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MURRAY**

Clark Terry
Jazz Ambassador



16 Clark Terry

Jazz Ambassador

Loved the world over, trumpet/flugelhorn great Clark Terry has seen and played it all, bringing all manner of people together. John McDonough shares the tale of one "baptized into the rigors of musical diplomacy," from Mississippi to Madagascar.

Cover photograph of Clark Terry by Cheung Ching Ming.



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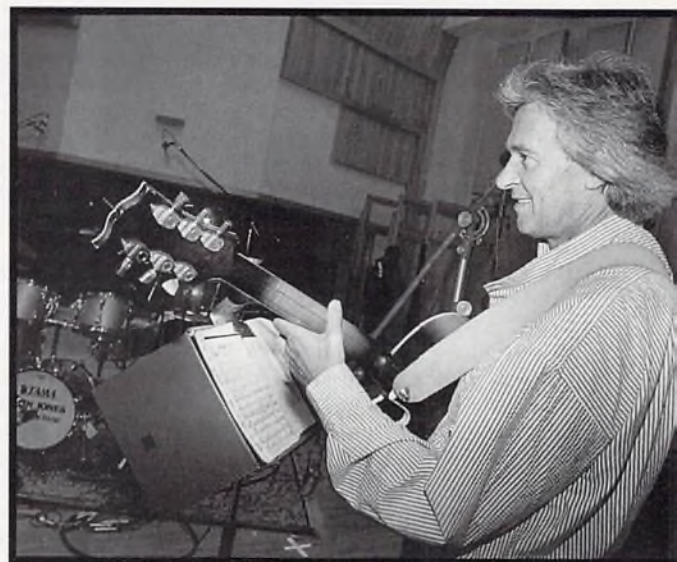
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Clark Terry

JAZZ Ambassador

By John McDonough

Photographs by
Cheung Ching Ming

Last February 13, as Iowa primary voters were giving America reason to ponder the specter of a President Pat Buchanan administration, Clark Terry was in Chicago with Bob Lark and the DePaul University Jazz Ensemble, campaigning for the cause that's absorbed his energy for more than five decades: good jazz that reconciles integrity and entertainment.

One can hardly imagine two more different temperaments. The combative Buchanan taking his case only to the convinced and provoking the rest of the world to fury; the magnetic Terry taking his to anyone willing to listen and always keeping the customers satisfied. The former, an enforcer; the latter an ambassador.

Back in the days of the Cold War, when jazz became an instrument of world peace and American propaganda, Terry was a born ambassador. Not for the first time, both Terry and jazz followed in footprints first set down by Louis Armstrong, who in

"You have to have the kind of attitude within you that you belong to the people when you're playing. It's your responsibility to give them a good time. That's one of the ingredients carrying on our tradition of jazz."

the fall of 1955 became the first major jazz artist to tour under the cautious eye of the State Department. By today's standards, it was no big deal: just a routine swing through western Europe.

But in those days it was enough to draw big press coverage, including a CBS *See It Now* program with

Edward R. Murrow. Armstrong's ambassadorial patience with the unhip was never more relentlessly tested than when he tried to explain jazz to Murrow.

But diplomacy and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles knew when they were on to a good thing. Dizzy Gillespie went abroad in 1956, Satch to Africa in '57. Benny Goodman played the Brussels World's Fair in 1958 and made the ultimate breakthrough to Moscow in 1962. And Duke Ellington, the most elegant of ambassadors, went everywhere kissing hands and cheeks around the world.

"I always felt like an ambassador," says Terry, "even before they started calling me one."

And so far as we know, he has always been one—in the

broadest sense of the word. Not just an ambassador to other nations, but across the generations and over the borders of racial antagonisms. It all began with Terry's attitude toward his work and his music.

"Being able to entertain is very important," he says. "The real jazz fans may think that's commercial—playing the horn upside-down or working with both horns at once. But the idea of playing music to an audience is to present it so they'll enjoy it. If you don't want to do that, you may as well rent a studio and play there. I try to pass on to young players the importance of remembering that when you're on stage, you're entertaining. Playing jazz is not heart surgery. You're there to vent your feelings and have fun. We don't work our instruments. We play them.

"You have to have the kind of attitude within you that you belong to the people when you're playing. It's your responsibility to give them a good time. That's one of the ingredients carrying on our tradition of jazz."

It is also one of the ingredients in performing the role of ambassador. Terry was already a significant figure in jazz when he cut his moorings to the Duke Ellington band in the fall of 1959 and joined the NBC staff in New York. He played *The Arthur Murray Dance Party* and *Music On Ice*. But he caught the eye of the country sitting alongside Doc Severinsen, Joe Newman and Jimmy Maxwell in the high-powered brass section of Skitch Henderson's *Tonight Show* band in the early '60s.

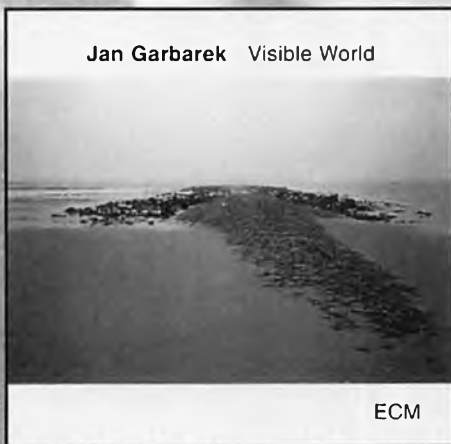
"*Tonight* was important," he remembers, "and it was great to get off the road and get a regular check. But in the long run, the most important thing has been going out to where the people are."

He got his chance when the *Tonight Show* moved to

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California in 1972. Terry remained in New York to pursue the life of the pure freelancer and became a second-generation member of Norman Granz's Pablo edition of Jazz At The Philharmonic. "I knew Clark from the early days in St. Louis," Norman Granz recalls. "And I always loved his playing. But during the main years of JATP up through 1957 he just wasn't available. But when I got Pablo going, the timing was perfect and I was delighted to be able to record him in ways he had not been heard before."

Terry was baptized into the rigors of musical diplomacy in the '70s. He toured the Middle East when Gamal Abdel Nasser was still president of Egypt and played in Pakistan in the late '70s shortly before revolution swept Iran. Then came Africa and a sub-Saharan gig that went from the west coast across to the east islands of Madagascar and Mauritius.

"It was fun, really," he says now. "You felt like you were doing something important for your country."

But his notions of the performer belonging to the people were more severely tested than in anything he ever experienced with Granz or aboard the S.S. Norway jazz cruises.

"We did more grinning and greeting than playing," he says. "Every night there'd be a reception or a dinner to attend. In the larger cities we'd often have to play for American audiences at attache or embassy events, sometimes even in an ambassador's home. Someone from the U.S. Information Agency would always be with us.

"The audience in some of the more exotic places were often a little awestruck. This music was sometimes very new to them. A lot of them showed up more for political reasons than to hear the music. Someone would tell them they ought to be

there. They were usually from the upper echelon and very polite in their responses and soft with their applause. There wasn't much spontaneity.

"You would see a lot of strange things sometimes, but you had to keep your opinions to yourself. We would see kids in India," Terry recalls, "where the life expectancy was 25 or 26 in those days. You would walk along and see people lying dead in the street. And nobody would say anything because whoever reported it had to pay for the funeral. It was unbelievable, shocking. But we were there for the State Department. So it was keep quiet, keep stepping, pretend nothing was wrong."

Terry's tact and diplomacy have served him equally well navigating the complex corridors of factionalism in jazz and racial politics in America.

Oscar Peterson may have recorded with more musicians, but none has crossed so many unbreachable moats and recorded with such a diversity of generations and sensibilities as Terry. He is perhaps the only player of his generation to engage the likes of Cecil Taylor, Roswell Rudd and Steve Lacy. "I saw Cecil a month ago," he says, "at a party that Bill Cosby gave for Max Roach. We talked about that session, the one with the two CTs." There were also collaborations with Ornette Coleman, and Thelonious Monk on the famous *Brilliant Corners* album and later *In Orbit*, both for Prestige. Did he play any differently with them than with Ellington or Gillespie or Benny Carter? "Pretty much the same way," he says.

Terry's gift for gracefully communing with alien musical visions is exceeded only by the grace with which he has negotiated the turbulent issues of race. In this Terry is hardly alone, and it is not in his nature to dwell on it. Maybe that's because within his generation, he has come out as one of the winners. Others

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NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

JONNY KING, *piano*

w. Steve Nelson, *vibes*; Joshua Redman, *tenor and soprano saxophones*; Peter Washington, *bass*; Billy Drummond, *drums*.

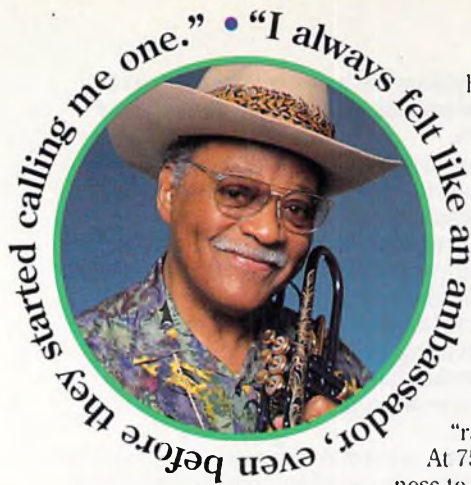
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have not been as lucky.

It somehow seems both corny and patronizing to suggest that Terry's ebullient gifts as an "ambassador" might also be offered as an

explanation for how he has managed the "race issue" in his life.

At 75, he was born witness to the worst of racial times. He remembers it all. Yet

it's been his choice not to hate.

"In the real old days," he says, "Lake Street in Chicago was the border line. When Roy Eldridge would leave the Three Deuces, he'd have a big bodyguard walk with him the half block along State Street until he crossed Lake.

"I remember when Duke would headline at the Flamingo in Vegas, but he'd have to come to work through the kitchen. We all would. We couldn't fraternize, couldn't gamble. They had a gambling joint in what they called 'the Dust Bowl' in the Vegas ghetto. There was one swimming pool. They called it 'the inkwell.'

"I can remember when you bought something in the South, you couldn't take change from a white person's hand. You waited till he put it on the counter.

"I can remember when Lena Horne was still dressing in her

trailer, when Ethel Waters couldn't get served in the Stork Club, when Eartha Kitt once used a white swimming pool in Vegas and they drained the whole damn pool. When I play Constitution Hall in Washington, I remember when Marian Anderson couldn't in 1939.

"Then I look at the scene today, and Whitney Huston is on all the magazines and everybody's bowing and scraping to her. The world is getting better.

"Except when it comes directly to jazz. I saw a program where they had Itzhak Perlman on the show with Dizzy, and Perlman was the one explaining bebop. That's not progress.

"Both sides need to get better. When I looked at the cats in the DePaul University band yesterday, I didn't see a lot of black faces, and it's not because of the school or white racism. It's actually pretty characteristic of the university band scene, and it bothers me. I did some research and found that it's the black bourgeois families who can afford to have their kids study music. 'We don't want our kids playing that stuff.' The first word out of their mouth is Beethoven, then Bach and Mozart. After all these years, I still see an uneasiness between jazz and the black middle- and upper-classes.

"People sometimes ask why I don't hate Caucasian people, having seen all that. My first wife, Pauline, hated white people because when she was little she was lying in bed one night and her favorite cousin was in the next little bed. And these guys stormed into the house and grabbed this kid, took him out to the porch and hung him by his neck. She had to watch all this. And she could never get that hate out of her mind.

"There's a reason I don't hate. When I was traveling with a carnival when I was in my teens, I almost got lynched. It was in Meridian, Miss., back in the '30s. I'm waiting for my drummer while he packs his stuff before we go to the showtrain. He had

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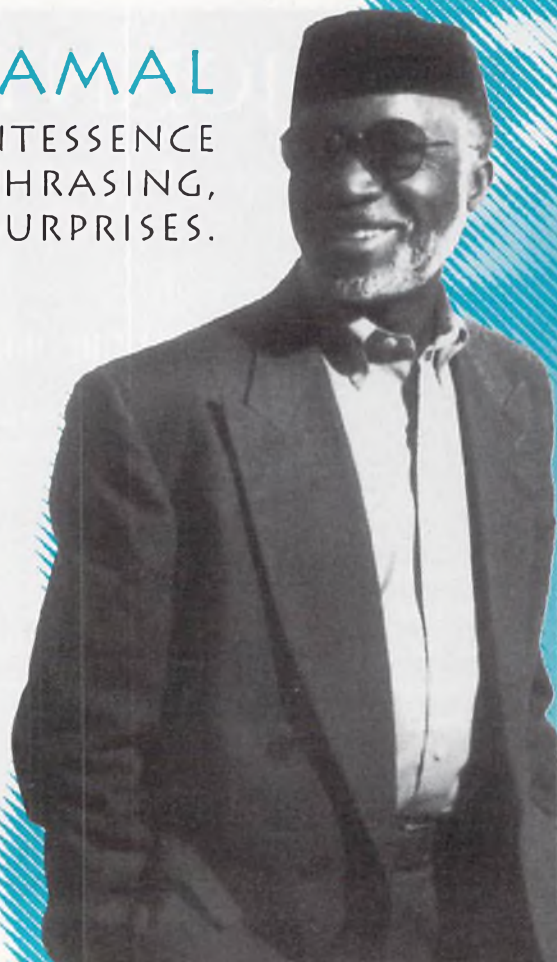
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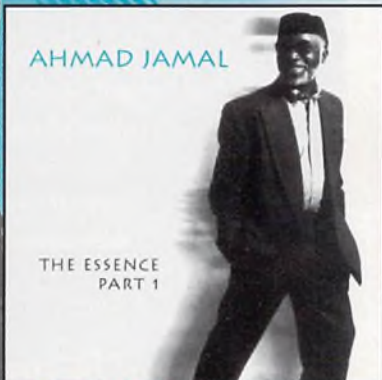
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met a girl who was very fair, and you didn't fool with those kinds of ladies. So we're standing there waiting on Marvin—just me and his girlfriend. And some cat hired to keep order on the midway walks up." ... The dialog went something like this, according to Terry:

"What's you doin' on this midway, boy?" says the goon.

"Waiting for my drummer," Terry replies.

"You with this here show, boy?"

"Yeah."

"What did you say?"

"I said, 'Yeah.'"

"Nigger, do you realize you said 'Yes' to a white man?"

"What am I suppose to say? You asked me."

Terry continues: "So he took a metal blackjack and hit me right in the head. It was raining and I dropped in a puddle of water, but could see him scurrying away. Next thing I remember the train crew, which is all Caucasian, picked me up and took me to the showtrain. As soon as they got back, this other cat comes back with 10 or 15 more guys carrying picks, shovels, bats, chains, knives. 'Where is that nigger we left in that puddle? We came to finish him up.'

"Some guy from the train crew came forward. 'Oh, he was some smart-ass trying to create problems,' he told them. 'We kicked his butt and sent him up that way.' In reality, they put me on the train and saved my life.

"So am I supposed to hate white people or not? Whites almost killed me. Other whites saved my life."

Things are getting better, he says.

And Terry expects to see it get better still while he plays on. "There is no age limit on how long you can play," he says. "As long as you can make a pucker and control the air column."

Clearly, this ambassador has no plans to close his portfolio. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Clark Terry still uses his Olds CT flugelhorn. On trumpet, "My new love," he says, "is a new 75th-anniversary CT model based on the old Committee Martin, which they've brought out again. The one I used had blue trim. Wallace Roney's been using it for some time. Miles was the first, I think. I played Wallace's once, and he got me one."

For mouthpieces, he favors a Giardinelli flat-rimmed V-shaped 7FL for flugelhorn and a flat-rimmed V-shaped CT model for trumpet.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

CLARK TERRY WITH PEE WEE
CLAYBROOK & SWING FEVER—
d'Note 2001
THE GOOD THINGS IN LIFE—
Mons 874 437 (with George Robert)
SHADES OF BLUE—Challenge 70007
REMEMBER THE TIME—Mons 874 762
WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD: FOR
LOUIS & DUKE—Red Baron 53750
CLARK TERRY METROPOLE
ORCHESTRA—Mons 874 815

Terry classics

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SQUEEZE ME!—Chiaroscuro 309
(Clark Terry Spacemen)
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DUKE WITH A DIFFERENCE—
Riverside/OJC 229

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J o h n M c L a u g h l i n ' s

Devout Madness

By Howard Mandel

"I'm a little bit mad,"
guitarist John McLaughlin
confides with a gleam in
his eyes.

It's his first interview of a press day planned to promote his latest release, *The Promise*, an album that reconvenes an historic array of people McLaughlin's met, reconstructing the worlds they've created.

"I've always been fascinated by different forms and have liked to experiment using music from different cultures," he says. "From time to time it's a pleasure to go back, bring relationships up to date, get friends together, play with our minds of today, so different from our perceptions of five, 10, 15, or—as with Jeff Beck—20 years ago."

Jeff Beck!?! Ain't it mad to ask the Bad Brit of Hot Licks, the rudest guitar player the Yardbirds ever had, to wax and twine sympatico with electric McLaughlin on the ballad "Django"?

"Well, we toured together in the '70s when he had his *Blow By Blow* group—Pretty Purdie, Wilbur Bascomb, Max Middleton—and I had Narada Michael Walden, Ralphie Armstrong and Stu Goldberg," McLaughlin explains. "Every night both bands massed onstage to jam. And I knew this tune was right for him. When Jeff heard the tape I prepared for him, he called—'It's so beautiful.'"

"It is a beautiful song, and I arranged it to keep its integrity. We get down a little more, perhaps, than the MJQ, but structurally, harmonically and

rhythmically, 'Django' is exactly as written."

So the guitarists shift between yearning swing and a hard-rock groove, evidently having great fun. Are they mad? "Look," McLaughlin says, setting things straight, "musicians please themselves. That's all we're interested in. Still, there's a very interesting process—recapitulation if you like—that's beyond getting together with friends such as Paco [de Lucia] and Al [Di Meola], Nishat Khan, Zakir Hussain, Trilok [Gurtu]." Also featured on *The Promise*: David Sanborn, Sting, Vinnie Colaiuta, Jim Beard, Don Alias, James Genus, Free Spirits Joey DeFrancesco and Dennis Chambers.

"To make one step forward, I sometimes feel I have to make two steps back," he concedes in acknowledgment of his earliest *Extrapolation* through late-'60s out-classics, including some big fun with Miles; from his soaring Mahavishnu Orchestra and sublime Shakti through a slew of sophisticated electric and acoustic combos to symphonic works prepared by such conductor pals as Michael Tilson Thomas and Dennis Russell Davies, and most recently on to reconfigurations for guitars of pianist Bill Evans' music and interpretations with Elvin Jones and organist DeFrancesco playing the works of John Coltrane.

But again McLaughlin asserts: "I'm involved in today as the only day I have—yesterday is gone, the future is completely neutral. I forget what I've done. If from time to time I have to remember, I listen to old records, which is great, and even go

back to when I was a kid to recall musical experiences that are relevant to me today. But basically, *The Promise* just grew out of a desire to play with some people.

"Michael Brecker and I played together but had not recorded. It's been 14 years since I played with Paco and Al. I haven't played with my Indian colleagues for a while, and I never recorded before with [sitarist] Nishat Khan. To get him with Trilok and Zakir in a 75-percent Indian East-West formation, that's perhaps better balanced than Shakti!" Clearly, it was a consummation devoutly sought.

"I had a piece I'd written or arranged to accommodate the musicians' comforts and be provocative at the same time. From the start, I intended to string these pieces together with certain transitions, specific verses of poetry"—a whisper of Dante, a burst of rain, a haiku, chirping cicadas, a Lorca couplet, temple bells, a 72-second "English Jam."

"It all fell into shape in the mix, done by Max Costa, with whom I always work. Recording is easy," McLaughlin laughs, "if you prepare well. Logistically, this album was tricky—going here, recording there, in the middle of tours, everyone else on tour, too. For the dates with Brecker and Sanborn, I flew from Japan to New York for three days, had sessions on two afternoons, the third day flew back to South Korea. Nutty, but it was that or not have them."

Which was not an option. The rough and open "Jazz Jungle" with Brecker is 15 minutes, the more laid-back "Shin Jin Ri" with Sanborn (both boast the rhythm



ALAN NAHODIAN

squad of Beard, Genus, Chambers and Alias) slightly longer than 10; so they might serve as centerpieces, if *The Promise* weren't so exceptionally rangy and more than 73 minutes in duration. Not that McLaughlin claims length or variety as an accomplishment.

"Don't forget, I got into jazz in the late '50s, early '60s. Miles and Trane, Bill Evans, Cannonball were amazing. Ornette, Mingus and Monk—what a phenomenal period. Compared to what they were doing then, we're not doing much new today. The only thing we can really say is, 'Nobody can ever do it like I do it'—because we're each of us unique.

"The standards of what's been done are incredible, but to be stopped by that is the wrong kind of vanity," he considers.

"Vanity is not necessarily bad—we can hope to transform it into pride. Anyway, you have to be vain to get up and pretend," he laughs, "that you can play. You end up going on faith, which is, sometimes, blind. But you have to go for it, trust in it.

"You may not get what you're going for—you never know if you're going to get that thing, spirit or whatever you call it, where you're liberated and it's wonderful.

It doesn't happen so often. You go out with the hope, you work to be ready when it happens. We're all waiting for the same thing, everybody knows when somebody gets it, and it's very infectious.

"But sometimes it's a *battle royale*. You see a concert and the guy is fighting his instrument. This can be very beautiful: a person struggling to get through his own conscious or unconscious barriers, to free himself—because we are free, we were born free, we always will be free and we'll die free.

"To articulate that is what music is *about*—music is one of its greatest, most elegant ways of expressing that, when it happens. When it doesn't, that's something I don't have any control over. I don't know who does."

What of the spirits he says he's most indebted to? Did Miles and Trane have the personal freedom and musical discipline to consistently summon music, to turn it on? "Two giants of disparate natures," McLaughlin muses. "I've been paying homage to them all my life. I don't stop paying homage to them." But the answer is: them neither. Are you mad?

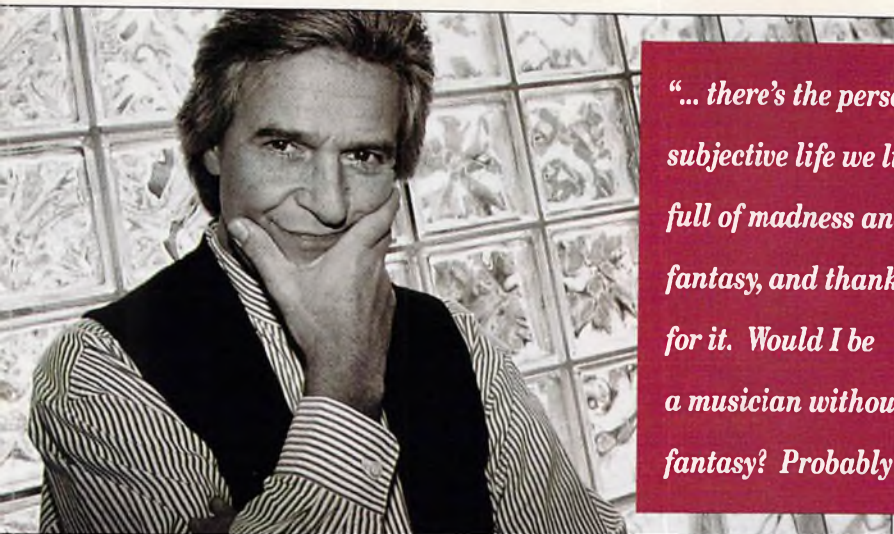
No, though McLaughlin can be irked by the notion that his main men—besides

Miles, Trane and Bill Evans, Delta blues guitarists Robert Johnson, Big Bill Broonzy, Lead Belly, Muddy Waters and Fred McDowell—seem to have fallen out of fashion. Surely they'll return.

"And maybe in three generations we'll get back into fusion," he joshes. "In fact, I wanted to get that fusion feel back on *The Promise*. I love fusion; it's part of me. It's degenerated, but I don't care. Whatever anyone says, I'm happy with how those pieces with Michael and Dave turned out, full of very live playing and collective improvisation.

"I don't know if you remember, but the Mahavishnu Orchestra used to get into collective improvisation," he becomes earnest. "Not that I invented it—it's New Orleans. Nor am I trying to play traditional New Orleans jazz. But collective improvisation lends itself to the fusion environment.

"That environment—fusion's vocabulary, volume, particular techniques, even arena size—doesn't affect the music's content," McLaughlin emphasizes. "But it affects the vibe in the band. On 'Jazz Jungle' I'm a little crazy, but not in a wrong way. I believe we're all a little crazy. And if I can bring some of this



"... there's the personal, subjective life we live, full of madness and fantasy, and thank God for it. Would I be a musician without fantasy? Probably not."

CHEUNG CHING MING

madness into the music, why not?

"To do so, one needs an encouraging environment. 'Jazz Jungle' was set up so we could go out and let it be as crazy as we wanted—which I s'pose could be termed indulgent. ...

"The thing is, it's *musical*. When you play spontaneously in this way, it's good, not indulgent in the ordinary sense of that term. Maybe you allow some subconscious things to come out—there's some *screaming* on that cut, but it's beautiful, like what Trane was doing—a soul, crying. Not to put myself up with Trane, but his influence was so powerful that it's still with me. Anyway, I don't mean to wave the fusion flag, but I don't think it's as somebody called it, 'a pestilence in the land of jazz.' "

If McLaughlin can't wave the fusion flag, who can?

"This is the nature of life," he waxes yet more reflective, "there's the personal, subjective life we live, full of madness and fantasy, and thank God for it. Would I be a

musician without fantasy? Probably not. Contrast that with life's necessary constraints: One has to be rational, logical, the opposite of what we really are. Without some kind of madness ..." he sighs, helpless to even conceive that. "Just my existence and the existence of the whole world and the fact that I'm witness to it—that's pretty amazing, and not rational or logical at all, not at all." He grows quiet at the idea of such cosmic enormity.

Yet that's the true hallmark of the fervent, out-bound "fusion" McLaughlin has championed: that fantasy can exist, writ large. Fusion's purveyors take fantasy seriously, not to escape but to address big questions—how to reach huge audiences, how to weave far-distant threads of tradition and innovation, how to admit, nay, *celebrate* the world's hilarious, mysterious, enormous contradictions, which are, after all, indicative of many societal strains in our day. More rigidly controlled, orthodox

musics work to contain fantasies and contradictions within comfortably familiar structures—delaying rather than exciting or confronting the conflicts. Fusion, as purveyed by musicians of McLaughlin's maturity and experience, looks the world that encompasses high-tech and underdevelopment square in the face.

"When Coltrane abandoned conventional structures, blew 'em up, he left most of us behind," McLaughlin says. "Hear Trane today, and your hair stands on end! What can you say to that? He's so powerful it makes you weep—but it's not *conventional*. So what? So what?!"

"We need the restraints of convention and structure to help us avoid self-indulgence, since we are all self-indulgent to some extent. How do you know you're being self-indulgent? I don't know. In the end, everything's a question of taste. I suppose—up to the point when taste disappears, and you're in a state of grace where taste doesn't matter." Now he's thinking and speaking of himself, playing on some present-day stage. "You're in another reality, an altered reality, an altered state of consciousness. Well, who wants to be in the usual state of consciousness, as it's been fabricated by society? The intellectualization of everything, the discrimination of everything—and we take that as being the most real!"

"I don't buy that," says John McLaughlin, emphatically. "I think the world is music and the world is madness. I do, I really do. I thank God every day that I have another day, because it may sound trite, but it's a miracle to be alive. And so here I am, and I'm going to do whatever I can, and that's it! It's as simple as that!"

He laughs, and the interview's over. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

"I'm using a Johnny Smith Gibson electric guitar. I've got a couple of models—a '68 and a '77—those are the years they were made. I carry one at a time. I'm playing the red one right now, which I like just because it's red, and so beautiful. But fortunately, it has a great sound, too.

"I use a Sony M7, which means I don't have to schlepp an amp around. As opposed to just having bass and treble on your amp, it's got some very nice equalization on the inside, and from that I can go directly out to the board or to a tape console. Though in the studio, I use monitors—playback from the board, or I'll plug into an amp just to have the physical sound. Like when you hear the drums, you want to hear them in your body, not just in your headphones. And that's it.

"I use a little guitar synthesizer on the new album, in a very discrete way: little bits on 'Tokyo Decadence,' and also on 'Shin Jin Rui,' the piece with David Sanborn. Actually, I'm just doubling James Genus' bass." His guitar synthesizer is a Roland, with electronics modified by New England Digital, makers of the Synclavier.

"My acoustic guitar is made by the great Abraham Wechter, a luthier from Michigan, and the microtechnology is by Larry Fishman, a Massachusetts transducer maker: It's a little preamp, with a cardoid mic for the purest sound possible. Microchips allow me to take a signal from the bridge and send it to the MIDI interface."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

THE PROMISE—Verve 314 529 828
AFTER THE RAIN—Verve 314 527 467
TIME REMEMBERED—
 Verve 314 519 861
THE FREE SPIRITS, TOKYO LIVE—
 Verve 521 670
MEDITERRANEAN CONCERTO—
 CBS 45578
EXTRAPOLATION—Polydor 841 598
DEVOTION—Celluloid 5010
MY GOAL'S BEYOND—Douglas 63014
 (Rykodisc 10051)
INNER MOUNTING FLAME—
 Columbia 31067
BIRDS OF FIRE—Columbia 468224

*BETWEEN NOTHINGNESS AND
 ETERNITY*—Columbia 32766
VISIONS OF THE EMERALD BEYOND—
 Columbia 46867
APOCALYPSE—Columbia 46111
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NATURAL ELEMENTS—Columbia 34980
*THE ONE TRUTH BAND, ELECTRIC
 DREAMS*—Columbia 48892
ELECTRIC GUITARIST—Columbia 46110
*JOHN MCLAUGHLIN TRIO, LIVE AT THE
 ROYAL ALBERT HALL*—JMT 834 436
OUE ALEGRIA—Verve 837 280
MAHAVISHNU—Warner Bros. 25109

MUSIC SPOKEN HERE—
 Warner Bros. 923723
BELO HORIZONTE—Warner Bros. 3619
ADVENTURES IN RADIOLAND—
 Relativity 88561-8081
 with Miles Davis
IN A SILENT WAY—Columbia 40580
BITCHES BREW—Columbia 40577
LIVE EVIL—Columbia 30954 (cassette)
ON THE CORNER—Columbia 53579
A TRIBUTE TO JACK JOHNSON—
 Columbia 47036
BIG FUN—Sony SRCS 5713-4 (Japan only)
AURA—Columbia 45332

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST—
 Columbia 40023
DIRECTIONS—Columbia (out of print)

with various others
LOVE OF COLORS—Sony 47227
 (Kalia and Marielle Labeque)
PASSION GRACE & FIRE—
 Columbia 38645 (Al Di Meola and Paco
 de Lucia; out of print)
EMERGENCY—Polydor 849 068
 (Tony Williams Lifetime)
LOVE, DEVOTION, SURRENDER—
 Columbia 32031 (Carlos Santana)
SPACES—Vanguard 6558 (Larry Coryell)

Benny

Big



Benny Carter, at 88 years old, continues to break new musical ground.

I was only vaguely familiar with Carter's legacy when first asked by MusicMasters to help produce his new album, *Songbook*. The concept was to showcase Carter's history as a songwriter, which includes such classics as "Blues In My Heart" and "When Lights Are Low." On meeting him, I found a kindred spirit of openness, humility and passion.

A big, live concert was a natural extension of the project. In June of 1995, as the confirmations came in from guest vocalists Bobby Short, Jon Hendricks, Weslia Whitfield, Billy Stritch and Nancy Marano for the New York *Songbook* recording sessions, we approached Jazz At Lincoln Center with a proposal: *An Evening With Benny Carter And Friends* to celebrate his long career and tie in with the release of the new CD.

There was still one date to be filled in Jazz At Lincoln Center's 1995-'96 season, and Saturday, March 9, at Avery Fisher Hall was offered to bring in Carter and his band, the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, and a handful of the guest vocalists lining up to contribute to *Songbook*. It would be months before the word came back that it was officially a "go."

Meantime, we were still making the album. In the studio, you could sense a tight vibe between Benny, his trio of pianist Chris Neville, bassist Steve

Benny Carter performs at the March 9 concert, while Wynton Marsalis conducts in the background.

Carter's

Day

By Danny Kapilian

Photo By Stephanie Berger

LaSpina and drummer Sherman Ferguson (who had just played a week of club dates in New York), guest cornetist Warren Vaché and the singers.

Carter has lived in Los Angeles since 1943. And despite his remarkable energy, he prefers to work as close as possible to home. So the remaining recording dates were booked for late July at Group Four Studios in Hollywood, where Carter had recorded his previous MusicMasters album, *Elegy In Blue*.

Over the course of three days, we recorded tracks with Ruth Brown, Carmen Bradford, Kenny Rankin, Dianne Reeves, Joe Williams, Marlena Shaw, Shirley Horn, Diana Krall and Lainie Kazan (who will be on volume two). There was one artist who lives in L.A., a close old friend of Benny's whose schedule hadn't worked out yet; the stars finally smiled on us when mixing was scheduled back at Group Four in August, and Peggy Lee was able to come in and cut "I See You."

Carter was privy all along to the possibility of the live event, but in his typically reserved fashion would only say something like, "Let's take it one step at a time." Fortunately, things went smoothly with Lincoln Center and our guest singers for the show—Jon Hendricks, Diana Krall, Dianne Reeves, Bobby Short and Joe Williams.

The rehearsals with Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra brought out the humble side of Carter. "The LCJO, being Wynton's band, responded to Wynton," Carter observed

after practice. "I was less demanding than I might have been with my own band." Cyrus Chestnut, sitting in at the piano with the LCJO, said that from his perspective, "Benny definitely took control of things at the rehearsal. I think I can speak for the entire LCJO—we were in awe of Benny's skills and command."

Jazz At Lincoln Center commissioned Carter to write a new work to premier at the March 9 concert. Carter called the new piece *Echoes Of San Juan Hill*, a four-section suite reflecting on the New York neighborhood where he grew up, which (by no small coincidence) is right where Lincoln Center now stands. Chestnut reflects: "At the beginning of rehearsals, when Benny came in with brand new music, it confirmed for me ... I mean ... Benny's in his late 80s and he's still writing new music. That's the greatest inspiration for me ... that he keeps on going and looking forward, in his music and his life. As I live my life, hopefully the music will come through. *Echoes Of San Juan Hill* was just so musical, his arrangements were so inventive and the experience so elegant. It's so important to check out history, but not be locked to history ... and there Benny was walking in with *Echoes Of San Juan Hill*."

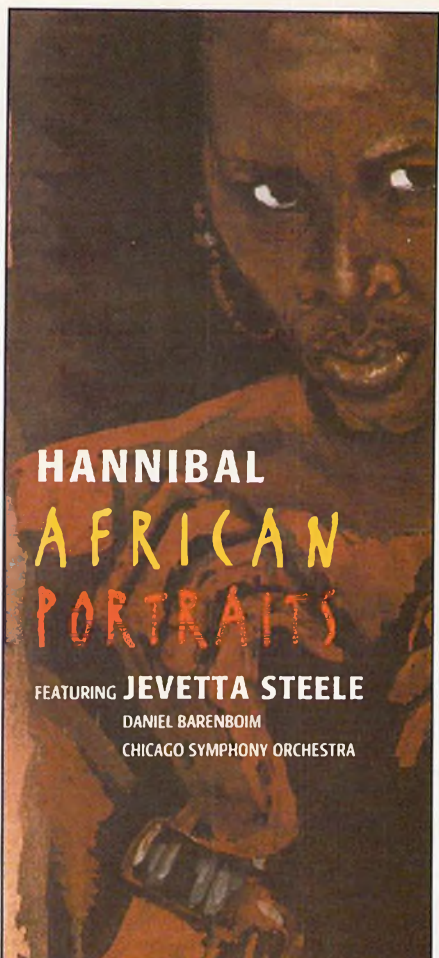
The concert opened with the LCJO and Marsalis on stage. Carter walked briskly to center stage, and started right in with his sweet, assured voice. "I'm very happy to be back, practically back home," he told the audience. This is a bit like returning to the scene of the crime, because I grew up right around the block from here, a neighborhood called San

Juan Hill on West 63rd Street. That's where I lived the first 16 years of my life. Here's something I wrote back in those days, in 1933: 'Symphony In Riffs.' "The band kicked into a swinging tempo, the winds driving the melody, featuring a Benny solo as if no time had passed in 63 years. Then he introduced "Devil's Holiday," a 1933 swinging jump-tempo number.

After several more tunes, including 1973's "A Walking Thing" and 1939's "Night Hop," the stage crew brought a set of vibes out to the front of the stage. Carter turned to the audience: "You see this instrument? Then you know what's about to happen. You know, the interesting thing is, the inventor didn't even know Lionel Hampton was going to be born. But Lionel, of course, has made it his own."

Hampton entered slowly from stage right with the aid of a cane, which he placed on the piano before reaching for the mallets. "This is not something I wrote, but it's something we both like to play," Carter said. "It's called, 'How High The Moon.'" It started with a small-ensemble two-verse intro, then the baton was passed to Lionel, who took ample space to stretch out. While his playing wasn't timid so much as fragile at the start, he sounded more assured after only a minute or so—especially when he added the sustain pedals. Then Carter led back into the melody, trading riffs on a couple of verses, then gently wound down to a finale.

"It's great to play with you still after 50 years," Carter said to Hamp between tunes. "I wrote this in 1937 and Lionel

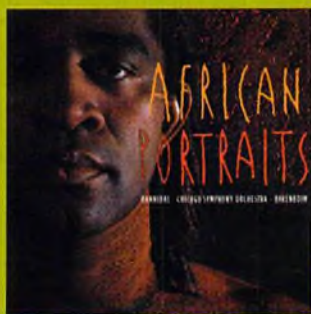


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recorded it with his band in what, 1939? ... probably the first American recording. Lionel, I'll have to follow you." They played "When Lights Are Low" with a gentle swing, Lionel leading the first two verses before vamping. A piano solo followed, the ensemble picked up the bridge, Hampton led back into a verse and the brass brought it home.

The evening progressed like this for more than four hours, one special guest after another, with Carter onstage the entire time. He played a number of tunes with his small group, which (as on the album) backed vocal selections by Diana Krall ("Fresh Out Of Love"), Bobby Short ("You Bring Out The Best In Me"), Joe Williams ("I Was Wrong"), Dianne Reeves ("Only Trust Your Heart" and a duet with Williams on "We Were In Love") and Jon Hendricks ("Cow Cow Boogie"). Marsalis joined the quartet for a bluesy, lazy rendition of "Another Time, Another Place."

Carter was most reflective of the past, however, while introducing the four sections of *Echoes Of San Juan Hill*, which he performed with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. "It looks like I've

made the cycle," he said, "because here I am again in the old neighborhood."

Part I was "San Juan Shuffle," a brisk jump tune with a little fanfare at the end; that was followed by "Bebe, The Belle Of The Block," a warm, mid-tempo bounce named for a woman in Carter's old neighborhood.

"I remember way back on 63rd Street those many years ago, there was a young lady. She was like the 'Girl From Ipanema,' and when she walked down the street the boys went, 'Ahhhhhh.' You really couldn't help but look at her, she was so lovely."

Introducing the suite's third section, Carter said, "I am reminiscing, but what we're going to play here is not nostalgic—that means a longing for. I'm just looking back at those other times, which were all wonderful times. The words would go something like, 'Moments come and moments go, but precious memories remain,' and wind up with, 'Other times were happy times, but the best of times is today.' So this tune is called 'Other Times.'"

The last number of the suite recalled the time the Carter family's dream of

EQUIPMENT

Benny Carter plays a 1964 Selmer Mark VI alto saxophone. He uses an Arnold Brillhart Ebolin mouthpiece, and a variety of reeds, including Rico, Buffet and SPI. He also has a Getzen Eterna trumpet.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

SONGBOOK—MusicMasters 65134
BEST OF BENNY CARTER—Pablo 2405-409
ELEGY IN BLUE—MusicMasters 65115
LEGENDS—MusicMasters 65087
HARLEM RENAISSANCE—MusicMasters 65080
ALL THAT JAZZ—MusicMasters 5059
MY MAN BENNY, MY MAN PHIL—MusicMasters 5036 (with Phil Woods)
COOKIN' AT CARLOS I—MusicMasters 5033
MY KIND OF TROUBLE—Pablo 2310-935
OVER THE RAINBOW—MusicMasters 5015
IN THE MOOD FOR SWING—MusicMasters 5001
CENTRAL CITY SKETCHES—MusicMasters 5030 (with the American Jazz Orchestra)
BENNY CARTER MEETS OSCAR PETERSON—Pablo 2310-926
A GENTLEMAN AND HIS MUSIC—Concord Jazz 4285
BENNY CARTER ALL-STARS—Gazell 1004
SUMMER SERENADE—Storyville 4047
LIVE AND WELL IN JAPAN!—Fantasy/OJC 736
BENNY CARTER FOUR: MONTREAUX 77—Fantasy/OJC 374
WONDERLAND—Pablo 2310-922
CARTER, GILLESPIE, INC.—Fantasy/OJC 682
THE KING—Pablo 2310-768
FURTHER DEFINITIONS—MCA/Impulse! 5651
SWINGIN' THE '20s—Fantasy/OJC 339
JAZZ GIANT—Fantasy/OJC 167
3-4-5: THE VERVE SMALL GROUP SESSIONS—Verve 849 395
COSMOPOLITE: THE OSCAR PETERSON VERVE SESSIONS—Verve 314 521 673
THE COMPLETE BENNY CARTER—Mercury 830 965
ALL OF ME—Bluebird 3000
THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS, 1929-1940—Affinity 1022
BENNY CARTER, 1928-1952—RCA 66539
HIS BEST RECORDINGS, 1929-1940—Best of Jazz 4001
THE VARIOUS FACETS OF A GENIUS, 1929-1940—Black & Blue 59.230

DEVIL'S HOLIDAY, 1933-1934—JSP 331
THE CHRONOLOGICAL BENNY CARTER: 1929-1933—Classics 522
1933-1936—Classics 530
1936—Classics 541
1937-1939—Classics 552
1939-1940—Classics 579
1940-1941—Classics 631
BENNY CARTER—COMPLETE EDITION: VOL. 1 (1928-1931)—Masters of Jazz 22
VOL. 2 (1931-1933)—Masters of Jazz 23
VOL. 3 (1933-1934)—Masters of Jazz 39
VOL. 4 (1934-1935)—Masters of Jazz 59
VOL. 5 (1936)—Masters of Jazz 73

with various others
MEL MARTIN PLAYS BENNY CARTER—enja 9041
THE MORE I SEE YOU—Telarc 83370 (Oscar Peterson)
MARIAN McPARTLAND PLAYS THE BENNY CARTER SONGBOOK—Concord Jazz 4412
SAXOMANIA. FEATURING BENNY CARTER—IDA 017 (Claude Tissendier)
BILLY ECKSTINE SINGS WITH BENNY CARTER—EmArcy 832 011
THE TATUM GROUP MASTERPIECES, VOL. 1—Pablo 2405-424 (Art Tatum)
A STUDY IN FRUSTRATION—Columbia/Legacy 57596 (Fletcher Henderson)

biography

BENNY CARTER: A LIFE IN AMERICAN MUSIC, by M. Berger, E. Berger and J. Patrick. Two-volume, 877-page biography/discography published by Scarecrow Press: (800) 462-6420.

video

BENNY CARTER, SYMPHONY IN RIFFS, directed and produced by Harrison Engle. 1989 documentary, available from Rhapsody Films: (212) 243-0142.

moving to a better place came true. "I'm sure you're all familiar with the television show *The Jeffersons*, with that song, 'Moving on up to the east side.' Well, back in the '20s, our aspirations were to live in Harlem. We were living in Hell's Kitchen, and we all wanted to move up to Harlem, then to Striver's Row, then on up to what was known as Sugar Hill. But the first step was getting to Harlem. So finally, my family was able to get to Harlem, and thinking back on that I named this tune 'Movin' Uptown.'" This last section kicked in with a fast, swinging "Whirlybird" feel and wound up with a grand half-speed finale. (Excerpts of the concert will be broadcast later this year on NPR's *Jazz At Lincoln Center*.)

After the show, Cyrus Chestnut spoke briefly about his experience of playing with Carter. "I feel privileged, an honor to share the stage with a father [of jazz]. I saw a real neat way of musical thinking. Benny's arrangements were so musical, and ... Benny was so elegant. ... You learn about music and life ... not just about chords and scales. Playing Benny Carter, you can hear one's appointments and disappointments translated into the music."

Carter himself said he was touched by the sold-out reception. "And now, I'm exhausted! I've got to rest up for my gigs in Boston next week with Phil Woods!" From there, he went on to perform a series of jobs on the road, including a heartwarming concert with the Chicago Jazz Ensemble at Milwaukee's Pabst Theater.

Next for Carter will be a big-band album, the second volume of *Songbook*, a possible recording project with Abbey Lincoln, an induction into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in May, and a June 8 premier at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., of a new work celebrating Martin Luther King Jr.

He continues to set examples for all of us. **DB**

Danny Kapilian recently co-produced two albums for MusicMasters, Songbook by Benny Carter and For The Love Of Harry: Everybody Sings Nilsson. Kapilian has worked for 17 years producing, directing and engineering concert tours and live events with George Benson, Roberta Flack, Lou Reed, the Count Basie Orchestra, Tony Bennett, Don Byron, the Brecker Brothers, George Wein's Festival Productions, The Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame Awards, Lollapalooza, New York's Apollo Theater, Brooklyn Academy Of Music and The Bottom Line's In Their Own Words songwriter series. His current projects include Don Byron's next Nonesuch CD, a 10-show summer concert program for Brooklyn Academy Of Music, four events for this year's premier Lincoln Center Arts Festival, a Bottom Line songwriter tour of the U.S. and Canada, and new CD collections for EMI Records.

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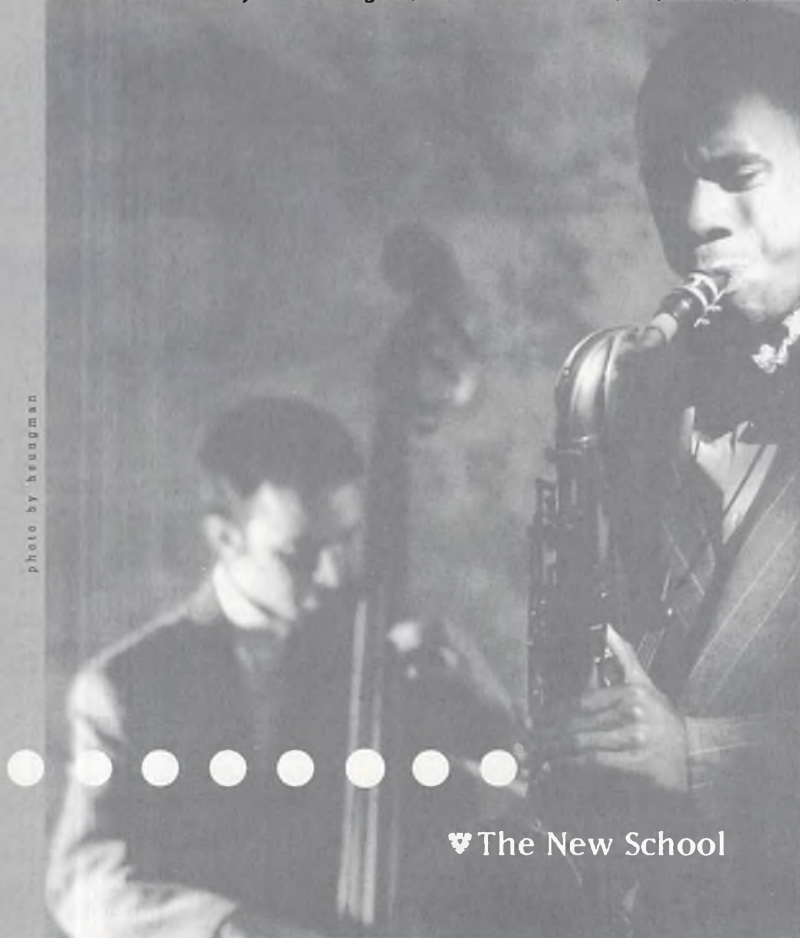
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 The New School

Snarling two first-call drummers like Carl Allen and Lewis Nash for an interview requires a lot of luck and patience. You have to wait your turn for that rare window of opportunity not occupied by rehearsals, studio sessions or road gigs. Together, they have appeared on more than a hundred recordings and have performed with nearly every major artist in jazzdom. Moreover, each has a released album as a leader. In 1993 Nash debuted with *Rhythm Is My Business*, and Allen most recently recorded *Testimonial*. For a while it seemed our chances of hitting the Super Lotto were better than catching them in the same city at the same time.

After pursuing the drummers for nearly a year, it finally happened: We caught Allen after his return from

prohess, a tasteful restraint that permits him to accentuate an ensemble's subtle interplay; he is virtually peerless with brushes.

The relatively young musicians—Allen, a native of Milwaukee, is 35, and Nash, who hails from Phoenix, is 38—have known and admired each other for several years, have a marvelous rapport and share an abiding admiration for Blakey, each noting his seminal role in their personal and artistic development. Both are rather reserved, careful about their remarks and as mindful of the clock governing the interview as time-keepers behind a battery of drums. Since Allen resides in the wilds of Brooklyn and Nash lives in Rockland County, they decided that my Harlem home was as good a place as any to pour libations for the masters and let it all hang out.

thing. As an artist I am deeply grateful and appreciative of this recognition. I'm still a student of the music, so I'm always in awe when I get a call from a Benny Golson, Pharoah Sanders or whomever, realizing there are a number of musicians they can call. But it's also humbling to know that while you can be a first-call musician today, you may be a last-call tomorrow.

HB: *A rather cyclical thing ...*

CA: Right. And you can never get to the point where you can rest on your laurels, thinking you've truly arrived. As soon as you get a mindset like that, someone will come to town and swing you right off the bandstand.

LN: I'd like to add one more thing about being a first-call musician. Even if you were on time to every gig and session, and wore what they wanted, and played what they asked, if there wasn't that cer-

First-Call Real

A Percussion Discussion with

Australia and before his weeklong engagement with guitarist Peter Leitch at Visiones in New York City; Nash was nabbed between studio sessions and a stint with guitarist Jim Hall at the Blue Note, and just hours before his departure to Japan.

While they share a number of common traits that make them indispensable as sidemen, the two drummers are in several ways markedly distinct. Allen is more physical and hard-swinging in the manner of Art Blakey; even so, he is aggressive without being intrusive. Nash relies on a considerable technical

HERB BOYD: *You're both first-call musicians. What does this mean to you?*

LEWIS NASH: It means we've put in a lot of time studying and experienced a lot of different musical situations; it means that your musicianship is at a certain level, that you are responsible and highly professional. Obviously, you don't become a first-call musician overnight. It's a cumulative process because the word has to get around from people attending your performances, hearing your recordings, and from the praise of other musicians. Much of it is exposure.

CARL ALLEN: I agree. It's an evolving

tain thing, they still might not call you. They have to enjoy working with you. You have to give them that certain something that makes them think of you when the next session comes up.

HB: *So sometimes the call is based on more than your ability to read the charts?*

CA: Playing music to me is a very intimate affair. It's like ... well, you know what I mean. [laughter] When you perform you are sharing a very personal part of yourself. That's why there are musicians that I will not get on the bandstand with. I don't respect them because they don't respect me.



CHRIS GIBERTTI

By Herb Boyd

ities

th Lewis Nash & Carl Allen

HB: *Are there some calls you've yet to get from leaders you admire?*

CA: How much time do you have? That list is long. I can't narrow it down to one. For years, though, when I was growing up I always wanted to be a Jazz Messenger. But there was just one problem: I couldn't get rid of the drummer. [laughs] Somebody had that gig for a minute.

HB: *How much of an influence was Art Blakey on the two of you?*

LN: He was my first real influence. I remember the first record I bought of his was *Live At Birdland* with Clifford

Brown and Lou Donaldson. From then on I was hooked. I knew when I bought his records that sound, that feeling, would be there.

CA: Another thing about Art, for me, was that so much of his philosophy with respect to the band had an impact on me. Not to say I agree with everything about him, but I was impressed with how much he was driven to nurture young talent. What was special about him was the way he enhanced your playing. When you got on the bandstand with him you rose above your level. And all the musicians who've spent time with

Art—Benny Golson, Freddie Hubbard and others—all say the same thing. Most rewarding were the lessons he taught you outside of the music. I remember once being in Europe—and you know how you never take your drums to Europe—but Art used to always take his drums. But there was this one gig when he didn't have his drums and we all had to play the same sad set. I was upset that the drums didn't have the specifications I wanted. But Buhaina [Blakey's Muslim name] played and was killing them. Billy Higgins played and was killing them. I played and it sounded sad. After the con-

cert I was fussing and complaining, and I told Bu about how sad the drums were. He looked at me and said, "I don't know what you're talking about. It's not the instrument, it's the artist." In other words, he said there are no excuses.

HB: *How do you prepare for a gig, and is it any different if the format is a trio, a quintet or a big band?*

CA: It's not so much the size of the group but the direction of the music and who's the leader. Playing with Tommy Flanagan is different from playing with Randy Weston, though both have trios. The primary thing is to put the music first and deal from that perspective. It's difficult to say, okay, it's a trio gig and I'm going to use this cymbal, or it's a big band and I'm going to use a 22-inch bass drum.

LN: The size of the group does make a difference with me. If I get a big band call, I begin to think of the size of the bass drum or different kinds of cymbals for that environment. While for a trio call, a smaller bass drum is required. The crash cymbals I might use with a big band I won't use in a trio format. But the principal thing is to swing, and that is necessary no matter what kind of group it is.

HB: *I imagine, given your druthers, you*

both would rather be leaders than sidemen, right?

LN: In some instances. But there is still so much to get by playing with other musicians. I don't think being a sideman will ever end for me. It's not an either/or proposition for me.

CA: I enjoy all of it. Sometimes for selfish reasons I enjoy being a leader. But as Lewis said, I think I will always be a sideman because I learn from those performances with great leaders. The idea of going back and forth is very fulfilling. It's humbling, too, because when you play with other people the demands are different, whereas when you're in your own situation, you make the rules. But leading my own band is not just about me. I believe in a more cooperative situation, and sometimes I feel like a sideman in my own band.

HB: *Do you both come from musical families?*

CA: Nearly everyone in my family, at one time or another, was involved in music, except my sister—she was great at talking. My mother is a gospel singer. And my brother, Eddie, plays trumpet. By the time I was 14 I became seriously interested in music, and two years later I was on the bandstand with Sonny Stitt. I had no business up on that bandstand. Stitt

wanted to play "Cherokee" real fast, but there was no way I could do that. He was very gracious and let me play it at my own speed.

HB: *How did you end up on that gig?*

CA: Well, first of all, Milwaukee—where I was raised—is not exactly the jazz capital of the world. Often horn players would come through and pick up rhythm sections. I got the gig by default: Nobody else was available. Later, in high school, I played in the various musical ensembles and by 1981 I was attending William Paterson College in New Jersey. It was in September or October of that year that I read an article in **Down Beat** where Freddie Hubbard said he was looking for a young, energetic drummer. So when I heard a few weeks later that he was appearing at Fat Tuesday's in Manhattan, I went to see him with the article in my hand. I just wanted to meet him. There was no audition or anything, and he promised that he would have Stanley Turrentine call me. Two years later, after I had returned to Milwaukee, Freddie came through, we talked again and I finally got my chance to play with him, and I stayed with him eight years.

HB: *Lewis, when did you first get to New York City?*

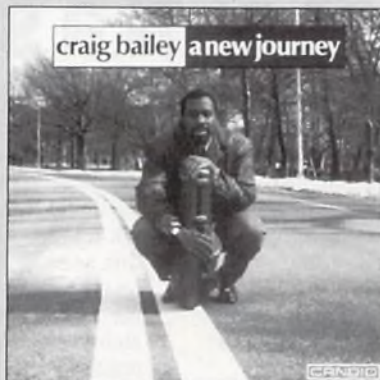
LN: The first time was in 1979. I saved up

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some money and just came to see what the city was all about, and to study with the late Freddie Waits. He had come through my hometown in Phoenix with the Billy Taylor Trio and he agreed to give me lessons, if I ever made it to New York City. Freddie was an excellent teacher. In 1981 I joined Betty Carter and moved permanently to New York. Like Carl's situation in Milwaukee, there was not a very large jazz community in Phoenix. But there was enough going on where I could grow and develop, and learn a lot of standards.

CA: [to Nash] I was playing with a singer in Milwaukee when I first heard you on Betty Carter's tune "Tight."

HB: That tune calls for some special kind of timing, doesn't it?

LN: Yes. Betty's timing. [laughter]

HB: Given your busy schedules, what sustains you?

CA: I think it is my Christian faith. The music sustains me, and also my family, with whom I'm very close. Although there are times when I wonder if I'm being sustained. I like the idea of having a full plate. Very often you complain about not having enough free time, but if I have more than a few days off, I start getting jittery.

LN: Me, too.

DB

EQUIPMENT

Carl Allen plays a DW (Drum Workshop) kit that includes a 14x18-inch bass drum, 8x12-inch and 9x13-inch mounted toms, 14x14-inch floor tom (sometimes 16x16-inch) and 5x14-inch snare (sometimes 4x13-inch). His cymbals are all Sabian HH models: 14-inch dark hi-hats, 18-inch medium crash, 20-inch mini-bell ride (with rivets), 22-inch jazz ride (with four rivets) and 20-inch duo ride. He uses DW pedals, Calato sticks, Evans drumheads, Roc-Soc thrones, Shure microphones and Protechlor cases.

Lewis Nash uses a Sonor Designer series five-piece kit that includes a 14x18-inch bass drum, 8x10-inch tom, 8x12-inch tom, 14x14-inch floor tom and 6x14-inch snare. He plays three 20-inch Sabian hand-hammered ride cymbals and Sabian hand-hammered 14-inch hi-hats, Calato brushes and Remo drum heads.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Carl Allen

TESTIMONIAL—Atlantic 82755
THE PURSUER—Atlantic 82572

Carl Allen & Manhattan Projects

THE DARK SIDE OF DEWEY—Evidence 22108
PICCADILLY SQUARE—Timeless 406
DREAMBOAT—Alta/Timeless 327

with Freddie Hubbard

THE FREDDIE HUBBARD-WOODY SHAW SESSIONS—Blue Note 32747
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with Art Farmer

THE MEANING OF ART—Arabesque 0118
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with Vincent Herring

DON'T LET IT GO—MusicMasters 65121
FOLKLORE—MusicMasters 65109
EVIDENCE—Landmark 1527

with Benny Green

BLUE NOTES—Somethin' Else 5553 (Japan only)
TESTIFYIN': LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—Blue Note 98171
THAT'S RIGHT!—Blue Note 84467

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FOR ART'S SAKE—Candid 79501

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RHYTHM IS MY BUSINESS—Evidence 22041

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Thelonious Monk Can Monk Withstand Success?

By Frank John London

Thelonious Monk, underrated and often misunderstood early in his career, experienced a great change of fortune during the late 1950s. In the following "Classic Interview," reprinted (and edited) from our Oct. 30, 1958 issue, we find that success didn't really change Monk the man. This piece, DB, and other classic DB articles, appears in the book Down Beat: 60 Years Of Jazz (Hal Leonard, Milwaukee), now available in its second edition.

Thelonious Sphere Monk finally has been discovered.

For years a mystery man of modern jazz, Monk now has emerged from a six-year involuntary absence from New York's night-club circuit to win first place [for piano] in the Down Beat Critics Poll, surpassing such men as Duke Ellington, Erroll Garner, Oscar Peterson and Dave Brubeck. In the year since his return to the jazz clubs, Monk has received rave reviews in *The New York Times* for his Randall's Island jazz festival appearance, offers to compose for French films and notice in magazines that customarily ignore jazz.

To say that Monk is doggedly individual becomes something of an understatement when one considers the whole man. He is singular in the strict sense of the word.

One phase of the interview for this story took place while Monk was in bed. It was 4:30 p.m. "Often Monk doesn't go right to bed after coming home from work," explained Mrs. Nellie Monk, his articulate wife. "He talks, writes or sometimes just lies in the bed without closing his eyes. Sometimes it's daylight before he goes to sleep."

Monk himself realizes that his ways are unorthodox. "I've even composed while sitting in my son's wagon in front of the house," he said.

Monk Jr.'s red wagon figured in a dispute Monk Sr. had with Riverside Records, his current recording company, over the cover of the *Monk's Music* album.

"They wanted me to pose in a monk's habit, on a pulpit, holding a glass of whiskey," the pianist said. "I told them no." Then with a wry smile, he added,



BOB ALPER

"Monks don't even stand in pulpits. Then they wanted to dress me in evening clothes, white tie and all. I told them I would pose in a wagon, because I have actually composed while sitting in my kid's wagon on the front sidewalk."

And that is the way it was.

One interview or 10 cannot shatter the protective wall Thelonious Monk has built around himself. His answers to questions are guarded, cryptic and even

defensive. Yet they are honest, intelligent responses when you consider that he has been cuffed about a good deal and that much of this has resulted only because he will be different.

"I want to achieve happiness in life, in music—the same thing," he said. "My influences? I am influenced by everything and everybody. There used to be a time when I would go around joints where there would be just piano players and you played piano by

yourself, no rhythm section. ... A lot of piano players would be playing. You know people have tried to put me off as being crazy. Sometimes it's to your advantage for people to think you're crazy. A person should do the thing he likes best, the way it pleases him."

When asked where he thinks modern jazz is going, he replied: "I don't know where it's going. Maybe it's going to hell. You can't make anything go anywhere; it just happens."

At this point, Mrs. Monk, slightly piqued by Monk's reticence, exclaimed, "You must know how you feel. Are you satisfied with where it's going? Is it going in the right direction?"

Monk glanced at the foot of the bed, where she sat, and said, "I don't know where it's going. Where is it going?"

Mrs. Monk, not to be defeated, countered, "Do you think anything can be done to educate the coming generation? So that they know the quality when they hear it, so that they have discriminating taste? Are they listening to the right sounds except for yourself? Are you satisfied with what you are presenting to the public?"

Monk answered, "Are they doing something about it? I don't know how people are listening."

By this time, Monk appeared to be undergoing a third degree in a precinct back room. The microphone of a tape recorder sat on his night stand. I sat in a chair near the night stand, his niece and wife sat on the edge of the bed, and Monk lay propped on a pillow, his chest rising and falling rapidly, perspiration ridging his brow. But his hands were calm, twisting his goatee.

Monk's niece tried to amplify the question: "Do you think the people are being educated properly?"

"Well, they've got schools," he said.

His niece, an impertinent teenager, snapped, "Unk, are they learning anything in the schools?"

Smiling, he replied, "I haven't been in the schools."

At the outset, Monk's wife had told him, "Thelonious, you can open your mouth when you speak."

He had answered, "I talk so plain a deaf and dumb man can hear me."

Nellie then had settled down to a nice, relaxed interview. "Why don't you do some of those *corny* jokes down at the Five Spot like you did in Philadelphia?" she asked her husband.

Then to me, she said, "He would make remarks that were so timely that you would have to laugh. He doesn't even have a mic at the Five Spot because he wants to keep the singers away."

Here Monk protested. "That's [the mic's absence] because the horn would be playing into the mic," he said. "It

would be too loud."

Mrs. Monk added, "Most of the people have never seen that [joking] side of him. He won't do it down there. Last year he did a dance ... during the solos."

Monk's comments on various subjects are always revealing. On the sudden prominence of Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, Frank Foster, Wilbur Ware and Johnny Griffin after each had become associated with him, Monk said, "I have noticed that with a lot of musicians." Then, with a wry smile, "I

don't know why it happens."

The world now seems to be "ready" for Thelonious Sphere Monk. "Why are people afraid of me?" he asked. "I've been robbed three times; they must not be afraid of me." He has been through disappointments, malicious rumors, exile, sickness and a destructive fire. Now, his bandwagon seems to be rolling. The onetime skeptics are hopping on.

Monk has withstood failure. Now the question is, can he withstand success? **DB**



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Modest Mraz Steps Into The Spotlight

George Mraz prefers to keep busy. When we spoke, the bassist's new quartet had recently debuted at Visiones in New York; *Jazz* (Milestone), his first U.S. release as a leader, had just hit the stores, and he was on the verge of heading to Japan to tour with pianist Hank Jones. Free time is an unaccustomed experience for Mraz, who took advantage of open dates to record *Jazz* after concluding a tour with Joe Henderson. Titrating the CD *Jazz* is no boast—it's characteristic understatement. Despite his world-class reputation, Mraz, 51, has little interest in self-promotion—he just wants to play bass.

Pianist Richie Beirach is a longtime collaborator, and he rates Mraz as among the great all-round bassists. "George always plays the exact right note you want to hear," says Beirach, "and he plays the bass as though he invented it." So, why isn't Mraz better known outside the cognoscenti? Beirach suggests, "His quiet demeanor sometimes obscures his deep commitment to the music." Despite his reputation as a technical virtuoso with a strong melodic sense and warm tone, Mraz still sounds a little surprised that anyone is interested in his story.

Jiri Mraz left his native Czechoslovakia in January 1967, before the Soviet occupation of Prague, arriving at the Berklee School of Music the following year, where he began to establish his credentials as a first-call bassist. The sensitive interplay of Bill Evans' trios became an important influence. Mraz formed long-term working relationships with the likes of pianists Jones, Beirach, Oscar Peterson, Jimmy Rowles and Tommy Flanagan, as well as saxophonists Stan Getz and Joe Henderson. As if to confirm Mraz's status among bassists, Charles Mingus called on him to play on several recording sessions (including *Three Or Four Shades Of Blues*, 1977) when Mingus' ill health limited his own participation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, conflict arose in the studio over a bowed melody part for "Haitian Fight Song." Mraz remembers, "He called a break, and I played it three times my way, and then three times the way he wanted it." After many playbacks,



George Mraz

Mingus grudgingly accepted the Mraz version, conceding, "It sounds better the way you do it ... but it's wrong!"

Mraz's long tenure as a sideman allowed him to observe a range of leadership styles. "The best way to lead is to let everybody do what they do best, and contribute what they think they should contribute," the bassist says, adding, "if it gets out of hand, I say a few words." Mraz downplays the significance of leading this familiar quartet. To him, it's a natural progression, and not so great an adjustment. He points out, "I choose the material, subject to discussion. Anybody could be the 'leader.' We've all played together for 20 years, on and off." Beirach enthusiastically endorses this collegial approach, observing, "I've played with George Mraz for 25 years, and I still look forward to it!"

Jazz is elegant, lyrical and frequently beautiful, with fine, sympathetic performances by Beirach and drummer Billy Hart, also a member of the working quartet, both of whom enhance Mraz's radiant treatments of tunes like Wayne Shorter's "Infant Eyes" and Bill Evans' "Time Remembered." With its multitracked bass-quartet introduction, a glowing treatment of Ennio and Andrea Morricone's "Cinema Paradiso (Love Theme)" is a highlight of *Jazz*. The composition, suggested by producer Todd Barkan, lends itself beautifully to

jazz interpretation. Mraz acknowledges that an unlikely source can be fertile ground for improvisation, but emphasizes the importance of treating the composition with respect.

Mraz is also pleased with the just-out *Heart Beats* (Milestone), recorded with John Hicks and Idris Muhammad as the Keystone Trio. *My Foolish Heart*, an earlier trio date (also with Beirach and Hart) recorded for the Japanese Alfa label, will be released on Milestone this fall. Looking ahead to future projects, Mraz envisions recording more of his compositions, like the stately swinging "Happy Saint," and possibly working in an expanded setting with horns or strings. The remarkable, multi-tracked treatment of Rowles' "The Peacocks" on *Jazz* signals one possible but highly labor-intensive approach.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, Mraz returned to Prague for a festival, ending a 25-year absence. He was warmly welcomed by the Czech city's small but persistent jazz community, and, while there, recorded *Catching Up* (Alfa, 1991, Japanese import). He's returned repeatedly since, and now plays a mid-19th century Czech bass along with his 1803 Italian bass. Prague's jazz clubs remained open in spite of the Soviet crackdown of 1968, and Mraz visits new clubs as well as venues he played in the 1960s. "Once jazz starts," observes Mraz, "you can't stop it." —Jon Andrews

Shredding The Canvas

The lanky Brooklyn brassman Conrad Herwig quips that trombonists are the Rodney Dangerfields of jazz—you know, they get no respect. But if the 36-year-old Herwig keeps blowing and sliding with as much imagination and diversity as he has in the last few years, esteem is bound to mount. On *New York Breed* (Double Time) Herwig displays just how much he knows about variety (see "CD Reviews" May '96). There are stompers where bluster is directly connected to articulation, and ballads that express the deliberation of a meditative state. Cadences evolve, textures mutate: Herwig's goal of integrating the notions of his diverse work experiences is definitely accomplished.

"People wonder: What is the music of the future?" he explains. "I think it's an inclusive sound, the real fusion, if you will. If you're exclusively into hard-bop, if you think the musical world ended in 1960, you're limited. Same thing if you're exclusively into creative music or free playing; that aleatoric randomness repeats itself after a while. I try to take from each. Hopefully, the future sound will be part bop, part modal/chromatic, part free ... part classical, too."

Not a surprising take from someone who has done time on the bandstands of both Buddy Rich and Henry Threadgill. From his college days at the celebrated North Texas State (where he gigged in Dallas with piano legend Red Garland) to recent sessions with Afro-Cuban bandleaders Mario Bauza and Eddie Palmieri, Herwig has made a point to roam the stylistic block. The collective personality on *New York Breed*—made with pals Richie Beirach, Dave Liebman, Rufus Reid and Adam Nussbaum—displays the resulting breadth. "We're too 'out' for the 'in' cats and too 'in' for the 'out' cats," he smiles. "Actually, we're seeking a balance between exuberance and reflection."

One of Herwig's strong beliefs is that technique isn't the means to every end: "The issue isn't speed; like, how high or

fast you can play. Playing isn't quantitative, it's qualitative. The discipline you develop should give you more creative freedom."

Toward that end, Herwig's forays into New York's Afro-Cuban scene have been illuminating. "I always thought that the reason the trombone was popular in Latin music was because it's loud. It has that attack. I think of a movie called *The Buccaneers* with Errol Flynn. He's up on the top of a mast with a sword, and jumps down while slicing through the sail: *shwaahhh!* I call it the shredding-canvas effect. The trombone has the muscle."

That may be true, but Herwig's Latin bosses dig his finesse, too. "When you play what Eddie Palmieri calls the 'Afro-



Conrad Herwig

Caribbean' sound, everybody's a drummer," the trombonist asserts. "Horn players learn to deal in that context as a percussionist. Both phrasing-wise and rhythmically, it's really helped me. Latin music is one of the most complex musics around, and it gives you wild ideas. When I get back to a jazz quartet playing four-on-the-floor swing, it seems like putting on an old bathrobe."

Hopefully, Herwig will feel just as comfy when he begins his next project: uniting the fertile Afro-Cuban cadences with the harmonies and melodies of Coltrane's tunes. The session is slated for the new Astor Place label, and is co-produced by Bob Belden. "It's something I'm taking super serious," he concludes. "You can't fool around with this stuff. Listen to some of those tunes—'Africa' or 'Brazilia'—and you hear the Latin references. Some of it is so amazingly syncopated, it's obvious. Really, if you dig it correctly, Trane had clave!"
—Jim Macnie



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Laughing At Standards

Dave Frank's take on standards is to make fun of them. "I have been trying to develop a humorous voice, because it's hard to get serious when playing

'Stella By Starlight' in 1995," explains the pianist. "It's time to just make it funny or just take it out someplace for a joke, because it's been done a million times."

Frank, 39, recently released his first CD as a leader, *Solo Piano* (Breeze Records). The recording, which Frank describes as 25 years in the making and two-and-a-half years in actual production, demonstrates his ability to play independent melodies in each hand at blistering speeds and reveals a sensitive, mature approach to ballads.

Despite Frank's claim that it's time to make fun of standards, he has a great respect for the music as an emotional



Dave Frank

vehicle. Instead of thinking about musical lines, he moves more in the direction of creating moods through the use of pianistic devices. Frank puts it this way: "The piano is inherently a complete entity. I'm intrigued with the possibilities of expressing all the different human emotions through this one instrument and developing a complete music, through different moods, structures and arrangements—a complete whole within each composition."

While Frank may seem a bit irreverent, he's dead serious about studying the work of past jazz masters and following their improvisational examples. In addition to his nine-year gig as an assistant professor of piano at Boston's Berklee College of Music, Frank gives master classes while on tour and instructs students from Botswana to Iceland through monthly correspondence courses. "Once you expose students to the concepts of the art form," he says, "you can see the transformation happening in front of you."

Last year while on tour, Frank had the opportunity to share these concepts with students in countries where the opportunities for jazz instruction are rare at best. And he noticed that whether he's in Brazil, South Africa or Brooklyn, the situation is usually the same: Students need someone to point out the major boulders in their way; once they're pointed out, they can be removed.

Frank attributes his flair for teaching to studying with master musicians himself. His most influential mentor was Lennie Tristano, who gave him practical information relative to harmony and technique but primarily communicated the concepts of improvisation. "He never once told me what notes to play, but he did provide the concepts that opened the door for those notes. He opened the door so the notes could come in on their own."

—Stephen Flinn

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The Pope Gets Serious

The timing of Odean Pope's latest trio release might make you think that *Ninety-Six* (enja) is a New Year's resolution wrapped in an album. But the CD's title track is really a tribute to the small South Carolina town (between Atlanta, Ga., and Columbia, S.C.) where Pope was born. Pope cites that town's Baptist church as his primary musical influence and the inspiration behind three albums with his 12-piece Saxophone Choir. "From my earliest memory of that period, it was always a lot of big choirs and a lot of singing," says the tenor saxophonist, who now resides and works extensively in Philadelphia. "I was very active."

Pope's sense of community is one theme of *Ninety-Six*, informing everything from his choice of fellow Philadelphians as sidemen (drummer Mickey Roker and



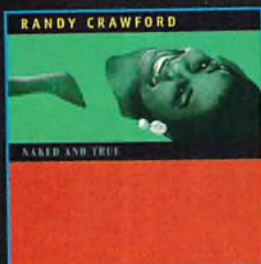
Odean Pope

bassist Tyrone Brown) to the numerous tributes on the album. "Knot It Off," slang for "get serious," is a phrase that Pope picked up in Philly. Indeed, Pope has been getting serious for so long that he has quietly held down the tenor sax chair in Max Roach's band longer than anyone else, including Sonny Rollins, Hank Mobley and Harold Land.

Pope's first break was a gig inherited in 1955 from friend and mentor John Coltrane, another Carolina native transplanted to the Quaker City. "When Coltrane went with Miles, he gave me his gig with [organist] Jimmy Smith at a club downtown, Spider Kelly's. He gave me a lot of encouragement," nods the lanky tenorman. Add to that a penchant for advanced harmonics, a scholar's work ethic and modesty, too. "I think what I got from John the most was dedication and consistency."

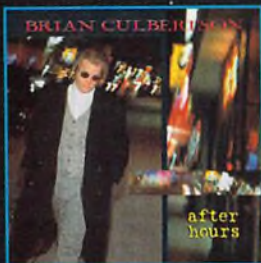
That dedication once led Pope to remove all of the records from his house, so he wouldn't be tempted to listen to them. The man's not unreasonable, though: He brought the records back after nearly two decades. —Kirby Kean

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JUNE 1996 DOWN BEAT 39

STARR BELTING
Loopin' The Cool

★★★

★★★★1/2

★★★★

★★★★

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JUNE 1996 DOWN BEAT 41

CD REVIEWS

bound but loves to groove, and his superb feel lends the session irrepressible momentum. Drummer Rainey and Guinean percussionist Bangoura tangle their percussives intelligently, providing space as well as interaction; on the opening tune "Munchkins" as well as "Seventh Sign" they manage to be unobtrusive but—even without explosive dynamics—propulsive as hell.

From his work with Edward Blackwell's Project, Helias adapts his tune "Thumbs Up," with its totally funky bassline and great African feel. All but three of the compositions ("Penta Houve," "Hung Over Easy" and "El Baz") utilize dramatic tempo shifts; as a writer, Helias knows how an abrupt leap from fast to slow or a quick sneak from one time signature into another can introduce a new mood or catalyze a soloist.

With the Carter/Eskelin frontline, Helias has created a provocative combination—the tenor/violin mix is startling, especially on the many unison sections that feature the two in tandem. Best vantage on this unique texture is "Pacific Rim," though it is contrasted interestingly with a balafon/bass through-line on "Penta Houve" and juxtaposed against a bass/tenor passage at the end of "One Time Only." In her solos, Carter exercises complete control, avoiding the high-harmonic flurries to which other violinists often gravitate; check her feature "El Baz." Eskelin is one of the great emergent talents of our time, and he's in

his element here, tackling extendo-line charts and leaping headlong into flowing solos. He's developed an outrageous method of combining overtones into straight-toned runs, much the way Derek Bailey does on guitar. Helias' aching blues "Hung Over Easy" brings the Sheppishness in Eskelin's approach into full, swaggering view, right up to the fluttery end.

Loopin' The Cool: true grit with an intellect.
—John Corbett

Loopin' The Cool—Munchkins; Loop The Cool; One Time Only; Sector 51; Seventh Sign; Penta Houve; Thumbs Up; Hung Over Easy; El Baz; Pacific Rim. (63:25)

Personnel—Helias, bass; Tom Rainey, drums, percussion; Epizio Bangoura, percussion, djembé; Regina Carter, violin; Ellery Eskelin, tenor saxophone.

The Nearness Arabesque 0120

★★★★

For this session, Jane Ira Bloom wraps an unexpected ensemble around her soprano saxophone. The group serves Bloom's personal vision, which is pastel in its palette yet firm in its concept.

Bloom does not belong to the dominant snake-charmer school of nasal soprano saxophonists. Her articulation is rich and rounded, and (also unlike many of her instrumental colleagues) she wastes very few notes. Her solos proceed with poetic coherence—but *The Nearness* is not about individual statements. In each song's aural fabric, Bloom's luminous voice is always the primary pattern, but subtly so. Kenny Wheeler and Julian Priester (who played together in a Dave Holland quintet) and Fred Hersch (except on the five tunes where he lays out) are ever-present, woven tightly into the collective counterpoint.

Bloom joins her own material onto standards, which are aspects of her own imagination obtained from sources in the public domain. The first track, "nearly Summertime," gradually gathers itself into Gershwin, the hovering repetitions of Rufus Reid's bass and Hersch's piano becoming Bloom's discovery of the melody over trombonist Priester's gruff commentary.

It is not easy to find a new take on "Round Midnight," but Bloom precedes it with "Midnight Round," and the staggered openings of the three horns lead to brief private forays, each deep in the nocturnal moment. Bloom's lines trail off like sighs. Priester and Wheeler and Hersch make solos as concentrated and mysteriously connotative as haikus. "In The Wee Small Hours" is opened by an incantation Bloom calls "Midnight Measure," and the whole demonstrates how restraint can create excitement when it is finally unleashed. Bloom is alone with the rhythm section and builds this piece very carefully, prompted and cautioned by Hersch. But Jane Ira *can* wail, as she does here—when she gets there and that achingly pure soprano actually breaks for a moment, it is a rush of release.

The Nearness is an apt title. The intricate elegance of Bloom's music does not stand proudly apart, but comes up so close we feel its breath; we end up intimately sharing its emotional truth.

This recording was engineered by James Farber and mixed by Jim Anderson. Since Anderson himself was not at the board, we do not get the "Anderson sound"—that immaculate, etched digital clarity that has become his signature on a jazz album. Farber goes for a softer focus and rounded-off corners that emphasize—perhaps unnecessarily—the limpid qualities of Bloom's music. Anderson would have given her more snap. —Thomas Conrad

The Nearness—nearly Summertime; Midnight Round/Round Midnight; '6 Bop; Midnight's Measure/In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning; Painting Over Paris; Wing Dining; Panasonic; White Tower; It's A Corrugated World; Monk's Tale/The Nearness Of You; Lonely House; The All-Diesel Kitchen Of Tomorrow; Yonder. (68:16)

Personnel—Bloom, soprano saxophone; Kenny Wheeler, flugelhorn, trumpet; Julian Priester, trombone, bass trombone; Fred Hersch, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Bobby Previte, drums.



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**Charlie Haden/
Quartet West**

Now Is The Hour
Verve Gitanes 529 827

★★★½

Charlie Haden

The Montreal Tapes
Verve 314 523 259

★★★

Haden has been on a roll lately, more visible in more varied settings than at any time in his career. On his fourth album with Quartet West, he continues to mine a rich vein of romantic nostalgia, while on the latest release from his concert series at the 1989 Montreal International Jazz Festival, he revisits the semi-abstract terrain he's explored since his days with Ornette Coleman. Ironically, he sounds more engaging on the mainstream music of his bop and swing elders than on the modern music he helped pioneer.

There are no sampled flashbacks or other gimmicks on *Now Is The Hour*, but Quartet West, backed by pianist Alan Broadbent's string arrangements, still evokes the Hollywood of the 1940s, poised between celluloid sentimentality and hipster cool. Misty-eyed ballads like "There In A Dream" and "Detour Ahead" predominate, with strings stressing the funerary feel. Uptempo tunes like "Back Home Blues" and "Blue Pearl," rendered in pure bebop style, lighten the mood, but like its predecessors, the album has the overall effect of an elegy for a bygone era. Tenor saxist Ernie Watts plays ballads and boppers alike with velvety authority; Broadbent comps elegantly, and drummer Larence Marable provides a perfect period beat. But it's Haden's bass, with its huge, lumbering tone and vocalized phrasing, that carries most of the emotional weight, as on "The Left Hand Of God," where he plucks the lugubrious lead accompanied by only the orchestra, mourning lost love like a singing elephant.

The second of Haden's eight Montreal shows to be issued features Paul Bley and Paul Motian, who bring out the bassist's brooding, introspective side. Between Bley's groping

pianistics and Motian's open-ended drumming, it's up to Haden to supply the momentum, which he does with such buoyant thrust that on the opening "Turnaround/When Will The Blues Leave?" his heaving swells threaten to swamp their delicate motifs. For the most part, however, the three manage to find the same wavelength, noodling restlessly from concrete themes to free-form figurations on their own individual compositions plus material by Ornette Coleman and Carla Bley. The prevailing air of wistful rumination extends from ballads like "New Beginning" to blues like "Turnaround," but even on all-out spacewalks like "Cross Road," Haden's bass has a lyrical quality, buzzing and thumping with a resonance so expressive, it's practically operatic.

—Larry Birnbaum

Now Is The Hour—Here's Looking At You; The Left Hand Of God; Requiem; Back Home Blues; There In A Dream; All Through The Night; Detour Ahead; Blue Pearl; When Tomorrow Comes; Palo Alto; Marable's Parable; Now Is The Hour. (59:38)

Personnel—Haden, bass; Ernie Watts, tenor saxophone; Alan Broadbent, piano, string arrangements; Larence Marable, drums.

The Montreal Tapes—Turnaround/When Will The Blues Leave?/New Beginning; Cross Road; So Far So Good; Ida Lupino; Latin Genetics; Body Beautiful; Turnaround. (67:59)

Personnel—Haden, bass; Paul Bley, piano; Paul Motian, drums.



Various Artists

Wavelength Infinity
Rastacan 18

★★★★½

Surrender To The Air

Surrender To The Air
Elektra 61905

★★★

It's been three years since Sun Ra's departure from the planet, and new attention has focused on his compositions and longtime members of his Arkestra. The two-CD *Wavelength Infinity* is a sparkling exception to the trend of bland tribute albums. In the course of 2½ hours, 32 bands, including Arkestra alumni and kindred spirits, pay homage to the diversity and strength of the music and poetry of Ra and the Arkestra, arguing convincingly that Ra's work will stand the test of time.

For (relatively) straightforward aspects of Ra's

music, investigate Eddie Gale and John Tchicai's stately, swinging "An Island In Space," NRBQ's loose, swaying take on "Fate In A Pleasant Mood" (with Marshall Allen) or a pensive "Lights On A Satellite" from the Coctails with Ken Vandermark. For creative arrangements, turn to Dan Plonsey's remarkable "Constellation/The Art Scene" featuring a swinging gamelan ensemble or ROVA baritone saxophonist Jon Raskin's soulful arrangement on "Lullaby For Realville." For inspired lunacy, look to twisted versions of "Space Is The Place" from the Residents as well as from delirious "shockabilly" guitarist Eugene Chadbourne. Producer/drummer Gino Robair (of the Splatter Trio) thoughtfully selected these tracks which, true to Ra's spirit, straddle a line between ceremony and circus. In addition to these virtues, sales of *Wavelength Infinity* benefit the Arkestra.

When guitarist Trey Anastasio of the alternative rock band Phish organized his 11-piece Surrender To The Air ensemble, he engaged two featured soloists from the Arkestra, alto saxophonist Marshall Allen and trumpeter Michael Ray. "And Furthermore" immediately commands attention with a sonic shockwave reminiscent of Coltrane's *Ascension*, then resolves into a pounding funk-fusion groove, confirming that we are a long way from Lollapalooza. Other tracks set bristling combinations of horns against John Medeski's synthesizer, evoking Herbie Hancock's *Crossings* (1972) sextet. Anastasio directs varying combinations of players in open, structured improvisations, getting tense, fiery performances from Allen and Ray, among others. Ray has recorded in numerous settings, but this is a rare chance to hear Allen's screaming alto away from the Arkestra. Guitarists Anastasio and Marc Ribot rarely solo, but add texture and rhythm. Credit Anastasio for defying commercial expectations with this gutsy, freewheeling ensemble effort.

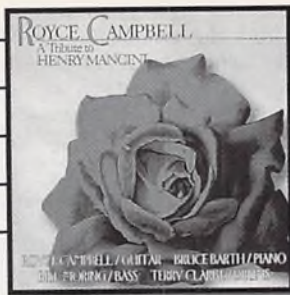
—Jon Andrews

Wavelength Infinity—Dancing Shadows; Kingdom Of Not; Friendly Galaxy; Darkness Light; Looking Outward; Energies; Sun-Day; Transition; Daydream In Space (Is The Place); Tiny Pyramids; Fate In A Pleasant Mood; The Name Sound; Disco 3000; Sunny's Sun Harp; Nature's Law; There Are Other Worlds (They Have Not Told You Of); The Satellites Are Spinning; Mu; Enlightenment; The Fantasy; The Call; Constellation/The Art Scene; Lights On A Satellite; Space Is The Place; The Nile; An Island In Space; Whereness; Advice to Medics; El Is A Sound Of Joy; Cosmic Equation; Lullaby For Realville; Planet Earth. (73:01/74:06)

Selected Personnel—Sun Ra, sampled synthesizer (9); Terry Adams, piano (11); Eddie Gale, trumpet, flugelhorn (6, 26); Tyrone Hill, trombone (11); Steve Adams (8); Marshall Allen (11); Amy Denio (18); Randy McKean (29), alto sax; Dave Barrett (6, 10); Jessica Lurie (18); John Tchicai (26); tenor sax; Charlie Kohlhaase (2); Jon Raskin (31); baritone sax; Ben Goldberg, clarinet (8, 17); Ken Vandermark, bass clarinet (23); Al Anderson, guitar (11); Elliott Sharp, guitar, electronics (13); Eugene Chadbourne, banjo, guitar, vocal (24); Myles Boisen, double-neck guitar/bass (10, 28); Dan Plonsey, bass, tenor sax (22); Lisle Ellis (6); Joey Spampinato (11), bass; Kash Killion, cello (3, 6); Tom Ardolino (11); Jimmy Carl Black (24); Gino Robair (6, 10); drums: Art Hoyle (12, 20); Malcolm Mooney (4); Thurston Moore (30), voice.

Surrender To The Air—Intro; And Furthermore; We Deltate; And Furthermore; Down; Intro; And Furthermore; And Furthermore; Out. (49:23)

Personnel—Trey Anastasio, Marc Ribot, electric guitar; Michael Ray, trumpet; James Harvey, trombone; Marshall Allen, alto saxophone; Kofi Burbridge, flute; John Medeski, keyboards; Damon R. Choice, vibraphones; Oteil Burbridge, bass; Jon Fishman, Bob Gullotti, drums.



Michael Lang

Days Of Wine And Roses
Varese Sarabande 5530

★★★½

Royce Campbell

A Tribute To Henry Mancini
Episode 1001

★★★½

Joe Locke Quartet

Moment To Moment
Milestone 9243

★★★★

There is perhaps no greater testament to Henry Mancini's enduring legacy than the occurrence of three tribute recordings within a year of his death in June of '94. Like Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern and Duke Ellington, Mancini penned a number of memorable melodies, many of them increasingly popular staples for musicians in several genres.

What immediately distinguishes pianist Michael Lang's homage to Mancini is his choice of tunes. While the familiar "Days Of Wine And Roses" and "Moon River"—versions of which appear on all three tributes—are warmly rendered, Lang gives the more obscure "Tom's Theme" from *The Glass Menagerie* and "The Sweetheart Tree" from *The Great Race* strong, expressionistic turns, and he is especially commanding on the latter, where the gospel feeling is abundant. Lang's approach on "It's Easy To Say" from the movie *10* is distinctively modal and compelling. But it is his treatment of "Charade," featuring a robust ostinato, that is most engrossing, Lang reaching beyond the easy-listening format to make it a signature performance.

Campbell has a similar defining moment on "Dreamsville," as he explores the song with a slow, introspective touch, his electric guitar affecting an almost acoustic quality. Without the presence of pianist/former leader Bruce Barth on certain cuts, much of what transpires here is rather prosaic. There is, however, nothing ordinary about their attack on "Wine And Roses," Barth's solo especially being brilliant with nary a banal phrase.

Bassist Eddie Gomez, like Barth to Campbell, has a powerful presence on vibist Joe Locke's date. He shines exquisitely on "Moon River," picking the old evergreen apart and making it resonate with special wonder and longing. Locke's playing on "Moment To Moment" is suffused with passion without being cloying, and he has a wonderful way of weaving a riff against the song's harmonic overtones. His interplay with pianist Billy Childs on "Charade" is the kind of kinetic exchange that enlivens the session and would have undoubtedly pleased Mr. Mancini. —Herb Boyd

Days Of Wine And Roses: The Classic Songs Of Henry Mancini—Days Of Wine And Roses; Whistling Away The Dark; Dear Heart; It's Easy To Say; Tom's Theme; Moon River; Charade; Two For The Road; Crazy World; Moment

To Moment: Anywhere The Heart Goes: The Sweetheart Tree (64:51)

Personnel—Lang, piano; Chuck Domanico (6, 10), Dave Carpenter (1, 2, 4, 8), bass; Harvey Mason (6, 10), Joel Taylor (1, 2, 4, 8), drums.

A Tribute To Henry Mancini—Charade: Wine And Roses; Moon River; Dreamsville; It Had Better Be Tonight; Breakfast At Tiffany's; Softly; Mr. Lucky; Pink Panther; Letter To Henry (53:07)

Personnel—Campbell, guitar; Bruce Barth, piano; Bill Moring, bass; Terry Clarke, drums.

Moment To Moment: The Music Of Henry Mancini—Slow Hot Wind; Moon River; Moment To Moment; Whistling Away The Dark; Charade; Loss Of Love; The Days Of Wine And Roses; Two For The Road; Dreamsville (56:50)

Personnel—Locke, vibes; Billy Childs, piano; Eddie Gomez, bass; Gene Jackson, drums.

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Shirley Horn

The Main Ingredient
Verve 314 529 555

★★★★

Shirley Horn is as reliable as the swallow returning each year to the mission at Capistrano. Since the late '70s, when a record deal with Steeplechase began her ascent from Washington, D.C., semi-obscurity to world-class status, she's made a long string of impressive albums, the last eight for Verve. The latest set, *The Main Ingredient*, finds Horn once again succeeding admirably in giving favorite songs an easygoing beauty. But there's a twist this time: She's made the album at *home* (the giant Big Mo recording truck parked outside her door) with longtime and new musician friends in the spirit if not letter of a wee-hours jam session.

Horn's singing is of the highest order, quiet yet passionate, assured and unmannered, perfect in pitch and phrasing, her accents shifted imperceptibly and tellingly. Vocals are of a piece with her measured, swinging piano playing, and she pays close attention to lyrics *and* music. Horn's affection for the handpicked material is clear as day. Always partial to slow tempos, she takes the choice David-Bacharach tune "The Love Of Love" at a near-crawl, sizing up her man with a keen understanding that's amplified in her expressive piano. Her snail-paced version of Peggy Lee's "Fever" achieves a sensuous sweat, the vocal line and piano commentary drenched in blues feeling. Horn even turns the Melissa Manchester tearjerker "Come In From The Rain" into a convincing statement of reassurance, her careful hopefulness underscored by her ever-consistent rhythm section.

Horn is the center of attention, although the invited guests do at times illuminate the music. D.C. pal Buck Hill adds his big sound on tenor to the uptempo jauntiness of Fats Waller's "Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now" and the after-hours informality of "Blues For Sarge." The singer is joined by Hill, Joe Henderson and Elvin Jones on the romping "All Or Nothing At All," and she seems a bit self-conscious performing in the wake of their forceful personalities. On "You Go To My Head" Horn does hold her own next to Henderson and Jones (now using brushes), all three sustaining a tender mood.

—Frank-John Hadley

The Main Ingredient—Blues For Sarge; The Look Of Love; Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now; The Meaning Of The Blues; Here's Looking At You!; You Go To My Head;

Fever; Come In From The Rain; Peel Me A Grape; All Or Nothing At All. (59:53)

Personnel—Horn, vocals and piano; Buck Hill (1, 3, 10), Joe Henderson (6, 10), tenor saxophone; Roy Hargrove, flugelhorn (4); Charles Ables, guitar (1, 8), bass (3, 5, 7, 9); Steve Novosel, bass (1, 4, 8, 10); Steve Williams (1–5, 7, 8), Elvin Jones (6, 10), Billy Hart (9), drums.



Wallace Roney

The Wallace Roney Quintet
Warner Bros. 9 45914

★★★★

The title to Wallace Roney's new album may be nondescript, but there is definitely a recurring theme or mode—a persistent openness that allows each member to add his own palette of distinct sound colors. If the imagery the group evokes is a collective work of modern chromaticism, the sound reference is decidedly Milesian of *Miles In The Sky* and *Miles Smiles*.

Most emblematic of this period are "Spyra," "Astral Radium" and "Nightrance," where the singular efforts explode in a splash of expressionism reminiscent of a Kandinsky painting or a vivid collage by Romare Bearden. Roney's trumpet forays are intensely bright and engaging on "Spyra." His attack is composed of quick note clusters that race up and down the scale, creating spacey, romantic venues for tenorist/brother Antoine to fill with carefully stylized passages that would make Wayne Shorter smile.

In fact, it is the younger Roney and pianist Carlos McKinney who are the most impressive from tune to tune. On "Nightrance" the format has all the earmarks of an Ornette Coleman composition, but the resemblance is only structural and momentary; Antoine's slower reflection provides a dramatic contrast to Wallace's staccato riffs. McKinney's solo is tastefully conceived as he explores different ways to recast the interplay inspired by the Roneys. He has that special ability to listen to the rhythm section and the lead horns simultaneously, giving the tunes balance and propulsion.

The group's best moment is on "Northern Lights"; the tune is perfectly named, for there is a full spectrum of colors, and drummer Eric Allen and bassist Clarence Seay make sure that things are not only exceedingly brilliant, but extra hot. As he does on "Astral Radium," Allen meshes his tempo with Seay's heaviest strokes, quickening the pulse while spreading an endless bottom. The Roneys are at their blending best with Wallace snapping off fragments in tribute to his mentor while Antoine

deconstructs and forges a new webby configuration. Either this composition or "Spyra" could have been a nice title for the release, even if they only hint at the vast array of fresh, multicolored vistas the group expresses.

—Herb Boyd

The Wallace Roney Quintet—Spyra; Astral Radium; G. D. D.; Night And Day; Nightrance; Ultra-Axis; Clowns; High Stakes; Geri; Northern Lights. (69:52)

Personnel—Roney, trumpet; Antoine Roney, tenor saxophone; Carlos McKinney, piano; Clarence Seay, bass; Eric Allen, drums.



Bobby Previte

Dull Bang, Gushing Sound, Human Shriek
Koch Jazz 7821

★★★½

Bobby Previte's Weather Clear, Track Fast

Hue And Cry
enja 8064

★★★★½

Bobby Previte

Pushing The Envelope
Gramavision 79509

★★★★

Dull Bang, Gushing Sound, Human Shriek breaks away from anything Bobby Previte has done before or since this shocking 1986 film score, previously available only as a European LP. These malevolent atmospheres owe nothing to jazz, and only rarely utilize Previte's drums. Working alone, Previte used electronic keyboards, mistreated electric guitars and drum machines to develop his dizzying, menacing music for Michael DiPaolo's film *Bought And Sold* (unseen by Previte during composition), which depicts a runaway teen's "hellish ride through the underside" of New York City. The title is derived from the last recorded sounds of downed airliner KAL 007. You get the picture, and it's not pretty. Accepted on its terms, *Dull*

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barbara dennerlein take off!



Bang is imaginative, even inspired, in achieving its goals—it unsettles, unnerves and provokes the listener. "For Bunny ... And Brian" opens with synthesized screams and a vertiginous falling sensation. Preville manipulates the listener's sense of time in a queasy sonic world where nothing sounds the way it should. "Turn The Corner" evokes the ugly sounds of metal shearing and of underwater collisions. "Human Shriek" is the most structured piece, and suggests a gamelan orchestra playing in hell. Definitely a walk on the wild side.

Hue And Cry, on the other hand, speaks directly to Preville's "jazz" audience. This configuration of Weather Clear, Track Fast is first-rate, and Preville's compositions are intelligent, melodic and multi-layered, offering new discoveries on each listening. Marty Ehrlich and Don Byron each alternate a number of reed instruments, giving the ensemble considerable flexibility. Byron is particularly impressive on baritone sax. Larry Goldings and Anthony Davis share keyboard responsibilities. On the Hammond organ, Goldings adds a lot of color and texture to tunes like "Hubbub" and "Smack-dab." (Is Goldings destined to save his best work for other people's sessions?) Davis contributes pretty, flowing piano to "Valerie" and "For John Laughlan." Davis has devoted so much time to opera in recent years that it's a rare treat to hear him play. Preville and bassist Anthony Cox shape the underlying grooves while Preville's themes emerge and mutate. Without soloing, the drummer is a constant presence, contributing a running narrative and adding another layer of interest.

Pushing The Envelope, recorded in 1987, returns from the vaults as part of Gramavision's reissue campaign. As Preville's new liner notes observe, this is a transitional quintet session that emphasizes fine work from Ehrlich and Tom Varner. The horns mesh well throughout, and on the aptly named "Ballad Noir," Varner's French horn warily shadows Ehrlich's wistful tenor saxophone. Preville was soon working with a larger palette, but *Pushing The Envelope* is well worth hearing for protean compositions like "102° In The Shade" and the title track, and for the intriguing "Open World" and "Mirror Mirror," which employ a minimalist-style use of repetitive figures.

—Jon Andrews

Dull Bang, Gushing Sound, Human Shriek—*The Arrival; For Bunny ... And Brian; Turn The Corner; Dull Bang; Gushing Sound; Human Shriek.*

Personnel—Preville, keyboards, electric guitar, electric bass, drums, acoustic and electronic percussion, slab, voice.

Hue And Cry—*Hubbub; Smack-dab; Move Heaven And Earth; 700 Camels; Valerie; Hue And Cry; For John Laughlan And All That We Stood For. (57:56)*

Personnel—Preville, drums; Eddie Allen, trumpet; Robin Eubanks, trombone; Don Byron, clarinet, baritone saxophone; Marty Ehrlich, clarinet, alto and soprano saxophones, flute; Anthony Davis, piano; Larry Goldings, Hammond organ; Anthony Cox, bass.

Pushing The Envelope—*Open World; Ballad Noir; Once; Mirror, Mirror; 102° In The Shade; Pushing The Envelope. (42:57)*

Personnel—Preville, drums; Wayne Horvitz, piano; Tom Varner, French horn; Marty Ehrlich, tenor, alto saxophones; David Hofstra, bass, tuba; Lindsay Horner, bass (6).



Dave Holland

Dream Of The Elders

ECM 529 084

★★★½

Ones All

Intuition 2148

★★½

Emerald Tears

ECM 21109

★★★★

Since Dave Holland's playing has always blurred the line between the trad and the intrepid, what makes his newest crop of releases so out of the ordinary is how unabashedly reflective they are. Both the title and the music on *Dream Of The Elders* evoke a past that makes rhythm its starting point, but they address the ancients of jazz more in spirit than actuality. In contrast to the Mingus, Coltrane and Billie Holiday music on the bassist's new solo outing *Ones All*, the ties that bind the vibrating, undulating elements on *Dream* are much younger but no less familiar. With reedman Eric Person's slippery alto and soprano floating over the vibraphone-augmented rhythm section's predominating vamps and African-inspired accents, the album comes off more like a relaxed, unassuming cross between two musics Holland had a hand in shaping: the adult-contemporary fusion of the late '70s and the postmodern bop of the '80s.

The first thing fans of Holland's horn-centered quintets of the past will notice is the distinct redistribution of energy, the switch from hard blowing over rhythm to an influx of melodic/percussive components that fit together like pieces in a puzzle. Holland can still write boppish, bluesy heads ("Lazy Snake," "Ebb And Flo"), but his new frontline-less instrumentation is better served by timing-centered compositions like the "The Winding Way" and "Dream Of The Elders." Without much effort, these excursions are where vibesman Steve Nelson gets to be both chordal and beat conscious on marimba, drummer Gene Jackson can shift from thunderous rolls to skittering cymbals at will and Holland can control the flow by simply altering his attack. The one twist comes when Person gives up the foreground to vocalist Cassandra Wilson on Holland's lovely treatment of the Maya Angelou poem "Equality."

Where *Dream Of The Elders* strips down the frontline, however, both *Ones All* and the just reissued *Emerald Tears* (from 1977) jettison the whole band. It's instructive to hear these two solo dates back to back, especially given Holland's newfound reflective streak. Even though the program on *Ones All* includes almost as many jazz classics as it does reworked pieces from Holland's own book ("Jumpin' In," "Homecoming"), the album doesn't breathe enough life into them to make them seem like much more than exercises. (Most of the time you want to hear an ensemble.) By contrast, *Emerald Tears* proceeds easily from arco to pizzicato, classic to original, and avant to traditional stylings with little loss in versatility or charm. Like *Ones All*, the earlier record was indeed a career summation (check the Miles and Anthony Braxton pieces), but because back then Holland had less to take stock in, he filled up the space with dreams of the future.

—K. Leander Williams

Dream Of The Elders—*The Winding Way; Lazy Snake; Claressence; Equality* (vocal); *Ebb And Flo; Dream Of The Elders; Second Thoughts; Equality* (instrumental). (77:11)
Personnel—Holland, double-bass; Eric Person, alto and soprano saxophones; Steve Nelson, vibraphone, marimba; Gene Jackson, drums; Cassandra Wilson, vocal (4).

Ones All—*Homecoming; Three Step Dance; Goodbye Pork Pie Hat; Jumpin' In; Reminiscence; Mr. P.C.; Little Girl I'll Miss You; Cashel; Blues For C.M.; Pass It On; God Bless The Child*. (57:27)
Personnel—Holland, double-bass.

Emerald Tears—*Spheres; Emerald Tears; Combination; B40+RS(4W)+M23(6K); Under Redwoods; Solar; Flurries; Hooveling*. (45:02)
Personnel—Holland, double-bass.



Ray Charles

Strong Love Affair

Qwest/Warner Bros. 9 46107

★★★½

Brother Ray, as he likes to call himself, is 65 and shows no signs of slowing his pace. *Strong Love Affair*—RC's umpteenth recording and first for Quincy Jones' Qwest imprint—is a step above his last album, 1993's *My World*, which suffered from a glut of slick arrangements and programmed rhythms.

This time out Charles delivers the goods even though he dips into some glitzy synth goo on the four numbers he self-produced in his L.A. studio. No personnel are listed in the liner notes for these tunes, which leads one to suspect that RC and his production team layered in all the music. In spite of the sheen, they're decent tunes, featuring funky Ray rap-

ping on the groove track "I Need A Good Woman Bad"; the r&b RC launching into a bouncy beat on a rare self-penned composition, "Tell Me What You Want Me To Do"; and the country-gospel Charles dueting with Peggy Adams Scott on the heavenly "If You Give Me Your Heart."

The rest of the tracks are produced by Jean-Pierre Grosz, who enlists a huge crew of musicians (including horn players and string sections) to support the feisty, grit-and-blues vocalist. Grosz spares no cost, with some songs requiring as many as four tracking sessions in different studios throughout Europe. The big production pays off. It's great hearing Charles belt out funky r&b cookers like "All She Wants To Do Is Love Me" with a full horn section behind him. And the lush strings gracefully complement his achy vocal pain on such ballads as "Say No More" and "Angelina." It's been years since Charles has sounded this good.

—Dan Ouellette

Strong Love Affair—*All She Wants To Do Is Love Me; Say No More; No Time To Waste Time; Angelina; Tell Me What You Want Me To Do; Strong Love Affair; Everybody's Handsome Child; Out Of My Life; The Fever; Separate Ways; I Need A Good Woman Bad; If You Give Me Your Heart*. (51:34)

Personnel—Charles, vocals, keyboards; various artists, including Nigel Hitchcock, baritone and alto saxophones (1, 3, 7); Stephen "Doc" Kupka, baritone saxophone (9); David Mann, tenor and alto saxophones (9); Molly Ducan (1, 7); David O'Higgins (3); Emilio Castillo (9), tenor saxophone; Paul Spong (1, 7); Sid Gaud (1, 7); Gerard Presencer (3); Greg Adams (9), trumpet; Nell Sidnell, trombone (1, 7); Lee Thornburg, trumpet, trombone (9); Nguyen Le (4); Phil Palmer (8, 10), guitar; Peggy Adams Scott, vocals (12); The Raelettes, background vocals (7).

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CD REVIEWS



Eddie Daniels

The Five Seasons
Shanachie/Cachet 5017

★★★★½

The strings and woodwinds of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra are sweeping grandly through the strains announcing "Spring" when suddenly an upward flourish of violins is replaced by the same phrase played on Eddie Daniels' clarinet. The rhythm section engages, and Vivaldi fast-forwards 250 years in 16 bars. The orchestra briefly insists on its history again before Daniels, streaming quicksilver, takes the music back. Then the clarinet merges gradually into the ensemble for the first movement's formal denouement.

In the liner notes, Daniels contrasts the abundant repertoire available to string players with his own limited options as a clarinetist. Rather than complain, he sets about imagining "a new vision of Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* for chamber orchestra and jazz quartet." In the process he "uncovers jazz" and startles everyone including himself (and, he "hopes," Vivaldi). His partner in this ambitious project is Argentinian composer Jorge Calandrelli, whose fluency in both the classical and jazz idioms serves both Daniels and Vivaldi well as arranger and co-producer. When "Summer" comes, Daniels stays within the orchestra to play Vivaldi's violin parts and to "improvise in the Baroque style," as the composer intended. There is an exhilarating moment when the orchestra's Vivaldi evolves naturally into the headlong groove of the rhythm section with Daniels along for the ride.

What is most remarkable about *The Five Seasons* is the complex and dynamic interaction between Daniels' unfettered muse and his fixed frames of reference. On "Autumn," the orchestra and the clarinet alternate eras and energize each other. It is not just an interweaving: There are moments of revelatory synthesis when the pure, penetrating voice of Daniels' instrument blends Vivaldi's ideas with its own until it no longer matters whose is whose.

Calandrelli offers his own "Fifth Season" as an epilogue, and it fits seamlessly into the whole. There is a section left open for Daniels and pianist Alan Broadbent to dream a ballad all their own. Liberated at last from their sources, they float free in a moment of sublime release.

The liner notes do not provide extensive recording information. Presumably the quartet sections were overdubbed on the orchestral

parts. The audio quality lacks the vividness and immediacy of a live-to-two-track recording, but the integration of the two layers is convincing. And the sonic focal point stays clear: That airborne clarinet, mellifluous in all four of its registers, weightless as thought. —Thomas Conrad

The Five Seasons—Spring: Summer: Autumn: Winter: The Fifth Season. (65:56)

Personnel—Daniels, clarinet; Alan Broadbent, piano; Dave Carpenter, bass; Peter Erskine, drums; Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; Jorge Calandrelli, arranger; Bernard Rubenstein, conductor.



Joanne Brackeen

Turnaround
Evidence 22123

★★★★½

Brackeen is an uncompromising post-bop pianist. Her jazz is complex yet lyrical, intense yet intensely rewarding for the willing listener. This live recording from NYC's Sweet Basil in 1992 certainly captures the statuesque, personal musician, who draws on such greats as Bud Powell, McCoy Tyner and Ornette Coleman in building her unique style.

A fervid passion imbues interpretations of both her originals, such as "Rubies And Diamonds" and "Picasso," and of standards—from "Bewitched" to Ornette's "Turnaround." In her solos, Brackeen unleashes notes in bunches, then flurries, swinging in the process. This mixing and matching of lines with melodic charm and those that lean toward, and embrace, dissonance—all delivered with ardor and an undeniably powerful sound—mostly works wonders: "No Greater Love" is a prime example. Occasionally, one begs for respite—a long, calming passage for balance. Even on a ballad like "Bewitched," it is rarely forthcoming. This tendency to overdo is Brackeen's lone drawback.

Variety abounds. "No Greater Love" is done medium uptempo, while "Picasso" moves from stance to stance before settling into a vibrant Latin groove; "Bewitched" is an unaccompanied essay.

The crew cooks: Harrison has grown into an assured, mature artist, playing with a robust sound and issuing statements that are curved and warm as well as jagged and edgy; the ace team of McBee and Smith keep the heat on the stove, and get a couple of choice solo spots, too.

It is shameful that Brackeen does not have a major-label deal; she did for a hot minute in the late '70s—early '80s with Columbia's Tappan Zee offshoot. Counting apprentice-

ships, she's spent 40 years in the jazz trade, working with Art Blakey and Stan Getz, among others, and as a leader, and it is time someone besides a gutsy independent like Evidence asked for her hand.
—Zan Stewart

Turnaround—*There Is No Greater Love; Rubies And Diamonds; Picasso; Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered; Turnaround; Tricks Of The Trade.* (65:57)

Personnel—Brackeen, piano; Donald Harrison, alto saxophone; Cecil McBee, bass; Marvin "Smitty" Smith, drums.



Mike Longo

I Miss You John
Consolidated Artists
Productions 912

★★★★

Dizzy Gillespie

Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac
Impulse! 178

★★★

No question about it, the world is a poorer place without John Birks Gillespie. Pianist Mike Longo, for one, misses the bebop giant terribly, but he grants himself some comfort by linking up with the venerable James Moody and several more Gillespie sidemen for a fond salute to their former boss. All of us can take modest satisfaction in the re-reissue of Gillespie's *Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac*, a 19-year-old album that has his quintet with Moody and Longo in a Los Angeles nightclub.

Longo's centerpiece track, "I Miss You John," counters the melancholic uncertainty of the unison theme at its start and closes with solos of steely resolve from trumpeter Jimmy Owens then tenorist Moody and finally Longo. "Brother K" capitalizes on the suitability of the pianist's heartfelt, focused playing to the Gillespie composition for peace-maker Martin Luther King Jr. Seven Longo songs featuring trio or quintet—along with a piano/bass/drums arrangement of George Gershwin's "Someone To Watch Over Me" and his solo-piano take on Ettore Strata's "Forget The Woman"—are in keeping with the serious musical thoughts and elevation of spirit that informed Gillespie's music. Expressive sincerity is a gift shared by all the players, whether it's David Sanchez's tenor sticking like a shadow to Cecil Bridgewater's trumpet on "Lion Tamers" or Jimmy Owens lending dramatic flair to the modern blues "Heritage Mix."

Gillespie, of course, made many of his club and concert-hall appearances extraordinary through a sizzling combination of charismatic personality and superb playing. You get glimmers of this wondrousness hearing the chronicle of a half-hour of clowning and jazz recorded under the direction of Bob Thiele at the Memory Room in 1967, not an auspicious time for beboppers. Gillespie's redone titular spoof of the spiritual "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" offers first-rate stage absurdism and almost incidentally some good swinging music. The trumpeter gives a sampling of his Afro-Cuban bravura during "Mas Que Nada," and the 16-minute "Kush" gives a display of his awesome control and spontaneity (not all that much, though, as Moody and Longo get plenty of solo room, and neither instigates

Gillespie). "Something In Your Smile," taken from a flop kiddie movie in release that season, points out his high value as an entertaining singer.
—Frank-John Hadley

I Miss You John—WGB0; *Lucky Seven; Someone To Watch Over Me; Heritage Mix; Brother K; I Miss You John; Lion Tamers; Desert Samba; Sweet Pea; Conflict Of Interest; Forget The Woman.* (64:03)

Personnel—Longo, piano; Paul West, acoustic bass; Ray Mosca, drums; Frank Wess (1, 4), David Sanchez (2, 7), James Moody (6, 10), tenor saxophone; Jimmy Owens (1, 4, 6, 10), Cecil Bridgewater (2, 7), trumpet.

Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac—*Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac; Mas Que Nada; Bye; Something In Your Smile; Kush.* (34:00)

Personnel—Gillespie, trumpet; James Moody, alto and tenor saxophones; flute; Mike Longo, piano; Frank Schifano, electric bass; Candy Finch, drums.

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CD REVIEWS



Giacomo Gates

Blue Skies

DMP Debut 3001

★★★

Giacomo Gates' respect and fealty to Eddie Jefferson is obvious from the first chorus of his debut CD, *Blue Skies*. Jefferson, who was slain in Detroit in 1979, was deemed the doyen of vocalese, and beyond Gates' mastery of the technique, his effortless invocation of Jefferson's phrasing, timing and tonality is an eerie spiritual affinity. Gates has tapped into the Jefferson style and nuance while retaining his own uniqueness.

An aspect of that singularity is evident on "Lady Be Good/Disappointed." To an impressive romp on the lyric Jefferson penned for Charlie Parker's solo, Gates adds a tincture of yodel that is reminiscent of Leon Thomas. This blend surfaces elsewhere, and further exploration might be a tact to truly set Gates apart from a number of Jefferson imitators.

Less impressive, though, are the singer's original lyrics, particularly his effort on "Five Cooper Square," which amounts to nothing more than riffing a roster of jazz giants who performed at the legendary Five Spot Cafe in Manhattan. He does better on Matt Emerzian's "Waitin'," though his real strength is the husky, swinging delivery.

His most captivating moments are on "Four," "Blue Skies/In Walked Bud" and "What Price Love/Yardbird Suite," and it is a surprise to discover that Parker wrote the words to this familiar melody. Gates and his rhythm section (pianist Harold Danko, bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Akira Tana) rip into the tunes as though they have lived with them for years. And the unit's portfolio of swing is greatly enhanced by the occasional splashes of color from saxophonist Jerome Richardson.

After a long tenure on the tundra of Alaska, the 45-year-old Gates is making the rounds in his native Connecticut. And while this CD will not make him a household name—call him "Jock-ah-mo"—it should expand his core of listeners.
—Herb Boyd

Blue Skies—Five Cooper Square: *Lady Be Good/Disappointed; Meet Me Where They Play The Blues; What Price Love/Yardbird Suite; Waitin'*; Four: *Lucky So And So; Blue Skies/In Walked Bud; No, Not Much; It's The Talk Of The Town; Where Or When.* (47:02)

Personnel—Gates, vocals; Harold Danko, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Akira Tana, drums; Jerome Richardson, saxophone.



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The New York Times



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inary talent, but a more adventurous song-book is in order. —Dan Ouellette

You Got What It Takes—*Baby You Got What It Takes; Stockholm Sweetnin'; Just In Time; Sophisticated Lady; Route 66; Here's That Rainy Day; Yardbird Suite; My Funny Valentine; Old Times Sakes; BG's Groove; God Bless The Child; Little Sherri; Please Send Me Someone To Love.* (55:16)

Personnel—Mahogany, Jeanie Bryson (1), vocals; Benny Golson, tenor sax (2, 8-12); James Williams, piano; Michael Formanek, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.



Kevin Mahogany

You Got What It Takes

enja 9039

★★★½

One of the shining lights of jazz vocalese, Kevin Mahogany sings with brio into the heart of these 13 tunes on his third enja outing. Blessed with a smooth, mellifluous baritone voice, the 37-year-old Mahogany leans back and booms out a potent set of songs, many of which are no strangers to the vocal tradition. Along the straightforward way, he puts on a confident exhibit of impeccable phrasing and intonation. He's also on the money with his scatting, especially on his robust cruise through "Route 66." But the best moments come when he's so in tune with the emotion of a number that, like a blues singer possessed, he belts out the lyrics in gusts of heartfelt passion. It happens often. Mahogany offers invigorating, full-bodied vocal flights into two spirited bebop numbers, Charlie Parker's "Yardbird Suite" and the Charlie Rouse-Ben Sidran composition "Little Sherri." He also captivates with classic ballads, rendering Rodgers and Hart's "My Funny Valentine" with powerful elegance and Billie Holiday's "God Bless The Child" with bluesy beauty.

Mahogany has enlisted an impressive support team, including the steady rhythm section of bassist Michael Formanek and drummer Victor Lewis. Pianist James Williams grabs the spotlight on several tunes with his sparkling and muscular playing, and tenor saxophonist Benny Golson, sitting in on five numbers, blows smoky, grainy and, in stretches, fierce solos that complement Mahogany's vocals. They get to dialogue together on one of the disc's showcase numbers, "BG's Groove," which is the singer's only original here. Other highlights include Mahogany's gospel-blues treatment of Curtis Mayfield's "Please Send Me Someone To Love" and his fun duet with Jeanie Bryson on the big-swing title tune that Ray Charles and Betty Carter once sang together.

The only disappointment is that so much of Mahogany's repertoire is a shade on the conservative side. Sure, he gives fresh renditions of traditional standards, but why not take, for example, Cassandra Wilson's lead and branch out into arranging newer material not normally associated with jazz vocalese? He's an extraor-



Jacky Terrasson

Reach

Blue Note 35739

★★★★

Despite the strong influence of Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell and Art Tatum (and traces of Bill Evans, Ahmad Jamal and Cecil Taylor), pianist Terrasson is determined to be his own man. His method is to write distinctive originals that lend themselves to his vibrant rhythmic and melodic improvisational style, to outfit standards with unusual approaches (e.g., he takes "For Sentimental Reasons" and does it Caribbean-tinged uptempo, using it as a basis for Parker's drum solo).

There's much to like here. "I Should Care" is almost perfect, as Terrasson deftly emulates Monk's chordal and stride style, enriching his solo with Tatum-like rippling lines atop a relaxed, swinging groove. "Baby Plum" sports a dancing left-hand melody figure contrasted by lingering right-hand notes, and a solo replete with splashed chords and single-note lines that tinkle.

Terrasson, whose opulent sound ranges from whisper-soft to shouting-loud, enjoys harmonically unstructured fare, and here "The Rat Race" effectively serves that cause. Occasionally, he's excessive, as on "Happy Man," where bluesy clichés and hammered chords detract rather than enhance. The combining of "Reach," a pulsating, one-chord vamp based on a repeating rhythmic pattern, and "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" is questionable. "Smoke," though treated tenderly, seems out of place between these two contemporary moods.

Okegwo and Parker (replaced in Terrasson's touring band by Clarence Penn) are empathy personified, working either discreetly or devilishly, depending on the leader's wont. And the sound is exquisite, as engineer Mark Levinson utilizes his unique recording system to achieve a remarkably natural aural result.

—Zan Stewart

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Reach—*I Should Care; The Rat Race; Baby Plum; (I Love You) For Sentimental Reasons; Reach/Smoke Gets In Your Eyes/Reach; Happy Man; First Affair; Just One Of Those Things.* (49:05)
Personnel—Terrasson, piano; Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Leon Parker, drums.



Bluesiana Hurricane

Bluesiana Hurricane
 Shanachie 5014

★★★

First there were the two gumbo *Bluesiana Triangle* discs featuring a who's who of the jazz and blues worlds, then the picante

Bluesiana Hot Sauce with more headliners cooking up a steamy stew of tunes. Now, producer Joe Ferry is back with another all-star cast (he calls the lineup "a rainbow of rock, blues and jazz") for the latest *Bluesiana* installment. And, as with the past projects, Ferry enlisted the troops, gave them a few moments to get acquainted with each other in the studio, allowed for quick run-throughs of the tunes, then started the tapes rolling. The result is another fine recording that's spontaneous, soulful and infectiously fun.

R&B elder Rufus Thomas, in tip-top rugged vocal shape at 78, launches the proceedings with a couple of rallying cries and a rousing directive to drummer Will Calhoun (a *Bluesiana* vet who replaced the late Art Blakey after the first recording) to kick it up. Thomas sings with coarse brusqueness as the band—featuring trumpeter Lester Bowie, sax man Bobby Watson, blues guitarist Sue Foley and Hammond B-3 ace Bill Doggett—romp with swinging verve through the singer's "Big Fine Hunk Of Woman." Thomas also belts out rollicking takes on the soul classic "Barefootin'" and his own hit, "Walking The Dog." The showcase instrumentals, which highlight the jazzier side of this session, include Calhoun's "Hubidy," Bowie's "On And Off," Watson's "A Bitter Dose" and Doggett's "Halfsteppin'."

Yet, as with any project of this ilk, *Bluesiana Hurricane* lacks that sense of group cohesiveness that comes with gigging together over a period of time. For sure, there's a party going on during these tracks and there are stretches of magical ensemble interplay, especially between Bowie and Watson. But the disc is

more an entertaining jam session than anything else. Taken on those terms, it's commendable. But, for the next *Bluesiana* outing, why not assemble a cast willing to hit the road for a week or two to develop more telepathic energy, then usher them into a studio or, better yet, capture them live in front of an audience? Now, that would be something.

—Dan Ouellette

Bluesiana Hurricane—*Big Fine Hunk Of Woman; Hubidy; The World Is Round; On And Off; A Bitter Dose; Honky Tonk, Part 1; Honky Tonk, Part 2; Barefootin'; Some Shady Stuff; Walking The Dog; Halfsteppin'; Soullful High Yellow.* (66:18)

Personnel—Rufus Thomas, vocals; Bill Doggett, Hammond B-3; Chuck Rainey, bass; Lester Bowie, trumpet; Bobby Watson, saxophone; Will Calhoun, drums; Sue Foley, Joe Ferry (8), Gil Parris (1, 4, 5, 11), Doug Munro (9), guitar; Peter Nardone, piano; Peter Beckerman, percussion.



Anderson/Harris/ Lewis/Valente

Slideride
 hat ART 6165

★★★★

Anderson/Bennink/ Doran

Cheer Up
 hat ART 6175

★★★½

If you are prone to occasional late-night trombone cravings, these two albums will fix you right up. Especially *Slideride*, with its all-bone quartet and nary a rhythmic or harmonic instrument to come between you and all those sublime blats, smears and glissandos. *Cheer Up* will work too, because it provides a powerful dose of Ray Anderson, the instrument's preeminent living practitioner.

Ray Anderson, Craig Harris, George Lewis and Gary Valente are not merely a Dream Team trombone section, they are a self-sufficient mini-orchestra that speaks its own language—sometimes guttural, sometimes volcanically erupting, sometimes flowing as molten gold. That language can articulate contrapuntal cacophonies and heartbreaking dirges, relentless rhythmic momentums and eloquent individual soliloquies. Take, for example, "Miles," Craig Harris'



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eulogy to a great trumpet spirit. Anderson, Lewis and Valente make a murmurous, darkly voiced chorus that sighs in response to the composer's deeply felt farewell. Then there's "Lotus Blossom," one of the slowest and tenderest treatments on record of Billy Strayhorn's most ephemeral flower. All four members of the quartet compose and arrange. Pieces like Anderson's "Again Raven," Lewis' "Sweeps" and Valente's "In Time Out" revel in the ensemble's endless timbral, textural and dynamic possibilities. These four smoke the written material, and when they cut loose they stay in contact because they all listen.

If *Slideride* surprises by how much variety and intrigue can emanate from four trombones, *Cheer Up* astonishes by conjuring vast sonic densities from a trio with trombone, drums and guitar. Ray Anderson's colleagues are Han Bennink, an eclectic percussionist with a flair for the comic and theatrical to match Anderson's own, and Christy Doran, a post-post-Hendrix adventurer. These three are up for anything, and sometimes what they come upon seems to be more fun to play than hear.

"Tabasco Cart" is 10 long minutes of spatters and hums like running in place. "Buckethead," the other group improvisation, is also a frenzy dissipating to stasis. Anderson's improvisations rarely develop by any previously known process. He thinks in fragments, gestures and odd, cut-and-paste juxtapositions. But when you can break through and hear like he hears, there are epiphanies. Horace Silver's "Melancholy Moods" is strikingly fresh. Anderson contains his tendency toward self-indulgence and repaints the song in broad brushstrokes over Doran's chordal grace and Bennink's soft, nervous stirring. On Anderson's "Like Silver," Doran insinuates the blues while the composer blusters, deadpan, on his powerfully flatulent tuba.

But the revelation of *Cheer Up* is Han Bennink. He is unpredictable as Anderson or Doran, but his every extravagance has a purpose. He relentlessly propels the title cut on bells only. He does not "keep time"; he sus-

tains multiple, concurrent fields of energy. He is the gravitational force that holds the guitar in its orbit, and which anchors the sudden flights and flurries of the trombone.

Which brings us back to where we began—with this quirkiest of instruments. Mendelssohn called the trombone the voice of God. Ray Anderson believes God is a humorist.

—Thomas Conrad

Slideride—*Sweeps; Miles; Again Raven; Lotus Blossom; The Jeep Is Jumping; Shadowgraph 5; Shadow Catchers; Unison; Four Some; Oclupaca; In Time Out.* (64:31 minutes)

Personnel—Ray Anderson, Craig Harris, George Lewis, Gary Valente, trombones.

Cheer Up—*No Return; My Children Are The Reason Why I Need To Own My Publishing; Tabasco Cart; Like Silver; Cheer Up; Buckethead; Melancholy Moods; New H.G.; Hence The Reason.* (51:44)

Personnel—Ray Anderson, trombone, tuba; Christy Doran, guitars; Han Bennink, drums.



Darryl Grant

The New Bop

Criss Cross 1106

★★★★½

For his second Criss Cross release, pianist/composer Grant gives us music that is fresh, invigorating, interesting. *The New*

Bop is Grant's view of hard-bop, circa 1995. It's an intriguing view, one that insists that subtlety and surprise shake hands with swing and swagger. In a tribute included with the liner notes, Horace Silver says he'll listen to this music many times; undoubtedly, others will do the same.

Silver is a sparkplug influence for Grant, who has worked with drummer Tony Williams and saxophonist Sonny Fortune and whose piano playing is characterized by a robust, mahogany-dark sound and the ability to make meaningful statements at any tempo. Many of these tunes echo the rhythmic fire, melodic cunning and joyous unpredictability that Silver instilled in tunes like "Room 608" and "Quicksilver." "Gettin' Mean With Mateen" is one of these. This dashing concoction starts with an appealingly complex, hard-bop melody, then segues to a brief, choppy interlude before the improvisations. It offers a savvy five-note figure that introduces Blade's drum solo, and then closes with the original melody.

"The Blues We Ain't No More" also keeps you guessing. It wends its way from a start-and-stop beginning to a smoother melody passage before announcing the soloists, who work out over a 16-8-16 bar structure. Other gems: the jaunty-then-grooving "Struttin' To Tangiers," the gradually bold "My Own Man," which goes from a sigh to a shout.

The players are first-rate. Grant uses brief phrases to generate rhythmic whammy, unfurls long, twisting lines for contrast, ever swinging. Blake's wonderfully gruff tone and improvisational agility spark each appearance, while Wendholt impresses with his fat sound and his non-stop invention. Jones and Blade never let the band coast; their fire is tangible.

—Zan Stewart

The New Bop—*The New Bop; The Blues We Ain't No More; Don't Stray; Struttin' To Tangiers; Lullaby; Gettin' Mean With Mateen; Comin' On The Hudson; My Own Man; Water Dreams, Part One (Beach, Three Views: How Deep Is The Ocean); Water Dreams, Part Two (Agua Profunda); Come Sunday; Rebop.* (69:39)

Personnel—Grant, piano; Scott Wendholt, trumpet; Seamus Blake, tenor and soprano saxophones; Calvin Jones, bass; Brian Blade, drums.

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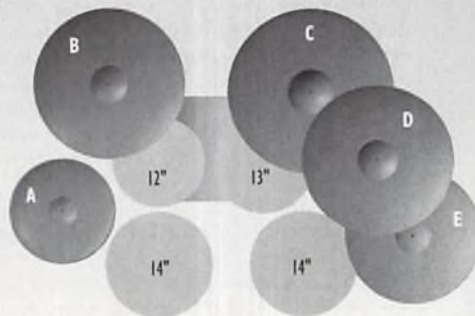


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CD REVIEWS

JAZZ

Aerologist At Work

by John Corbett

Reed players, heed the advice of the master: "It's all done with the column of air, pressure, the diaphragm, the ear, the experience. The mouthpiece is a boat, the reed is a sail, you are the captain, you control the wind." Navigator Steve Lacy's been at the helm of his muse's venturesome vessel since first recording as a member of Dick Sutton's Progressive Dixieland Band in 1954. With an instantly identifiable soprano sound, Lacy's proved one of the most dedicated self-documentarians, releasing waves of records with the consistency of a tidetable.

Findings (CMAP 003/004; 67:07/53:41; ★★★★★) Never one for abfuscating his approach, Lacy has provided an invaluable guide to his working methods and esthetic aims with this CD and its companion book (published in both English and French by the Paris-based company Outre Mesure, with the subtitle *My Experience With The Soprano Saxophone*). There's one disc of exercises and examples (illustrated both visually and aurally) that offers a day-trip through his practice regimen, and a second disc of straight music, including a startling transcription of one of Anton Webern's songs as well as solo versions of Bird and (of course) Monk, duets with drummer John Betsch, and trios and quartets that add other members of his longstanding quintet. A must for Lacy devotees and saxophone players alike.

Weal & Woe (Emanem 4004; 72:40; ★★★½) Lacy is one of the great innovators of solo saxophone, and this fabulous reissue includes his very first lone venture, from 1972. Many of the ideas on tap in his book are evident in these cuts: marshalling the harmonic series, utilizing a wide range of articulations and the natural sound of the soprano, and thoroughly controlling the wind. On "Stations," Lacy improvises off of a mellow soprano voice emanating from a transistor radio in the background; "Name" and "The Breath" are taken from his touchstone "Tao Cycle," and "The New Duck" is an installation in his ongoing quack-based series. The reissue also includes one side of the LP *Crops*, an extreme anti-Vietnam War suite from his quintet, circa '73, with alto saxist Steve Potts, cellist/singer Irene Aebi, bassist Kent Carter and drummer Oliver Johnson.

Steve Lacy/Lol Coxhill/Evan Parker: Three Blokes (FMP 63; 72:30; ★★★★★) British saxophonist Parker has pointed out his great debt to Lacy; indeed, many were surprised how deferential he was on the



Lacy: consistency of a tidetable

pair's duet outing *Chirps* (also FMP). Here, in round-robin freely improvised soprano duets that factor in the undersung Brit Coxhill (a solo-sax groundbreaker), Lacy's profound impact is once again clear. So much soprano one might OD on it, but fans of the straight horn shouldn't miss Lacy and Parker's communal momentum on "Backslash" or the Coxhill/Lacy duet, "Glanced," with its more juxtapositional counterplay. Lacy seals the disc with a four-minute solo kiss.

Steve Lacy/Irene Aebi/Frederic Rzewski: Packet (New Albion 080; 58:20; ★★★★★) Some Lacy lovers just can't take Irene Aebi's voice. Personally, I don't mind it at all; in the right places, like *Packet*, I enjoy it very much. Lacy and Rzewski have worked together here and there since they were in Musica Elettronica Viva in the '60s, and they make a compatible pair, creating luscious settings (abetted by a wet mix) for Aebi's art-song renderings of Malina's supple, dark poetry and Lacy's stepwise tunes.

Steve Lacy Quartet: Revenue (Soul Note 121234; 57:03; ★★★★★) For those less Aebi-oriented, here's the ticket: a fearless foursome, stripped down from the Lacy Sextet. It's the same group that made the super live disc *Morning Joy* (hat ART), replacing Oliver Johnson with Betsch, the soprano man's drummer of choice in recent years. The heart of this band is Lacy's rock-solid partnership with Steve Potts—they're one of the classic tag-teams in contemporary jazz. Bassist Jean-Jacques Avenel buckles down with Betsch for the no-nonsense, no-piano blowing date. Featured material includes older tunes like "Esteem," "Gospel" (written as a portrait of Stevie Wonder) and "The Uh Uh Uh" (written in homage to Jimi Hendrix).

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BEYOND

Top Of The Pops

by Jon Andrews

No longer the great common denominator, popular music grows more rigidly compartmentalized by the year. This Balkanization allows enclaves of blues and roots music to prosper, amid hints that rock, r&b and rap have loosened their stranglehold on the pop world. These recent releases confirm that the vision and esthetics of the producer are more important than ever.

Los Lobos: *Colossal Head* (Warner Bros. 9 46172; 43:07: ★★★★★) Los Lobos can do no wrong. Their records grow increasingly imaginative and eccentric, but remain accessible and faithful to the band's East L.A. origins. *Colossal Head* follows a course set by the band's *Kiko* (1992) and continued by the *Latin Playboys* side project ('94), a continuing metamorphosis from roots rock into something rich and strange. The distinctive, occasionally bizarre production (credited to Mitchell Froom, Tchad Blake and Los Lobos) sharpens and magnifies quirks of the band's sound. On "Mas Y Mas" and "This Bird's Gonna Fly," the guitars sound energized, baritone saxen buzz and blur, drums echo unnaturally and vocals are slightly distorted. To the credit of the producers, this sonic world enhances, rather than distracts, from the uniformly strong songs and performances.

Bonnie Raitt: *Road Tested* (Capitol 33705; 54:03/49:17: ★★★★★) Anyone who found Raitt's recent studio projects to be a little fastidious, with insufficient attention to her guitar work, should investigate *Road Tested*, which adds grit and drive while keeping the focus on Raitt's vocals. This solid, consistent double-CD follows the "Hits Live" format to a point, but includes lesser-known material and intriguing covers, with Raitt's slide guitar prominently featured. Songs like Raitt's "Feeling Of Falling" and "Come To Me" get new life, and she may be the only artist who can effectively cover both Mississippi Fred McDowell and Talking Heads on the same night.

the subdues: ***Primitive Streak*** (High Street/Windham Hill 10344; 49:51: ★★★★★) Coming from New Orleans, the subdues embody the roots-rock ethic. Their songs could be called pan-American folk-party music, putting them in a camp with the likes of The Band, Little Feat and the Neville Brothers. Along with guitars and accordion, Steve Amodee's tambourine is part of the subdues' signature sound. On "Carved In Stone," Tommy Malone recalls Richard Manuel's high lonesome croon. Bonnie Raitt joins Malone for a tasteful acoustic duet on "Too Soon To Tell." Rowdy and raucous, this group should record live.



Los Lobos: rich and strange roots rock

Joan Osborne: *Relish* (Blue Gorilla/Mercury 314 526 699; 61:19: ★★★★★) "One Of Us," a.k.a. "The God Song," jump-started Osborne's career. That whimsical novelty song understates Osborne's abilities. *Relish* argues convincingly that she won't be a "one-hit wonder." Gifted with a powerful voice, Osborne is still defining her sound. She adopts a variety of styles, indebted at times to Janis Joplin's frenzied wail on "Right Hand Man," Linda Ronstadt, and even Lou Reed's insolence on "Let's Get Naked." Apart from Mark Egan's solid work on electric bass and strong but occasional contributions from guitarists Gary Lucas and Rick DiFonzo, Osborne deserves more consistent support next time out.

Sting: *Mercury Falling* (A&M 31454 0483; 48:18: ★★★★★) Can you pity Sting? He's strayed from his usual upbeat, somewhat smug pop craftsmanship with these wintry, impeccably produced tales of loneliness and betrayal. The hard times are leavened only by small epiphanies and infrequent redemptions. Branford Marsalis returns, adding a soaring soprano sax solo to the swaying, infectious vamp of "I Was Brought To My Senses." Dabbling in country & western, Stax/Volt, Celtic and gospel themes, Sting contributes to the inconsistency of *Mercury Falling*. The mocking cynicism of "Lithium Sunset" causes one to question whether Sting's wounded persona is just a case of crocodile tears.

Mark Eitzel: *60 Watt Silver Lining* (Warner Bros. 9 46152; 54:12: ★★★★★) With pain in his heart and trouble in mind, Eitzel writes moody, poetic songs that ache with unsatisfied longing. He's left behind the grinding guitars and aggressive drums of the defunct American Music Club, opting to surround his down-and-out lyrics and anguished vocals with quieter, more spacious accompaniment. The self-produced *60 Watt Silver Lining* features Mark Isham, who adds the perfect just-before-dawn atmosphere with bleary, anguished trumpet solos. Dedicating "Saved" to newly hip Burt Bacharach, Eitzel looks for a divergence of pop music from rock. Titles like "When My Plane Finally Goes Down" say it all.

REISSUES

Lee's Way

by Zan Stewart

When Lee Morgan arrived on the New York scene from Philadelphia in 1956, he could have been called *The Young Lion*. A mere 18 but already displaying the powers of a major, mature artist, Morgan had it all: trumpet chops, technique to handle any tempo, an improvisational sense that could deliver bluesy swagger or heartfelt emotion with unflagging drive. The following reissues highlight Morgan's place in the jazz pantheon.



Morgan with Art Blakey and Wayne Shorter, 1959: unflagging drive

The Complete Blue Note Lee Morgan Fifties Sessions (Mosaic 4-162; 67:00/64:52/59:41/66:26: ★★★★★½) These four CDs (also available as six LPs) run consecutively from Nov. 4, 1956, when Morgan made his debut, to Feb. 2, 1958, when the trumpeter wrapped up *Candy*. In all, six original albums are offered, with two previously unreleased tracks. And while they're not classic recordings of the hard-bop era, they're mighty close. Interestingly, there are only two Morgan compositions here, and nine standards; most numbers were written by other jazzmen—14 by Benny Golson.

Presenting Lee Morgan (a.k.a. *Indeed!*) features such established luminaries as pianist Horace Silver and drummer Philly Joe Jones. Morgan sounds marvelous, if not quite fully formed—that would happen a year later. On "Gaza Strip," he exhibits the core of the round, solid tone that marks his work, and displays characteristic aspects, such as embellishing ideas with triplet figures that spin cartwheel-like. For Silver's "Roccut," the trumpeter drops in crisp double-timed ideas that recall his idol, Clifford Brown. *Lee Morgan Sextet (Volume Two)* was recorded the following Dec. 2 and boasts Silver, tenorist Hank Mobley, bassist Paul Chambers and Charlie Persip on drums. Included are the debut performance of Golson's "Whisper Not," where Morgan's poise is remarkable, and the ballad "Where Am I?"

On *Lee Morgan (Volume Three)* from March 24, 1957, the leader is surrounded by Golson, Chambers, Persip, Gigi Gryce and pianist Wynton Kelly. The lines are informed by Golson's breathy tenor—he wrote all the numbers—and Gryce's alto or flute, lending an exotic flavor to "Hasaan's Dream," a delicious, altered minor blues. On the premiere of "I Remember Clifford," Morgan delivers a reserved tribute to Brown, his simplicity and use of space making the track all the more

poignant. By the time Morgan recorded *City Lights* on Aug. 25, 1957, he had changed. Now the buzzing, biting tone of his later recordings was in place—epitomized by the ballad "You're Mine, You"—as was the abandon with which he approached uptempo tunes such as the title track, playing crafty, bluesy figures, leaping registers, changing dynamics suddenly, flawlessly. The three-horn frontline with tenor saxist Coleman and trombonist Curtis Fuller gives the melody statements a special richness.

The sound of *The Cooker* is distinctive, due to the presence of the magnificent baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams as Morgan's horn foil. Backed by pianist Bobby Timmons, Chambers and Jones, the fellows on this Sept. 29, 1957, collection tear up a jack-rabbit version of "Just One Of Those Things" and a fomenting, Latin-tinged look at "A Night In Tunisia." These delights are contrasted by "Lover Man," where Morgan plays with rhapsodic charm, coaxing out melodic gems.

The final inclusion is *Candy*, where just the trio of wondrous pianist Sonny Clark, bassist Doug Watkins and drummer Art Taylor accompany the leader. Started on Nov. 18, 1957, and finished the following Feb. 2, there's a refreshing openness about this album, due partly to the choice of material. Obscure standards such as "Personality" are mixed with better-known tunes such as the title track and Jimmy Heath's "C.T.A." Clark's regal sound blends with Morgan perfectly and the music simply flows. (Mosaic Records: 35 Melrose Place, Stamford CT 06902)

Lee Way (Blue Note 32089; 39:41: ★★★★★½) Highlighted by two natty originals by Cal Massey (the medium groove of "These Are The Soulful Days" and the jaunty "Nakatini Suite") and brought to life by singing performances from Morgan, Timmons, Chambers, altoist Jackie McLean and drummer Art Blakey, this 1960 recording is riveting stuff.

The Procrastinator (Blue Note 33579;

40:31: ★★★★★) There's more of a modern edge to this '67 gathering with tenorist Wayne Shorter, pianist Herbie Hancock, bassist Ron Carter, vibist Bobby Hutcherson and drummer Billy Higgins. Morgan, while sounding like himself, is more expansive and chance-taking. The title track has a probing, grand quality while maintaining a dandy swing, and "Party Mood" is a catchy minor blues; the cast celebrates.

Live At The Lighthouse (Blue Note 35228; 61:17/64:45/55:45: ★★★★★) Initially

released as a double LP with four numbers, this set from July 1970 performances now includes eight new tracks, composed collectively by Morgan, reedman Bennie Maupin and pianist Harold Mabern. Energized and vibrant, the trumpeter soars, not afraid to pepper his distinctive melodic style with the occasional dissonance. The band is superb, and among the highlights are Mabern's cracklingly fast "Aon," Maupin's reflective "Neophilia" and the leader's spiffy blues, "Speedball."

Flashback: Recalling the initial sessions from the '50s, Benny Golson says that he didn't write any particular way for Morgan because "he was self-contained. He could play ballads, funky, high, fast. He did it all."

At the recordings, Golson recalls Morgan, though young, exuding confidence. "It was nothing ridiculous," he says. "Lee was aware he could do certain things, and he did them."

Near the end of his career (and life), Morgan recorded *Live At The Lighthouse*. Sideman Bennie Maupin says Morgan's playing was top-drawer: "Sometimes he'd get right up into the mic and I could hardly hear him, but on the playback, the intensity would blow you away."

Maupin recalls the two weeks as "really exciting. The band was incredible and there was great atmosphere every night." **DB**

Morgan's initial **Down Beat** ratings:

- *Presenting Lee Morgan*: ★★★★★½ (4/4/57 issue)
- *Lee Morgan Sextet*: ★★★★★½ (7/25/57)
- *Lee Morgan*: ★★★★★ (11/14/57)
- *City Lights*: ★★★★★ (10/25/58)
- *The Cooker* (not reviewed)
- *Candy*: ★★★★★ (3/5/59)
- *Lee Way*: ★★ (7/6/61)
- *The Procrastinator* (not reviewed; previously released as part of a 1970s twofer collection)
- *Live At The Lighthouse*: ★★★★★½ (7/22/71)

BLINDFOLD TEST

JUNE 1996

Charlie Hunter

by Dan Ouellette

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.

A 28-year-old eight-string guitarist, Charlie Hunter grew up in Berkeley, Calif., taking lessons from rock guitarist Joe Satriani, gleaning chops from his mother's blues collections, grooving to the soul music of Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye as well as Charlie Parker and Charlie Christian. He also listened to such Hammond B-3 players as Jimmy Smith and John Patton, inspiring him to learn organ riffs on guitar.

After playing for spare change on the streets of Europe for a couple of years after high school, Hunter returned home and became a member of the San Francisco Bay Area agit-rap group the Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, which opened stadium gigs for U2. Fed up with the pop-music world, Hunter went on to pursue more jazz-oriented endeavors. He formed a trio with tenor saxophonist Dave Ellis and drummer Jay Lane. The group packed local new-jazz clubs with young audiences and released its debut album on the Prawn Song label owned by Les Claypool of the funk-rock band Primus. The trio's second disc, *Bing, Bing, Bing!*, was released by Blue Note last year. At the same time, Hunter's other band, T.J. Kirk (featuring guitarists Will Bernard and John Schott and drummer Scott Amendola), signed with Warner Bros. and released its self-titled disc of high-voltage, idiosyncratic interpretations of Thelonious Monk, James Brown and Rahsaan Roland Kirk tunes.

Hunter's next Blue Note release, *Ready ... Set ... Shango!*, is due out in June. This time he's using a quartet featuring Ellis, Amendola and alto saxophonist Calder Spanier. This was Hunter's first Blindfold Test, taken in the living room of his Berkeley home.

John Scofield

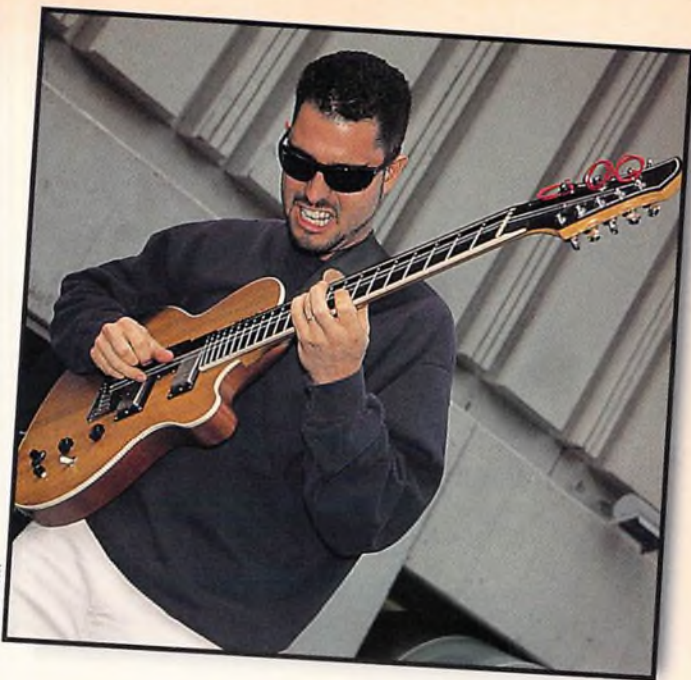
"Fat Lip" (from *Time On My Hands*, Blue Note, 1989) Scofield, guitar; Joe Lovano, tenor saxophone; Charlie Haden, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

That's John Scofield playing that Meters' tune "Sissy's Strut" or his version of it. It's definitely mid- to late-'80s Scofield. I love Sco. He's one of my all-time favorites without a doubt. But I'm not big on this period. I was more into the music he was playing with Adam Nussbaum and Steve Swallow. But I can't give less than a 5 'cause you can't give your idol less than 5. His playing gets 5 stars, but I'm not sold on the rhythm section. Who's on the drums here? Is that Dennis Chambers? Wait a minute. No, it doesn't sound slick and chopsy enough. Who is it? That's Jack DeJohnette? Wow, that blows my mind hearing him playing funky. It's so out of his milieu that I didn't recognize him. I'm so used to hearing him with Keith Jarrett.

Philip deGruy

"My Girl" (from *Innuendo Out The Other*, NYC, 1995) deGruy, solo guitar.

(immediately) Phil deGruy. What can you say? It's a shame more people don't know about him. He's one of those guys who has changed the face of the guitar without using a lot of spandex. He's taken the vibe of Lenny Breau, Chet Atkins and Bill Evans. The first time I saw him perform was in his room in New Orleans. There were five other musicians watching him play. It was the truth. No bullshit at all. Just this guy and his totally insane playing. He can even take the corniest tune in the



world—like this one, which I could stand never hearing again—and make it sound golden. He has his own sense of humor and sense of harmony, incredible voicing, and you can't mess with his right-hand chops. Plus, no one else in the world can play that instrument. This album is the only solo-guitar record I can listen to now. Every guitar player should have this in their collection, no matter what kind of music they play. Stars? Oh, a million. Five million and a half.

Django Reinhardt

"Djangology" (from *Djangology 49*, Bluebird, 1990/rec. 1949) Reinhardt, guitar; Stephane Grappelli, violin; Gianni Salzedo, piano; Carlo Recori, bass; Aurelio de Carolis, drums.

My first guess is Django with Stephane Grappelli, but wait a minute. I want to hear the guitar player solo. Oh, yeah, that's got to be Django in the mid- to late-'40s. I can't imagine it being anyone else. This must be a tune from a later period when he still had incredible facility. But he was hearing more intervals and therefore playing a lot less notes. He wasn't playing super-fast runs up and down the neck anymore even though he still could. Talk about getting the most out of the least. There was probably one mic in the middle of the room, and there was this dude playing a guitar that had action as high as a basketball hoop and strings the size of telephone wires. He's got the most incredible tone. He's definitely the man. 5 stars easy.

Joe Pass

"Tap Blues" (from *Blues For Fred*, Pablo, 1980) Pass, solo guitar.

Joe Pass. This is off that virtuoso solo-guitar record. Right on, man. If you want to be a jazz guitarist, you have to listen to him. If you study science, you have to learn the table of elements. If you study carpentry, you need to learn how to make a good joint. If you want to be a mechanic, you've gotta learn how to tune up a car. If you want to be a jazz guitarist, you have to listen to Joe Pass. It's like bread and butter. I studied the shit out of him when I was 20 years old. He was a real inspiration for sure. He's the one who brought that walking bass-line accompaniment to the electric jazz guitar. He brought that chunk-chunk-chunk four-to-the-bar chord thing. I have to give it up for Joe Pass. 5 stars, even though listening to it now his time-field sounds rinky-dinky and kind of square. But he's the ancestor of people like me, Phil deGruy and Tuck Andress, who are trying to do nifty things on the guitar.