Nussbaum, drums.

“mesmerizing”



USA Today

USA Today says Claire Martin “has impeccable taste and phrasing and a mesmerizing ability to inhabit lyrics.” CD Review gives her *Old Boyfriends* a 10 for quality and says she “is

such a fully developed artist that trying to point out her strengths is a dangerous exercise.” They said a lot more, but why don’t you take her for a mesmerizing spin? *Old Boyfriends*.

When the Sun Comes Out, Close as Pages in a Book, Partners in Crime, Chased Out, Moon Ray, Old Boyfriends, Out of My Continental Mind, I’ve Got News for You, The Wheelers, I Was Telling Him About You, Gentleman Friend, Killing Time.

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Ronnie Cuber

In A New York Minute
SteepleChase 31372

★★★½

Given the scarcity of major baritone saxophonists—and even fewer nowadays with the recent death of Gerry Mulligan—comparisons to Pepper Adams, Harry Carney and

Cecil Payne are inevitable. And while Ronnie Cuber more than warrants a mention in the same breath with these masters, he brings his own touch of class to the table.

From the opening downbeat on Miles Davis' rarely heard "Dig," Cuber presents his bebop credentials, and they are current and legit. To a robust and ebullient tone, Cuber adds fresh nuances to some old lines, deftly editing them like the skilled veteran he is. Pianist Kenny Drew Jr., who is spectacular throughout the session, lays down a blistering solo that combines the florid runs of Art Tatum with the two-handed wizardry of Phineas Newborn.

Cuber and Drew apply a similar assertion to "Bu's Beat," an original tune by the leader, which, after a chorus or two, is in reality drummer Adam Cruz's beat, and he gets under the rhythm, leaving just enough room in his snappy attack for bassist Andy McKee to fill in the gaps. The pulse of things is given an additional urgency from Cuber's occasional bleats that erupt like a hip-hop dj's scratching.

The *piece de resistance* is the group's take on Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady." Yes, the lady has been twirled around thousands of times, but never in such a bold, full-bodied manner. Cuber's approach is richly wrought as if he were smearing layers of honey, making the lady irresistibly sweet. And the coda is simply delightful.

What keeps the recording from being a full New York minute are the rather lackluster originals apart from "Bu's Beat." A trumpet or trombone on the side would have fattened the concept and perhaps taken some of the onus from Cuber's chores upfront. —Herb Boyd

In A New York Minute—Dig; In A New York Minute; Con Pasion; Bu's Beat; Sophisticated Lady; For Bari & Bass; 12/8 Thang; Emily; Caravan. (67:65)
Personnel—Cuber, baritone saxophone; Kenny Drew Jr., piano; Andy McKee, bass; Adam Cruz, drums.

rhythm section of bassist James Genus and drummer Billy Kilson for the project, they obtained plenty of attitude. Osby, in particular, sounds completely confident and self-assured, weaving serpentine alto sax lines over Genus' thick, vibrant bass. On "Summer Mist" and "The Moon Dog," the saxophonist is a colorful, swaggering presence.

Hino's trumpet comes across as cautious and a little dry by comparison. Initially tentative, as though unsure of his surroundings, he loosens up in time to add unrestrained, effusive solos to "The Pain's The Killer" and "Sliced Wild Potato." Hino's playing on "Shape Of The Window" hints at Miles' *Bitches Brew* by way of *Doo-Bop*. Pianist Kikuchi wrote (or

co-wrote) some attractive hooks for this session, but these bass-driven tunes aren't the best context for Kikuchi's often spare, understated playing. Kikuchi is capable of creating an air of mystery and suspense, but his dark ruminations on "Shape Of The Window" and "Summer Mist" seem out of place.

When the pieces fit, however, *Acoustic Boogie* achieves an intriguing stylistic synthesis. —Jon Andrews

Acoustic Boogie — Monk's Dilemma [sic]; Summer Mist; The Moon Dog; The Pain's The Killer; Shape Of The Window; Thump; Sliced Wild Potato. (49:34)
Personnel—Hino, trumpet; Kikuchi, piano; Greg Osby, alto saxophone; James Genus, electric bass; Billy Kilson, drums.

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Terumasa Hino/ Masabumi Kikuchi

Acoustic Boogie
Blue Note 36259

★★★½

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CD REVIEWS

JAZZ

Miles Through Others

by Howard Mandel

Five years since his passing, Miles Dewey Davis is the continued subject of curiosity, consternation, regard and vilification among musicians, critics and other listeners. Those paying tribute here honor just one or two aspects of Davis' long, broad career; except for Dave Liebman's, their tips of the hat to Miles' sound, style and spirit concentrate on his late-'50s/mid-'60s acoustic combos, slightly but significantly revised standards, blues and modal forms.

Freddie Hubbard: *Blues For Miles* (Alfa Jazz/Evidence 22139; 57:08; ★★★) Hubbard struggles with a give-a-damn attitude and the expectation his lyrical ideas are ends in themselves, whatever his chops. Recording in a Tokyo studio in April '92, he's on the line: Neither capable support from West Coast-based pianist Billy Childs, bassist Tony Dumas and drummer Ralph Penland nor the Harmon mute (which Miles favored, too) mask his smooch and quaver. So he plays full-out as possible, and blue light glints off tarnished brass. Master of romantic mood, melodic line, songlike phrase and rhythmic figure, Hub makes a jazz-funk case on the title track (aka "Hip-Hop-Bop"), aces "Come Rain Or Come Shine" and "The Thrill Is Gone," flirts but doesn't succumb to kitsch on "Gypsy Lament." But "Skylark" and "Tenderly" are dubious, and "Autumn Leaves" a foolhardy cover.

Carl Allen & Manhattan Projects: *The Dark Side Of Dewey* (Alfa Jazz/Evidence 22138; 51:53; ★★★½) Trumpeter Nicholas Payton, making his album debut in January '92, boasts technique that Miles never dreamed, and borrows smartly; alto/soprano saxist Vincent Herring, though fluid in Cannonball's manner, is garrulous rather than bouncy. With solid leader/drummer/composer Allen abetted by stalwart bassist Dwayne Burno and touch-sensitive pianist Mulgrew Miller, the four original songs are fairly compelling. "All Blues," "Funny Valentine," "Dear Old Stockholm" and "Just Squeeze Me" break no new ground, do have their moments.

Candid Jazz Masters: *For Miles* (Candid 79710; 64:58; ★★★½) Clear, clean and fleet brassman Claudio Roditi, rampant alto saxist Donald Harrison and righteous tenor saxman Ricky Ford, exquisite pianist Kenny Barron, yeoman bassist Larry Gales and crisp drummer Joe Chambers find unity in their different strengths for energy that redeems the repertoire's familiarity. Some ensemble touches—the "All Blues" backing line, "Nardis" and "Walkin'" intros—aren't



Benny Golson: plenty of warmth

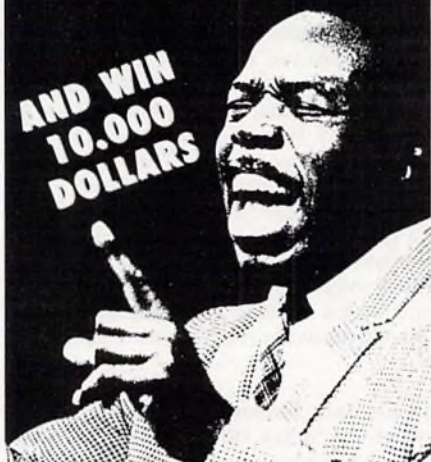
perfect. The soloists take big chances (Ford gets Rollinsesque on "Valentine") and land right-side up in this Manhattan club date from '91. Settle for no less.

Benny Golson: *I Remember Miles* (Alfa Jazz/Evidence 22141; 63:55; ★★★) A stellar and estimable sextet. The subtle tenorist/composer/arranger Golson brings two ballads—the new "One Day, Forever (I Remember Miles)" and "Hearstrings"—as well as a sleek blues ("Uptown Afterburn"), overall integrity and warmth to the date, generously featuring never-better trumpeter Eddie Henderson, jaunty trombonist Curtis Fuller and the hand-in-glove team of bassist Ray Drummond and drummer Tony Reedus. Their very polished respects are highlighted by fine details (Golson underlines Henderson so softly on "Round Midnight," Reedus brushing and Miller placing chords just so), a distinctive "Four," faithful renditions of "Autumn Leaves" and "So What."

Dave Liebman: *Miles Away* (Owl 078 830485; 55:42; ★★★) Miles' soprano saxist in the halcyon electric '70s surveys the Master's moves in reverse, with pianist/key-boardist Phil Markowitz, drummer/percussionist Jamey Haddad, guitarist Vic Juris, upright and electric bassist Tony Marino. "Code M.D." from *Decoy* burns as Lieb squeals. "Wili (For Dave)," recorded on *Dark Magus*, is spacey-spooky; "In A Silent Way" is as deliberate as a rock garden, then waxes luxuriant. "81" (actually "Eighty-One") from *E.S.P.* accrues power gradually; Wayne Shorter's "Fall" is reverberant and fascinating.

Juris' solo on "All Blues" in 11/4 is followed by fervent Liebman (and their appetite-whetting duet). A thoughtful, polyrhythmic "Pan Piper" (*Sketches Of Spain*); driving, with minor swerves, "Milestones"; tender piano/soprano version of Mingus' "Smooch"; swinging ass-backwards "Solar"; and gentle once-through "Boplicity" (*Birth Of The Cool*) complete a radically personal and imaginative reinterpretation of a great musician's legacy. That's cool: Miles survives! **DB**

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CD REVIEWS

B E Y O N D

Lusaphonics

by Larry Birnbaum

Brazilian music has long overshadowed other lusophone (Portuguese-language) styles, but lately the sounds of Cape Verde, Angola and Portugal itself have gained wider exposure. Recent releases illuminate the connections between the genres, but each radiates its own scintillating light.

Various Artists: *Brasil—A Century Of Song* (Blue Jackel 5001/2/3/4; 60:21/58:13/65:47/68:33; ★★½) Producer Jack O'Neil has compiled a superb four-CD box that covers a lot of territory while stepping clear of the beaten path. Only about half a century is represented, however (the earliest track being Ary Barroso's "Deixa Esta Mulher Sofrer" from 1939), and older styles are mostly represented by recent recordings. O'Neil's tastes run so heavily toward percussive sambas that on many selections, the *Folk & Traditional*, *Carnaval*, *Bossa Nova Era* and *MPB* discs seem interchangeable. Still, there's variety enough within each disc to maintain unflagging interest, with lesser-known but first-rate artists—plus folk groups, samba schools and *blocos Afros*—interspersed among brand names like Gal Costa, Baden Powell and Antonio Carlos Jobim. The many highlights include Carmen Miranda's 1941 "Ella Diz Que Tem" and Milton Nascimento and Lô Borges' 1971 "Cravo E Canela," which Nascimento later recorded with Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock.

João Bosco: *Na Onda Que Balança* (TriStar 67210; 46:37; ★★★★★) A contemporary of Nascimento, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, singer/songwriter Bosco takes old-school Brazilian pop into the '90s with airy textures and stripped-down rhythms. He smoothly mingles classical, folk, rock and jazz influences, stamping them all with his own sophisticated melodic feel. On uptempo tunes like the bluesy "O Espirito Do Prazer" or bittersweet ballads like "Indeciso Coração," his agile yet relaxed vocals draw the listener into a buoyant, dreamy mood. Surprisingly, he avoids explicit samba beats altogether, except on the gorgeous bossa "Olhos Puxados."

Madredeus: *O Espirito Da Paz* (Metro Blue 7243 8 32338; 60:17; ★★★) Founded by two Portuguese rockers who decided to return to their national roots, Madredeus has taken Europe by quiet storm. The group updates traditional *fado* music with original instead of folkloric melodies and standard guitars in place of the lute-shaped Portuguese kind. The results verge on new-age blandness, with gauzy arrangements that often seem precious and cloying. But Teresa Salgueiro's gossamer vocals imbue the poetic lyrics with the melancholy nostalgia that the



João Bosco: agile yet relaxed

Portuguese call *saudade*, bringing emotional bite to songs like "Os Senhores De Guerra" and the hit "O Pastor."

Símentera: *Raiz* (Lusafrica/Melodie 79588; 75:47; ★★½) With musical links to Portugal, Africa, Brazil and the Caribbean, Cape Verde is a logical launching pad for a world-music crossover, but Símentera's island roots are nearly smothered in French studio sweetening. Former Cesaria Evora producer José Da Silva has fashioned a sleek acoustic sound tailored to European tastes, capturing neither the earthy exuberance of Cape Verde's dance beats nor the plaintive profundity of its balladic *mornas*. The group is most effective on the wistful title track, floating sweet vocal harmonies over breezy rhythms.

Mendes Brothers: *Bandera* (MB 0012; 63:13; ★★½) Based in Massachusetts, the Mendes Brothers market their electric dance pop primarily to Africa and their native Cape Verde. The sound resembles French Caribbean *zouk*, with touches of samba and salsa, but the bounce and lilt are uniquely Cape Verdean. The material, all by brothers João and Ramiro Mendes, consists mainly of *coladeras*, which originated in the 1950s, but there are a few *banderas*, which developed in the 1500s. The old beat is trickier, but the tunes are all catchy, with call-and-response vocals by João and chorus and booty-shaking riffs by multi-instrumentalist Ramiro.

Various Artists: *Angola 20 Anos* (Gravison 23/95; 71:25; ★★★★★) Angola is the home of samba's ancestor the *semba*, so its music has a natural "Brazilian" feel, flavored with Portuguese, Caribbean, Zairean and other ingredients. Spanning two decades worth of Angolan hits, plus a couple of ringers by the Mendes Brother, this collection ranges from soft bossas like Rui Mingas' "Morro Da Maianga" to hard-throbbing *soukous* like Os Kiezos' "Princesa Rita." Among the better-known artists are Bonga, whose style suggests Cape Verdean *morna*, and Teta Lando, who sounds like a French *chanteur*. But most of the music has a distinctively delightful Angolan flair, providing a missing link to rest of the lusophone world.

REISSUES

The Ericle Of Dolphy

by John Corbett

In his woefully short 16 years of professional music-making, **Eric Dolphy** continually pushed his own playing into unfamiliar territory, turning the bass clarinet into the accepted tool it is today, writing a book of challenging and memorable tunes, quickly carving out a unique place in jazz history alongside his most insightful contemporaries and collaborators.

The Complete Prestige Recordings (Prestige 4418; 77:35/73:15/75:03/77:18/76:21/74:34/74:57/75:55/74:44: ★★★★★) Dolphy's 17 months of work for the Prestige label produced some of his key musical statements. Some think of his contribution primarily in terms of conceptualism; for such listeners, nothing approaches Dolphy's interrogation and reinvention of standard jazz form on the Blue Note classic *Out To Lunch*. In fact, this well-notated, beautifully dressed nine-disc box (with individual CDs intelligently packed together in two-disc jewel cases rather than space-gobbling singles) comes with plenty of Dolphy's angular, disjunct, unusually structured, choicely dissonant compositions to chew on. But if you listen to the alto saxophonist, clarinetist and flutist as a revolutionary instrumentalist, then hearing him wend his way inside, against, around and off of conventional chord sequences and rhythms—as he does on many on the box's tracks—won't seem regressive at all.

Compiling the full 17 Prestige (and subsidiary New Jazz) dates Dolphy played on in '61 and '62, the box includes a couple of sessions less central to his opus: *Trane Whistle*, a slick big-band record led by Eddie "Lock-jaw" Davis with Dolphy in the horn section, and *Caribè*, one of a couple of records he made with the Latin Jazz Quintet. But it's right that these should be in the box; they're more than filler, giving a full sense of the breadth of stylistic activity Dolphy was willing to delve into and the sheer amount of work he was capable of. And if you listen to what he does with his portion of those more straightahead projects, including two LPs with Oliver Nelson, you'll be convinced of his ability to blur the line between soloist and conceptualizer.

While there are no new discoveries from the vaults, in the tradition of the best box sets the material is reorganized into its original sessions, taking the alternate takes and subsequent issues and folding them back into chronological sequence. The fabulous *Dash One* alternate takes of "245" and "G.W.," both quintessential Dolphy compositions from his first Prestige record *Outward Bound*, are placed in proximity to the master takes, making easy comparison. The other



Dolphy: plenty to chew on

Dolphy-led material comes from his records *Out There* and from Dolphy's great partnership with trumpeter Booker Little, which produced *Far Cry* (containing Dolphy's important unaccompanied alto version of "Tenderly") and three LPs from July '61 at the Five Spot. With an unstoppable rhythm section of Mal Waldron on piano, bassist Richard Davis and Edward Blackwell on drums, the group interplay and personal soloing on these tracks is the stuff of dreams. Another of *The Complete Prestige Recordings'* joys is the Waldron-led sextet session *The Quest*, with Dolphy's future Mingus-mate Booker Ervin on tenor; I also have a spot in my heart for Ken McIntyre's *Looking Ahead*, which finds Dolphy playing alongside a highly sympathetic, if less fully formed, multi-reedman. For anyone who values creativity in jazz, the material in this package is indispensable.

Vintage Dolphy (GM 3005; 67:56:★★★★) On the day before he recorded *Far Cry* and played on Ornette Coleman's *Free Jazz* in December 1960, Dolphy played on composer Gunther Schuller's record *Jazz Abstractions* (Atlantic—out of print). This assemblage of live material is drawn from concerts in '62 and '63 that featured Dolphy and different ensembles playing Schuller's third-stream pieces. To these ears, the music is rich and subtle, full of more fulfilled possibilities than it was often given credit for; check out the luminous clarinet feature "Densities." Along with a jam-session version of Bird's "Donna Lee," with Phil Woods and Benny Golson on reeds and Barre Phillips on bass, three tracks are straight Dolphy Quartet, with drummer J.C. Moses, Richard Davis on bass and Edward Armour on trumpet; a version of Dolphy's "Iron Man" sports his trademark interval-blazing alto, still sounding fresh 33 years later. The only thing that differentiates this "second edition" on Schuller's own GM label from the already available version, same name, on enja, is better packaging, a tad cleaner sound (still quite live) and a previously unknown version of Schuller's fascinating "Variants On A Theme By Thelonious Monk." **DB**



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BLINDFOLD TEST

MAY 1996

Antoine Roney

by Jim Macnie

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.

Tenor saxophonist Antoine Roney's talent for sculpting kinetic contours can be heard on *Whirling*, his second Muse release as a leader. Quartet pieces are interspersed with a drum and sax duet and a closing solo prayer. Like several fledgling reed players, Roney is still negotiating the Wayne/Trane axis. But Antoine's essence is emerging all the time. You can really tell on Grand Central's *Sax Storm* (Evidence), where Roney bounces ideas off fellow reedist/pal Ravi Coltrane. Of course, his highest visibility comes from his participation in brother Wallace's unit. *The Wallace Roney Quintet* finds Antoine waxing elliptical. "I think I sound different on all those records," he muses, "because I'm trying to fit into the situation at hand."

This is Roney's first Blindfold Test, but he says that his dad challenged his two sons to guess styles from an early age on. "It wasn't no game for my father," he recalls. "This was for real. I mean, how much of a game is it when you're five years old and your dad says, 'Who's that on drums?' and if you give the wrong answer he gets upset? 'You can't tell who that is?' It's a Philly thing. You knew what kind of horns were used, what kind of drums the guy played. It definitely developed my ear."

Clifford Jordan Quartet

"Bearcat" (from *Bearcat*, Jazzland/OJC, rec. 1961) Jordan, tenor sax; Cedar Walton, piano; Teddy Smith, bass; J.C. Moses, drums.

It's Clifford Jordan ... he kind of raised me. When I first got to New York and was checking out all the guys playing, Clifford Jordan was one of them. He was playing great, burning. I sat in with him once at a club called Lush Life. He pulled me aside and said, "Yeah, I hear you playing those snakes. Keep playing those snakes." Every time he saw me, he wanted me to get up on the bandstand and sit in. "Go get it, keep on playing!" He inspired me.

He sounded fresh playing every era of music. Play just as free as anybody and play as inside as anybody. I don't know this record. But I know his sound, his movement, the way he plays from the bottom to the top. Real command of the instrument. Real personality. Some cats bend a note and they think it's personality. Clifford Jordan plays himself. 5 stars for Clifford.

Jack DeJohnette

"Central Park West" (from *Special Edition*, ECM, rec. 1979) DeJohnette, drums, piano. melodic; David Murray, tenor sax, bass clarinet; Arthur Blythe, alto sax; Peter Warren, bass.

"Central Park West." That sounds like something you'd play on a Sunday morning in the summertime, when you're just relaxing. The way they did it was nice. Parts sound improvised, you know, there are movements. The other pieces you have played had a whole motion. This created a quiet, a cooled-out thing. Very touching. They used an arrangement to provide an atmosphere. One instrument was hitting a high note over the top of a harmony that was outside the harmony they were playing. Made me think of nature, birds flying. I don't know who it was. A common guess would be World Sax Quartet, but there have been others who did that stuff, too.

JM: It's DeJohnette.

Oh yeah, I remember this. 4 stars.



Stanley Turrentine

"Triste" (from *More Than A Mood*, MusicMasters, 1992) Turrentine, tenor sax; Cedar Walton, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

That's Stanley. I give Stanley 5 stars. I haven't heard that record, but it's the sound. When I hear Stanley, I see his face, not the saxophone. He transcends the metal of the instrument, and makes it live. What comes out of the bell is him. Notes, phrases, the comical thing—just like when he's talking to you.

Wessell Anderson

"Ron Green's DC Kitchen" (from *The Ways of Warmdaddy*, Atlantic, 1995) Anderson, alto sax; Taurus Mateen, bass; Donald Edwards, drums.

Whooh. I don't know who that is. I heard a lot of things. Bird phrases and some phrases from a big-band style, riffs. On top there were wide intervals. I know it's not Eric Dolphy, but if it's coming out of Eric, it's sarcastic. It's a sarcastic recording. I say that because when you're playing with your eyes closed, you go with the flow. This guy here is trying to create the flow instead, know what I mean? It sounds like it could be someone today imitating the '60s. I'd give it ... I don't want to be cruel ... one star for effort. He's trying to play jazz.

Roy Haynes Quartet

"Fly Me To The Moon" (from *Out Of The Afternoon*, Impulse!, rec. 1962) Haynes, drums; Roland Kirk, tenor sax, manzello; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Henry Grimes, bass.

Roy Haynes is very quick. You say something to him and he responds instantly. That way on the drums, too. He's from New York. Got that style thing: the dress, the nice car. One time we were coming back from D.C. in a canary yellow Cadillac with Roy, and the car breaks down in Philly—we stopped to get hoagies. We were dirty from messing with the oil, and a young guy pulled up to help. He said, "Hey, I know who you are, you're Roy Haynes!" You can't mistake Roy. Or Rahsaan, who is playing tenor. Oh ... Rahsaan. He cut a big path. He had courage. Not just the fact that he played all the horns, but played them great. You got guys that can be a novelty and play three or four horns, but Rahsaan was a phenomenal personality, and it's in the instrument. I heard a jam session with him and George Adams, and George played some free stuff, "arraggghha, arraggghha," and Rahsaan played it right back at him perfectly. The free stuff! Rhythm and everything. I've heard this record, but I don't know it. As many stars as possible.

DB