

DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

February 1997 \$3.50
U.K. £2.50 Can. \$4.30

Steve Lacy
Forget

Paris

CHRISTIAN McBRIDE

DIANNE REEVES

**MEDESKI MARTIN
& WOOD**

CLASSIC INTERVIEW:
JACK TEAGARDEN

CAUGHT:
BRANFORD MARSALIS





STUART BRININ

32 Medeski Martin & Wood

18 Steve Lacy

Forget Paris

American expatriot Lacy disbands his sextet, picks up shop and hits the road, again. This time the soprano saxophonist leaves Paris, his home for the last quarter century, in search of more fruitful environs in Berlin.

By John Corbett

Cover photograph of Steve Lacy by Christian Ducasse

36 Classic Interview:

Jack Teagarden: Keep On Plugging

By John Tynan

38 Tradin' Fours:

Marc Copland Harvey Wainapel Ralph Peterson Free Flight

FEATURES

24 Christian McBride

Road Runner

By Bob Blumenthal

28 Dianne Reeves

Aligned With Her Allies

By Zan Stewart

32 Medeski Martin & Wood

Band Of Gypsies

By Ed Enright

DEPARTMENTS

6 On The Beat

8 Chords & Discords

10 Riffs

42 CD Reviews

58 Caught

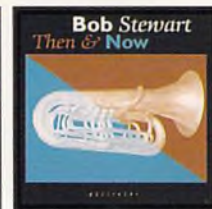
60 Woodshed

66 Jazz On Campus

70 Blindfold Test



42 Oscar Peterson



Bob Stewart



Sonny Rollins

DOWN BEAT Volume 61, Number 2 (ISSN 0012-5768) is published monthly by Maher Publications, 102 N. Haven, Elmhurst, IL 60126-3379. Copyright 1997 Maher Publications. All rights reserved. Trademark registered U.S. Patent Office. Great Britain registered trademark No. 719,407. Periodicals postage paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: \$35.00 for one year, \$55.00 for two years. Foreign subscriptions add \$11.00 per year. PRINTED IN U.S.A. SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Send orders and address changes to: DOWN BEAT, P.O. Box 906, Elmhurst, IL 60126-0906. Inquiries: U.S.A. and Canada 1-800-535-7496; Foreign 1-630/941-2030. CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include current DOWN BEAT label showing old address. Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photos, or artwork. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without written permission from publisher. Microfilm of all issues of DOWN BEAT are available from University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. MAHER PUBLICATIONS: DOWN BEAT magazine, MUSIC INC. magazine, UpBeat Daily. POSTMASTER: SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO DOWN BEAT, P.O. BOX 906, Elmhurst, IL 60126-0906. CABLE ADDRESS: DOWN BEAT (on sale January 21, 1997) MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION.

Steve Lacy

F O R G E T

Paris

By John Corbett

ROAD TRIP: January 1996

Soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy picks up shop and hits the trail, leaving Paris, the cosmopolitan that he and his wife and main collaborator, singer and string player Irene Aebi, have called home for the last quarter century. Their temporary new residence: Berlin. Under a fellowship from the DAAD, the German government's arts foundation, Lacy will live and work in the reunified capital city. But this is only the latest in an ongoing string of road trips that stretch back like a freeway to the early part of Lacy's career.

"My head is my only house, unless it rains."

—Captain Beefheart

CHAPTER ONE: THE ROAD

An imperative to go where the music tells you to go. "I live on the road," muses Lacy, reclining with an espresso in his airy Berlin apartment. "I spend an awful lot of time in airports, on airplanes. And we're not even certain where the next turn will take us. I'm still on the road, man. Paris is finished for the moment. We've used up Paris. It's not a very good moment in Paris right now—they're blowing it! Maybe we'll go back when it swings the other way." Beyond the year-long residency, Lacy says he and Aebi will stay awhile in Berlin, a city that has quickly proven, as he puts it, "very fruitful." Indeed, already he's been the focus of FMP's five-day Workshop Freie Musik, performing with five pianists (Misha Mengelberg, Marilyn Crispell, Ulrich Gumpert, Fred van Hove and Vladimir Miller), a festival documented on the live CD *Five Facings*. And over this particular late-October weekend, he shares the spotlight (albeit in separate performances) with pianist Cecil Taylor at the Total Music Meeting, as one of "Two Portraits." (Lacy later jokes: "Let's call it 'Two Sketches.' We did what we could.")

"I've always gone where the music takes me," Lacy explains. "It isn't that I want to go here or there, it's that that's where the music is. The music has taken me all over the world. And that's also in terms of living, because I have to live where Irene and I can operate—where I can play and she can sing and I can write



ROAD TRIP: 1970

Based in Rome, Lacy and his Swiss-born wife are frustrated playing with enthusiastic, but amateur, Italian musicians. Lacy can't find anyone whose reading skills are strong enough to perform the music he's writing. And furthermore, there are no good drummers around. "I played this festival in '69 outside of Paris, and there were all the cats from Chicago. There was Roscoe Mitchell, Anthony Braxton, Leo Smith. There were good drummers and Bobby Few the piano player. And I said: Wow, these guys live in Paris, that's where I want to go." Go where the music tells you to go.

and we can have a group and realize things. Berlin has been a refreshing change and opened up everything for me." With change of scenery comes a change of scene, and Lacy has disbanded his longest-lasting band, the Steve Lacy Sextet, paring it down to a more economical trio with bassist Jean-Jacques Avenel and drummer John Betsch. It's been a period of great development and turmoil, honors and knocks: In 1992 Lacy received the prestigious (and lucrative) MacArthur Fellowship, while in the same year, after five records, he was unceremoniously dropped from RCA/Novus, his first liason as a leader with a major record label. In 1994 his book *Findings: My Experience With The Soprano Saxophone* was published, a crowning achievement in his purposeful and exhaustive self-documentation.

Through triumph and pain, Lacy's main activities continue to center around composing for Aebi's voice. "We're working on an opera all this year, but we're already performing bits of it here and there," he reports. In fact, Lacy's been metamorphosing words into music since 1967, when he adapted Lao Tzu's "The Way." Ever road warriors, he and Aebi will take off the next morning—the day after his portion of the Two Portraits fest is done—to present the opera-in-progress at a French festival. Strange coincidences abound: Bangladeshi poet Taslima Nasri, whose work Lacy had already been setting to music, turned out to be the couple's upstairs neighbor when they arrived in Berlin. Now Lacy's turning her text into the opera's libretto. "It's not a coincidence at all; it's one of those written-in-the-stars things. This is what we came to do here—though we didn't know that. It's an adventure also, and it's a dangerous adventure, so we're playing it cool." It's an adventure, of course, because opera isn't exactly en mode in the jazz world these days. "I swore I'd never do it. I swore, oh man, I never want to do that!" exclaims Lacy. "We had enough trouble with musical theater pieces and dance pieces."

CHAPTER TWO: MIXED-MEDIA

The Two Portraits pairing suggests a crossing. "Cecil and I have crossed paths for many, many years," the 62-year-old recalls. "Going back to 1953 when he plucked me out of the traditional music and threw me into the avant-garde ocean." Lacy performed and recorded with Taylor for six years. "He's a very important figure in my life; he showed me the way to find my own music. I discovered Monk through Cecil, he turned me on to dance like Cunningham and Balanchine; he clued me in on politics, films, a certain amount of literature and theater, and humanity, people." At the last minute, the whimsical and unpredictable Taylor chooses not to capitalize on a potential (and widely anticipated) mid-fest duet with Lacy, so the soprano saxophonist's sparkling solo set, full of Monk and Lacy's own compositions, leaves the crux uncrossed. "Cecil likes to leave people hanging," grins Lacy afterward, unphased.

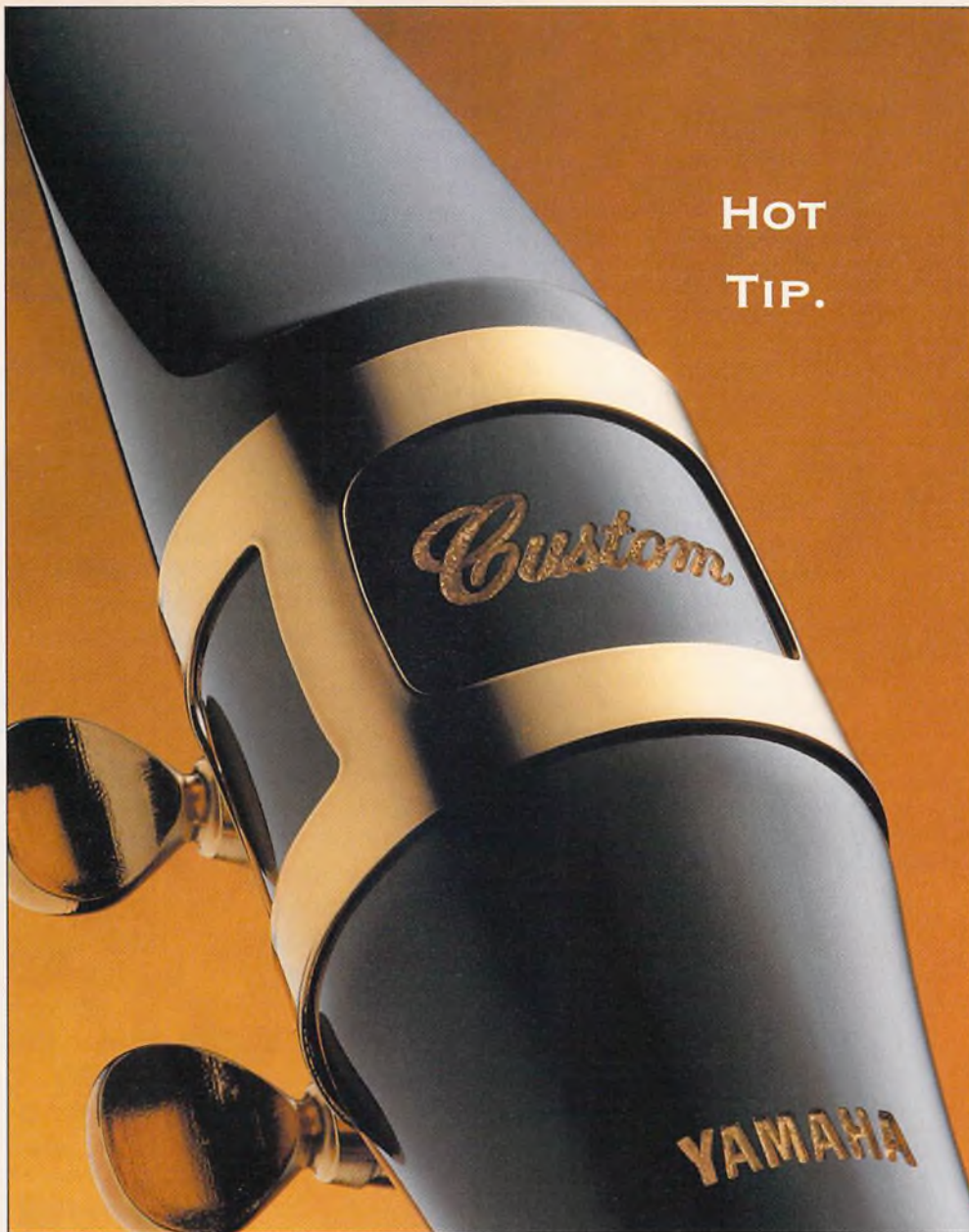
In the four decades since joining "Cecil's gang" (his term), Lacy has immersed himself in collaborations with a wide array of different art forms. This polymorphousness is evidenced at Two Portraits, where Lacy plays with dancer/performer Shiro Daimon and actors Hanon Reznikov and Judith Malina.

"I was inspired by Duke Ellington, who was a total arts man. His stuff involved the visual—he was a painter himself—and poetry and dance and music and theater and everything. And on the other hand, Harry Partch. Gil Evans took me to see Partch's show *The Bewitched* in '57 or '58 in New York. It was musical theater with song and dance and speech, and things were falling out of the ceiling and floor, like a happening. But it was completely controlled, it wasn't accidental or chance. A total theater piece, I saw it two nights in a row. Even before that I was taken to see Broadway shows—that's one of the things my family did for me that I'm really grateful for. Plus I've always been interested in painting. Since I was a kid I was interested in art, in fact I used to try to make a little bit myself.

"To me it seems the most natural thing in the world is not to combine but to employ the various media together. Why not? Like Duchamp said, you can put anything you want in a work of art. That was a very important statement and he proved it in his own work. I've always been eager to collaborate with dancers, painters, poets, actors, cinema, whatever. It makes the music move. Music has to be what it normally would not be. It requires something new of the music, and I like that urgency, that need to change, to adapt, to invent." Lacy says he can learn more from a painter, actor, comedian or clown than from another musician. "Sports figures, too. You can get inspired watching some athletes, get ideas about rhythm, line, timing, dynamics. It's all there. We're in the same boat, we're here to entertain each other ... until the ship goes down!"

ROAD TRIP: 1966

A musical turning point comes in the midst of a misadventure in Argentina, with trumpeter Enrico Rava, bassist Johnny Dyani, drummer Louis Moholo and Irene along for the ride: "Tangled up in the tango! I learned what the tango was, down there, and it ain't funny. But since then tango has been a very deep part of the music I do—there must be hundreds of little tango-type movements in the music I write. It was a disaster. That was the wrong group at the wrong time in the wrong place playing the wrong kind of music, the wrong money and the wrong hotel. And yet it was very important. The music was incredible, but the politics. ... We arrived, and there were tanks in the streets; they were prohibiting the Beatles. It was a fascist jungle, and also there were old Nazis running around. And we arrived with our little free-jazz routine, and the posters advertised: 'Revolution In Jazz!' You can imagine the reaction. We were on one-way tickets, and playing off the door of the theater. It's a recipe for disaster. The rest is history. Nine months we languished down there. We played all we could, and we performed, and eventually we found a small public that appreciated what we were doing. Before the very end we recorded [*The Forest And The Zoo*]. I made that happen because I thought the music was too important to lose. It was what we'd call the 'hermetic free.' The point of no return. Where the music had the maximum calories in it. There was nothing to say, no words necessary. Just: 'play.' After that, the music went elsewhere."



HOT
TIP.

Introducing Custom Series Ebonite mouthpieces from Yamaha.

The quality of your sound is important to you. So when you're looking for a new mouthpiece, nothing less than the best will do.

Yamaha's new Ebonite mouthpieces for Custom Series clarinets and saxophones are made from only the best materials and precision crafted to assure the highest quality. The result is profound and colorful sound. So smooth, so deep, so rich you won't be able to play anything but your best.

So get a tip from your Yamaha dealer today.

YAMAHA

Play the Very Best You Can.™

CHAPTER THREE: VARIOUS FREEDOMS

In the era after the harrowing visit to South America, Lacy's music took a very different turn, right into the period he calls "the scratchy seventies." "After about a year or so of playing completely free," he says, "the music started to sound the same every night. And then it was no longer free. That's when we had to start making another revolution." In retrospect, he categorizes the work after "hermetic free" into two sequential types: "post-free"—which began to put fences up in the music, to "groom" the total improvisation—and eventually "poly-free." "The C-major scale came right back. I thought I'd never see it again. But when it came back it was wide open with possibilities. We started adding melodies, written things, modes, rhythms. Sometimes it was free, and sometimes it was free not to be free. Limits are very important. Once you know you're only going to do something for one minute, there's a certain freedom in that. You don't have to worry about the second minute."

Lacy's musical route took him deep into composition and back into performing Thelonious Monk's pieces, an obsession he first seriously initiated on his 1958 record *Reflections*, then with trombonist Roswell Rudd in the early '60s. It's a songbook he's never since tired of digging into, though at the time, as Lacy is quick to point out, nobody was recording Monk tunes. As for his own approach, he sums: "You go through the complex to get to the simple. We have an old piece called 'Bone.' We try to get it down to the bone. You want to end up with something that's easy ... easy to love!" A prolific composer with a writing style as distinctive as his personal soprano sound, Lacy has carefully honed his perspective on working material. "The jazz I like is a mixture of prepared and unprepared," he details. "The unprepared is also prepared, and the prepared is also

unprepared. There are four edges. Improvisation is a tool, not an end in itself. It's a way of finding music that can't be found by composing. And composing is a way of finding music that you can't improvise. Maybe certain geniuses can improvise perfect structures, but in general to really make a language structure you need time to work on it, time to think about it and prepare it. And then you can play it in a minute! It's prepared. And you can play it in an unprepared manner. You can play it differently each time, in an improvised manner. This is what Monk is about: a prepared structure that can be played in an improvised manner and can be elaborated upon improvisationally. It promulgates improvisation; the tune is not complete without improvisation. And a lot of what I write is made to be improvised. It's up to you to fill them out." Lacy ponders a minute, then adds: "Monk told me: the inside of a tune is what makes the outside sound good. That's a very succinct definition of form, but it's true!"

ROAD TRIP: October 1961

After Ornette Coleman's record *Free Jazz* was out and successful, there were demands for him to produce live concerts by his double quartet. Eric Dolphy wasn't available, so Ornette called Lacy, who was working days at a record store: "We had rehearsals in New York—Don Cherry, Bobby Bradford, Art Davis, Charlie Haden, Ed Blackwell. It was wonderful, the music was very exciting, I was looking forward to the concert, really. We got on the plane, went to a cinema in Cincinnati. On the cinema was written: 'Free Jazz—Ornette Coleman Double Quartet.' Around the cinema was a long line of people waiting to buy tickets for it. And guess what? They didn't want to pay. It was a crisis, man. 'Hey, it's free-jazz, we're not gonna pay.' So they wouldn't pay and we wouldn't play. The concert did not take place, we got back on the airplane, went back to New York, and that was the end of *Free Jazz* in America." And the birth of an archetypal ruse. "Now it's a joke, but it wasn't then. Everybody was hungry, broke. The chance to play some interesting music and get payed for it! To go all the way out there and find a lack of comprehension like that, it was hard."

Timeless
essence
of sound



Otto Link

J.J. Babbitt Company, Inc.
2201 Industrial Parkway
P.O. Box 1264
Elkhart, IN 46516
219-293-6514
FAX 219-293-9465

Manufactured in the band instrument capital of the world.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE HORN

In the end, there's the horn. The inimitable soprano sound that Gil Evans wrote lead parts for on his first record, *Big Stuff*. Back then, there was no one but Lacy—even John Coltrane, who several times asked technical advice from his predecessor, was a decade behind Lacy in coming to the straight horn. Now, of course, sopranos are as ubiquitous as, say, Monk tunes. "What do you want your instrument to do and what does your instrument want to do? Those two things are the basis of a style, really. Your own desires and the instrument's exigencies. The soprano, if you take Evan Parker's playing and Lol Coxhill's and Coltrane's and my own, you can see that it can be played in a million different ways. The truth is that it hasn't been played in a million different ways, it's only been played in two or three ways. Sometimes I'm disappointed that somebody doesn't imagine something else to do with that. Maybe they'll come along.

"The main disappointment is that hardly anybody has developed the bottom of this instrument. I must be the only one



© FRISTIAN DUCASSE

HEAD TRIP: Sometime in the late 1950s

Zen was in the air, everyone was reading John Cage and thinking about sound and silence. In New York City, young Lacy had an adventure without leaving his flat: "I was practicing long notes to develop my tone. I started playing two notes. I was working on the smallest interval, the minor second. In those days I was pretty crazy, really, I could do things for long, long periods of time. So, I started rocking back and forth on this minor second, between a B and a C, and decided to stay on those two notes for a long time. I played them for maybe an hour. Of course it went through the various stages of boredom, frustration, puzzlement, and it started to get interesting because my perceptions started changing. So I stayed on those two notes, that little interval, for a long, long time, I don't know how many hours, until I started to hallucinate, to the point where that little interval had become enormous. And I had become very small. There I was, this little being in a huge room, and the room was a minor second. And it was uncanny, extraordinary, and I almost flipped because it was real, it was surreal, it was unreal, but it was for real. I found that I could hear so many things within that little interval, it had completely changed its aspects. When I came out of that room and went back to the rest of the horn, everything had changed, there was no relationship that was as previous to that experience of having gone into that little interval. My mind was blown, my ear was blown. That's a very important experience to dig into something to the point where you get beyond. Like Georges Braque said: impregnation, obsession, hallucination. Dig in, obsess, then it's a hallucination, and that's where something is revealed. And you can apply it to anything, break down a wall a day."

that's really opened up the bottom." In fact, through tireless work he's extended his lowest note possibility down to a low G through combination of lipping and foot-muting. "I'm waiting for somebody else to really have

founded something downstairs. That's perhaps the most interesting part of the horn, the most beautiful part, its most pleasant part." But Lacy points out the excruciating work that goes into such discoveries: "These things are possible if you really want them, but you've got to pay dearly and you've got to sound terrible, so pathetic and hopeless and hapless for a long time until it turns the corner and starts to sound better. To go through those pains, not everybody wants to do that. But the difficulty of playing a thing like that gives it expressive power automatically. It has tension because it's not easily won. It is per se dramatic because ... maybe you won't be able to do it!" Lacy chuckles with the distinctive laugh of personal experience.

EPILOGUE: WHERE TO?

As long as he's lived in Europe, Lacy still doesn't like being known as an expatriot. "I've been out here for 30 years," he says, gazing out the window into the gray drizzle of Berlin. "But I don't want to be an ex-anything. If you're ex-, you're gone really. You're not there anymore!" he snickers, revealing the New York twang that's stuck with him through thick and thin. Where will the next twist in life's turnpike take him? "I feel a pull from America, and there's a time coming soon when I'll have to go back. I must, for a while, to see what's involved. It's just a question of timing, but it's coming up. I think there's something I'd like to accomplish: I hear a lot of stuff coming out of New York and it sort of rubs me the wrong way. I may be fooling myself, but I thought maybe I could go back there and do something about it." Home from the road or just another pit stop, maybe the peripatetic jazzman will alight on these shores, set them straight like his horn. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Steve Lacy uses a Selmer Super Action, though he's not completely happy with it. "Best horn I ever tried was an Adolphe Sax from 1875: very light, only went so low and so high, but the sound! If I could get a horn like that, better than all that machinery they have now. The soul was there in the original conception by Adolphe himself. This particular model Selmer has out now, it's quirky. The octave key is problematic. At one point I had Don Redman's old gold horn. I was just a beginner on that. I didn't know the value of it. I should have kept that one, I think that was the one I need."

Lacy uses an Otto Link #12 mouthpiece, the second of three that Mr. Link

custom made for him (after years of use the first got an irreparable chip). His reed of choice is a 1½ Marca reed, the softest one they make, and a Bobby Dukoff *alto* ligature, which Antonio Lyons gave him as a gift. "Fifteen or 20 years ago I arrived at this and now until my teeth fall out I'll stay on the same setup. I wouldn't recommend it for anybody—you've got to start in the middle, normal, and then step-by-step find what you've been looking for until death do you part. It's a lifetime vigilance to control; it's a horse that will kick you. Especially a setup like this which is super-critical, with the soft reed and large mouthpiece, there's no hiding, you have to control it."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

The proportions of Steve Lacy's discography are legendary. This short list updates the last Down Beat feature (May '92), and includes new releases as well as a couple that slipped through the cracks. For further information, log onto Lacy's Web site (<http://www.imagnet.FR/~senators>).

BYE-YA—Freelance 025
 BLUES FOR AIDA—Egg Farm 004
 FINDINGS—CMAP 003/004/Outre Mesure 1194/1294
 CLANGS—hat ART 6116

REVENUE—Soul Note 121234
 WE SEE—hat ART 6127
 VESPER—Soul Note 121260
 THE WAY—hat ART 2-6154
 SCHOOL DAYS—hat ART 6140
 WEAL & WO—Emanem 4004

with various others
 FIVE FACINGS—FMP 85 (Misha Mengelberg, Marilyn Crispell, Fred van Hove, Ulrich Gumpert, Vladimir Miller)
 ROUND MIDNIGHT—hat ART 2-6172 (Mal Waldron)

I REMEMBER THELONIOUS—Jazz 0959 (Waldron)
 DUETS: ASSOCIATES—Musica Jazz 1001 (tracks with Gumpert, Waldron, Irene Aebi, Masahiko Togashi, Steve Potts, Roswell Rudd, Bobby Few, Derek Bailey, George Lewis, Muhammad Ali)
 THREE BLOKES—FMP 63 (Lol Coxhill, Evan Parker)
 PACKETS—New Albion 080 (Aebi, Frederic Rzewski)
 RUSHES—New Sound Planet 809 (Aebi, Rzewski)
 SPIRIT OF MINGUS—Freelance 016 (Eric Watson)
 GLOBE UNITY SPECIAL '75—FMP 40 (Globe Unity Orchestra)



STUART BRININ

ROAD

Christian McBride

By Bob Blumenthal

We've found the perfect time and place to get together with Christian McBride and talk about life on the road—early Sunday morning in a Washington, D.C., hotel room. The bassist is ready to begin a day of rehearsals for the finals of the Thelonious Monk Institute's International Saxophone Competition, which takes place tomorrow night. The interview was originally scheduled for last night, after McBride had finished a full day of rhythm-section duties behind 13 semifinalists; but road weariness got in the way.

"I haven't been that tired in a long time," McBride quickly admits. "My quartet finished a two-week tour of Europe last Sunday, and I didn't get much rest even with three days off, since it was my only chance to set up my new apartment. Then we drove down to Washington and played at Blues Alley on Thursday and Friday nights. After the semifinals yesterday, I just went to my room at 7 p.m. and slept 14 hours. That happens once in a blue moon. You rarely get even four hours of sleep on the road."

For a musician who is only 24 years old, McBride can draw on a rich history of road experiences. He has been touring virtually since graduating from high school, with a slew of the most prominent players in jazz and for the past two years at the head of his own band. He has been road-tested as both a sideman and a leader, and of late he has faced the challenge of keeping a group together while frequently going out with other leaders. He knows that psychology, stamina and luck are required to overcome the inevitable strains of touring.

"My bass was crushed coming out of the airplane last winter, before the first concert of my band's first European tour," he says when asked about his worst road experience. "So we did 10 concerts and I had to play a different bass every night. Mentally, it was the most taxing thing that ever happened to me. I'm trying to lead a band, and I have to play on these instruments I've never seen before."

Even when things go according to schedule,

tours can settle into a blurry sequence of travel connections, hotel reservations and soundchecks. A day-to-day rhythm is established, but it is not always invigorating.

"The road takes a lot of energy," McBride acknowledges, "especially for someone like me who likes to meet people and is something of a ham on stage. So usually I do nothing when I'm at home, and get to the point where I am re-energized and feel like the Incredible Hulk. Then, for some reason, I can never sleep the night before a tour starts, so I stay up packing and getting things together. If you're going to Europe, you leave for the airport at 3 p.m., the flight's at 6, and you sleep the whole flight until you arrive the next morning. Depending where the gig is, it can then be a long haul from the airport to the hotel. And once you're in the hotel, you might have an hour to unpack and get yourself together before the soundcheck. That might take an hour, an hour and a half. Sometimes you can go back, change and have dinner; sometimes you just go to the soundcheck dressed and stay in the hall until the gig."

"Then you do the concert, which is a few hours. Depending upon the schedule, you may have a six- or seven-hour drive to the next city, and you have to leave right after the concert. Even if you fly, you still have to wake up at 6 or 7 in the morning. Then it's the same cycle, though sometimes you have interviews or promotional activities thrown in."

Not the best way to see the world, as McBride admits. "People who don't know always ask, 'Did you sightsee? Did you buy gifts?' I was in Washington, D.C., about 20 times before I saw the Washington Monument or the White House."

What McBride does get to see on the road are the insides of clubs and concert halls, where hours can be spent before audiences hear a note. The soundcheck can be frustrating when engineers are unsympathetic, yet McBride finds the experience essential. "Soundchecks are often even more important for acoustic bands," McBride stresses. "Electric bands have more stuff; but acoustic instruments have to be heard, especially the bass and the piano, and in a 3,000-seat

*"I'm trying to lead a band,
and I have to play on instruments
I've never seen before."*



ELDERA BROWNETT

auditorium you need some amplification."

This means a potential problem at each tour stop, especially for an acoustic bassist who increasingly finds himself in large halls where the crew is used to working with pop bands. "Most of the time you just have to be nasty," McBride says, "because sound engineers want to tell you how your instrument is supposed to sound."

McBride has discovered that the answer to many of the road's problems is simply having an experienced tour manager along. "At first," he explains, "I

had to carry the contracts with me, then go in the back with sweat still dripping off my face immediately after a concert and tell the promoter how much money he owed me. Now I have a tour manager, Jerry Wortman, and I think those days may be over. Jerry saved my life on this last European tour, because I had sprained my ankle. If he hadn't been there, I'd have gone absolutely crazy."

As a bandleader, McBride holds up his end by applying lessons he learned as a sideman. "First of all," he says, "you have to make sure that everyone is comfortable with the music. While everyone has to be comfortable with everyone else spiritually, they have to be the right guys to carry out what you want to do. Different leaders get this in different ways. Being in Freddie Hubbard's band was relatively easy in that respect, because the guys idolized him so much that they made themselves accessible musically. Then being in Benny Golson's band—he's so classy you don't have to ask him anything. He's always asking the musicians, 'Is this OK?'"

Working with pianist Benny Green taught McBride that sometimes more direction is required. "Benny was the first bandleader I played with who was very specific musically. Benny would tell Carl [Allen], 'Don't play that cymbal there, use a cross-stick right there, hit the rack tom there'. At first we thought, Man, this cat is kind of overboard; but, once the group started to grow, we realized it couldn't have sounded better another way. When it came time to put my band together, I didn't want a band that was just routine. Playing with Benny taught me that it was all right to tell the guys, 'Don't do that, play the chord I wrote out.'"

McBride's road history has also led him to value the personal compatibility that is essential to touring. "It hasn't really happened to me," he reports, "but leaders pass on great musicians all of the time for reasons of chemistry. Imagine a band of vegetarians and non-smokers where a new member plays the music better than anybody else but drinks, gets high and might punch somebody out. It's hard to deal with those situations.

"I guess that you could get up on the bandstand with someone who you 'don't have much of a bond with' and just out of the blue get into something. The closest thing to having that happen for me was the Jazz Futures, that 'young lions' group that toured in 1991. There was a whole lot of politicking in that band, a lot of B.S. When that tour was over, we all said that, as much as we loved each other as people, we don't ever want to do this again."

Two of his fellow Futures, drummer Allen and tenor saxophonist Tim Warfield, clearly did have a bond with McBride. They are charter members of his quartet, and remain on board today with pianist Charles Craig. Besides being compatible, they are both committed to McBride and in demand elsewhere, which makes it easier for the bassist to continue taking occasional road work with other leaders, like the "Celebrating Bud Powell" tour he did with Chick Corea last summer.

Still, personnel changes are inevitable, and require still more flexibility. "When Carl can't make it," McBride explains, "Greg Hutchinson comes and plays with us, and that's an easy transition for everyone in the band. On the other hand, the piano seat has changed twice, and that calls for everyone to make their own adjustments to match up. My job is to make sure the other guys are happy, then take whoever the new guy is and say, 'You need to do this and that.'"

All of these issues get worked out on the road. "One thing in my favor," McBride notes, "is that when we do go on the road it's for long stretches of time. Since Charles joined, we've been touring non-stop, and we're starting to get a thing going. It will be tough when we take the month of January off, because that whole continuity will come to a short halt. We go



MICHAEL BRECKER'S CHOICE

Saxophone virtuoso Michael Brecker exclusively plays Dave Guardala® Mouthpieces and Reeds—the choice of professionals!

For the finest in hand-made Saxophones, Mouthpieces and Reeds, contact Dave Guardala® Mouthpieces, Inc.

Also available at fine woodwind retailers worldwide.

Dave Guardala® Mouthpieces, Inc.
P.O. Box 926
Hicksville, NY 11802 U.S.A.
516-254-2220/Fax 516-254-2229

©1995 Dave Guardala

back on the road in February, then I'm supposed to go back out with Chick in March. So the development of this band might take a bit longer."

It all comes down to being prepared to function at your peak when the road beckons. For McBride, the key is brainpower. "You are using your brain all of the

time," he emphasizes, "and to have brainpower, you need rest. And most musicians, especially in my age group, don't get enough rest on the road.

"It's tough being a tired bandleader on the road. I have to think about what will make the band members cool, what will make the music cool, how to pace the set. I

have another problem now that I never had before: looking at my watch while playing my bass, to make sure we're not going over the clock. I hate that, because sometimes I just want to go for it. ... Then I see some guy on the side of the stage with his hand across his neck."

One more adjustment—for the road. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

"This bass I've been using for most of the year is what I call a Frankenstein bass. It was made out of different parts. David Gage, the bass guru in New York, offered me this bass as a replacement to my Juzek, which was crushed on a European tour last year. Somehow, some way he managed to fix it; but all year long I've been using this Frankenstein bass. I think the bass is half-German and half-Czech.

"Other than that, I use Weich strings, made by Thomastik. I carry my own

microphone on the road with me, the Electro Voice RE-20. I have a French bow that was made by John Norwood Lee. I use David Gage flight trunks.

"For my escalating electric bass use, I have two Warwick's that I carry on the road: a Fortress fretless and a Streamer five-string. Both basses have D'Addarios on there. I'll soon be searching for an endorsement with David Eden cabinets. And mounds of effects—wah wah pedals, flange, all that stuff—they're usually Boss."

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

GETTIN' TO IT—Verve 523 989
PARKER'S MOOD—Verve 527 907
 (with Roy Hargrove and Stephen Scott)
NUMBER TWO EXPRESS—Verve 529 585
 with Don Braden
THE TIME IS NOW—Criss Cross 1051
WISH LIST—Criss Cross 1069
 with Cyrus Chestnut
NUT—Evidence 22152
ANOTHER DIRECTION—Evidence 22135
 with Benny Green
THAT'S RIGHT!—Blue Note 84467
THE PLACE TO BE—Blue Note 29268
 with Roy Hargrove
PUBLIC EYE—Novus 3113
FAMILY—Verve 527 630
 with Joe Henderson
LUSH LIFE—Verve 511-779
BIG BAND—Verve 533 451

DOUBLE RAINBOW—Verve 527 222
 with Joe Lovano
TENOR LEGACY—Blue Note 7243 8 27014
QUARTETS: LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—
 Blue Note 29125
 with Joshua Redman
JOSHUA REDMAN—Warner Bros. 45242
MOODSWING—Warner Bros. 45643
 with Wallace Roney
OBSESSION—Muse 5423
MUNCHIN'—Muse 5533
 with James Williams
TALKIN' TRASH—DIW 887
TRUTH, JUSTICE & THE BLUES—Evidence 22142
 with various others
TESTIMONIAL—Atlantic Jazz 82755 (Carl Allen)
YOUNG LIONS & OLD TIGERS—Telarc 83349
 (Dave Brubeck)
BLACK ART—Criss Cross 1087 (Darrell Grant)

TE-VOU!—Dreyfus Jazz 36569 (Roy Haynes)
LIVE AT FAT TUESDAY'S—MusicMasters 65075
 (Freddie Hubbard)
BURNIN' IN THE WOODHOUSE—Quest/Warner Bros.
 45918 (Milt Jackson)
LIVE IN CONCERT—Novus 01241 63158 (Jazz Futures)
ONLY TRUST YOUR HEART—GRP 9810 (Diana Krall)
A TURTLE'S DREAM—Verve 527 382 (Abbey Lincoln)
INTRODUCING BRAD MEHLDAU—Warner Bros. 45997
 (Brad Mehldau)
PEARLS—Elektra 61759 (David Sanborn)
SOMETHING TO CONSIDER—Verve 849 557
 (Stephen Scott)
DAMN!—314 527 631 (Jimmy Smith)
PRELUDE AND SONATA—Milestone 9244 (McCoy Tyner)
COMPOSER—Astor Place 4001 (Cedar Walton)
7TH AVE. STROLL—Verve 529 228 (Mark Whitfield)
CARNEGIE HALL SALUTES THE JAZZ MASTERS—
 Verve 523 150
KANSAS CITY—Verve 529 554

The time has come for the world's greatest jazz trumpeter and vocalist of our day!

JACK SHELDON



BCD7701

Jack Sheldon Sings – The dynamic vocals and seductive trumpet solos of Jack Sheldon are backed by his own 18 piece modern West Coast big band, The Jack Sheldon Orchestra, consisting of the finest young players in the country. Sheldon and his band heat up 13 timeless standards by the greatest composers of all time including Ellington, Mercer and Gershwin.



BCD7702

Jack Is Back! – Our second release by Jack Sheldon also features The Jack Sheldon Orchestra. Once again, the unique genius of Sheldon reigns supreme with his rapturous trumpet solos and sultry vocals, breathing new life into ten standards and two Sheldon originals.



Free Catalog: Butterfly Records™ 7095 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 617 -Hollywood, CA 90028 (213) 850-7252 Fax (818) 508-4896

Distributed by: California Record Distributors (818) 361-7979

Big State Distribution (214) 631-1100 • Northcountry Distribution (315) 287-2852

DIANNE REEVES

Aligned

Wearing a beige cotton dress, feet in sandals, hair done in corn rows with small gold artifacts fitted at the ends, Dianne Reeves fits the picture of Mother Earth. A tall, large-boned woman with a pretty, round face, she speaks with a rich, resonant voice. It's her singing voice, though more subdued, and she's without affectation—an honest, open woman.

The authentic, intuitive Reeves is now in the process of getting out and touring in support of her new baby, a guest-laden CD release on Blue Note that reads like a lifescrypt. The singer, who travels eight months a year, cites smaller venues as her favorites, such as the Blue Note clubs in Japan and the States (each seats about 200 people).

"I like the intimacy of a club, or actually any place that allows the people to be close, so I can communicate," she says. "But I work a lot of halls seating around 2,500, and some of these, like one in Vienna, are remarkably intimate. There I can sing without a mic and everyone can hear me."

Touring can be an arduous business for Reeves. A scad of one-niters. Hopping from place to place by bus or train or plane. Hoping the hotel rooms are ready when you get there. Making a soundcheck, doing the show, then maybe grabbing some winks at the hotel, getting up and going somewhere else.

But in all of this, Reeves has a major ally: tour manager Conan Reynolds. "He's been with me six years and he makes things as comfortable as possible," she says. "He makes sure that our rooms are available when we arrive, that the soundcheck is on schedule. He keeps a lot of the craziness off me."

Throughout her career, Reeves' allies—particularly musicians with whom she's fostered strong relationships—have served her well both on and off the road. Trumpeter Clark Terry, for example, had a very warm response to Reeves when he first heard her sing with

her high school band at a National Association of Jazz Educators (now IAJE) convention in Chicago in 1973. She was 17, and he was more than impressed.

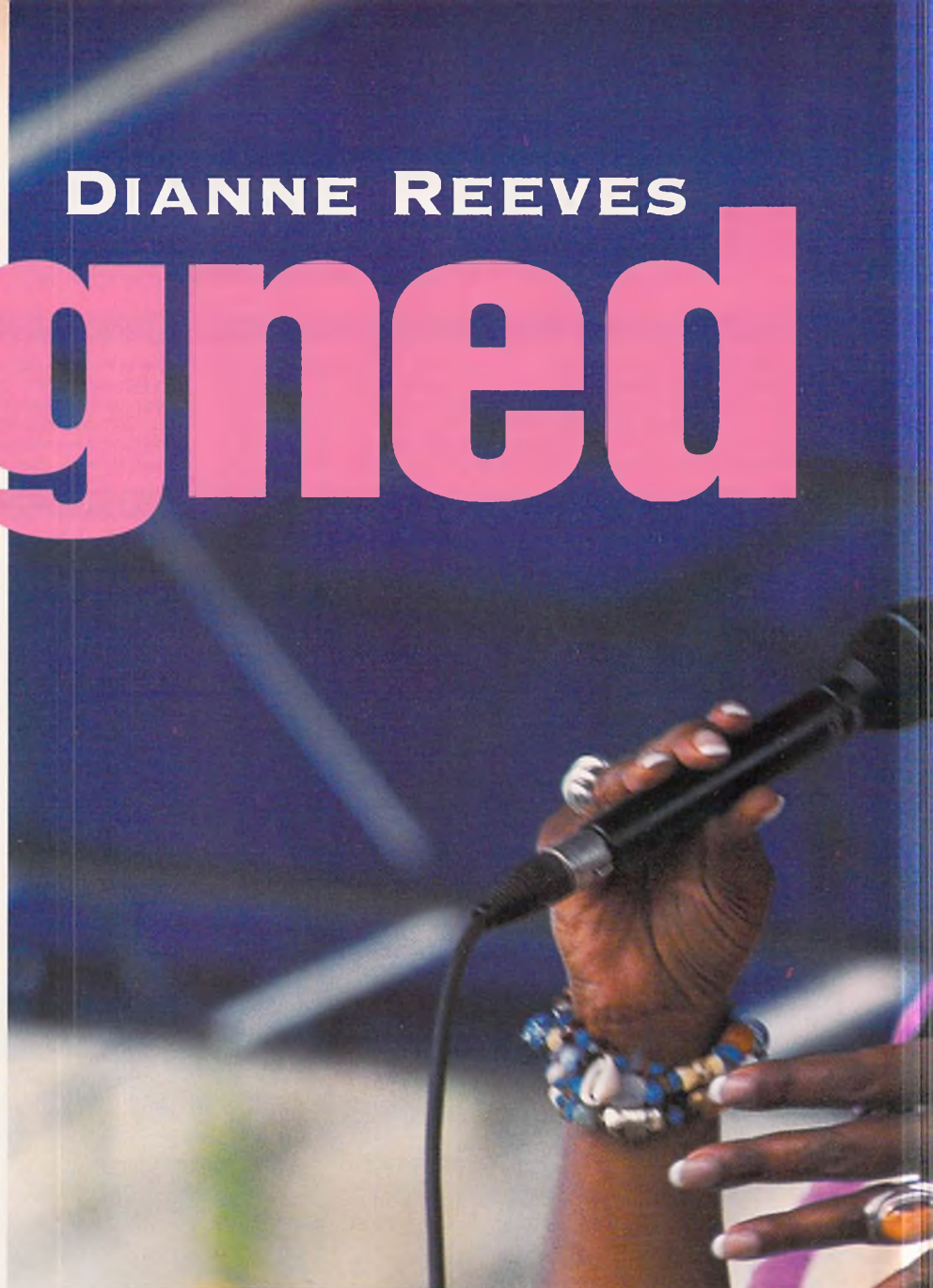
Terry arranged for Reeves, a Detroit native, to appear with him at that year's Dick Gibson's Colorado Jazz Party, held over Labor Day weekend at the famed Broadmore Hotel in Colorado Springs. Reeves did a handful of tunes—"That's All," "God Bless The Child," "On A Clear Day"—with Terry and a rhythm section she remembers as pianist Tommy Flanagan, drummer Grady Tate and "either Major Holley or George Duvivier on bass—Clark used both of them."

Reeves calls that set with Terry her "first grand encounter." Over the years—she's been a pro now for more than 20—she's had many other such experiences of working with inspirational

fellow artists, both those her senior and those her junior. She's gathered together many of these colleagues for the new album, called, appropriately, *The Grand Encounter*.

Here's the invited cast of characters: singers Joe Williams, Germaine Bazzle and Kimberly Longstreth; trumpeters Terry and Harry "Sweets" Edison; saxophonists James Moody, Phil Woods and Bobby Watson; trombonist Al Grey; harmonica player Toots Thielemans; pianist Kenny Barron; bassist Rodney Whitaker; and drummer Herlin Riley.

While Reeves is quite close with some of these artists, others are more like acquaintances. Where she had never met Phil Woods, she knew Moody and Edison from a Gene Harris Philip Morris Superband world tour in the late '80s. "We had a ball," she says with a typically





With Her Allies

BY ZAN STEWART

KEN FRANCKLING

robust smile. Thielemans she knows from bumping into him at numerous festivals, as with Grey, whom she met at the many Wichita Jazz fests she's played.

Reeves had never worked with Bazzle, but had always admired her. "She's from New Orleans, and I when go there, I see her," she says. "She's a friend of [Crescent City native and pianist] David [Torkanowsky, *The Grand Encounter's* producer], who is still my musical director. That's our connection."

Williams and Reeves have a recent history. They first sang together at a Dizzy Gillespie tribute at the Hollywood Bowl in 1994, then appeared together on Benny Carter's *Songbook*. In September 1995, the two joined Jon Hendricks for a 35th-anniversary reunion performance of his "Evolution Of The Blues" at the Monterey Jazz Festival. "It was great,"

she beams.

For this essentially straightahead date, Reeves selected a bouquet of favorite tunes that she had long wanted to record. These included the classic Latin bolero "Besame Mucho," the pop ballad "Tenderly," "Ha!" (a relic from the Charlie Ventura/Jackie & Roy bebop songbook) and a convivial "Side By Side." Her partners came to Clinton Studios in Manhattan last April, spent three days together ("everybody made time") and laid down the album.

"My idea was really simple," says Reeves, relaxing in Los Angeles between tours on a late fall afternoon. "I picked some good songs that I really like that would make for special moments, mostly with people I have liked as friends. The biggest thing was to make it easy enough so that everybody could go in and have a

good time, and that happened."

She chose "Besame" because she had heard Cuban pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba play it at a crawl at a festival in Barbados. "I thought it was so beautiful," she says. She enlisted her old buddy Eddie del Barrio (with whom she worked in the Latin/jazz/fusion band Caldera in the late '70s in Los Angeles) to arrange it. And she chose Thielemans as the perfect soloist.

"Side By Side" presented Reeves with an opportunity to work with Bazzle, while Longstreth, Moody, Terry and others contributed humorous scat vocals on "Ha!" "Kimberly is an up-and-coming singer—also from New Orleans, where I had met her—and that's why I wanted her here," Reeves says, remembering her break with Terry.

Reeves and Williams paired up on

SAVED BY JAZZ

Born in Detroit in 1956 and raised in Denver, Reeves came to singing late. She thinks that maybe it saved her life, and if so, she has one main person to thank: Bennie Williams.

In 1971, while in junior high school, Reeves was involved in one of the first school busing programs to achieve racial integration. "There was a lot of tension between blacks and whites—many people felt we were an intrusion to their neighborhood—and we all gave a concert to show some kind of unity," she says. At a rehearsal, she was helping another girl sing a part when she came to the attention of Williams, who became her first piano teacher and mentor, and who urged her to sing.

After high school, where she first came under the spell of Sarah Vaughan, Reeves attended the University of Denver for one year. She then moved to Los Angeles, where she often performed with pianist Billy Childs at the now-defunct Comeback Inn. The pianist also appears on her reissue compilation, *The Palo Alto Sessions*.

From 1983 to 1986, Reeves lived in New York and worked with Harry Belafonte. "I sang world folk music," she says, "songs from the Caribbean, Africa, Brazil. What I really learned is that there is this whole other world of music, allowing for other possibilities."

Back in L. A. in '87, Reeves began her career with a self-titled album that essayed both her jazz and pop inclinations and her interest in her own compositions.

In her subsequent recordings, Reeves has continued her back-and-forth love affair with straight-ahead and her brand of pop, going here with the somewhat pop-leaning *Art And Survival* and *Quiet After The Storm*, then there, as with *The Grand Encounter*. Each album has one essential element—Reeves' individuality—and despite the recordings' relative differences, she loves them all. "They were what I had to say at the time." Underpinning it all, though, is her basis in jazz. "Jazz allowed me to understand that I had a unique, distinctive voice," she says. "It's allowed me to represent my spirit, my soul." —Zan Stewart



"I LIKE THE INTIMACY OF A CLUB, OR ACTUALLY ANY PLACE THAT ALLOWS THE PEOPLE TO BE CLOSE, SO I CAN COMMUNICATE. ... I CAN SING WITHOUT A MIC AND EVERYONE CAN HEAR ME."

"Tenderly" and Bart Howard's "Let Me Love You." Working with Reeves has proved an inspiration to the renowned blues and ballad master; he offered her quite a tribute.

"I've said it before, and it bears repeating: I think Dianne's the legitimate extension of all of the good things that have gone on before, from Ethel Waters to Ella Fitzgerald, and Sarah and Carmen," Williams says. "Legitimate means the real thing. ... She is earth mother, lover, she is the hurt child, she manages to live and to get inside each one of those things. She also manages to not be overly demonstrative, so that you're listening to the music and feeling the power that is given only to a few people. She can get into a song, give you the feeling of what it is about, of what a woman is really about, what a person is all about."

Peppered throughout the sessions are dynamic solos from Barron, Terry, Woods and Moody, who was also ebullient in praise of the leader. "She's a wonderful, soulful singer, and she's a lady," Moody says. "Whenever I'm around Dianne, it's special. I dig her all the time."

A youthful, vital 40, Reeves is like Moody in that she leads a healthy life by following a strict diet—although that's not always easy when she's on the road. "On the road, I often have to buy fruits and vegetables in open-air markets, and keep them on the bus," she says. "Since often the cooked food has a lot of oil, I try to find a way to eat less and still do well. I find the better I eat, the fewer colds I have."

At home in Denver, she has an exercise regimen of bike-riding and hiking. When staying in Los Angeles, she works out on what's become a renowned set of outdoor stairs in Santa Monica, climbing this 180-step mountainside passage 10 times in about 30 minutes. (This routine, she avers, has added five-and-a-half steps to her upper voice, so that can now reach a high C sharp, "and it's strong.")

To prevent illness, Reeves takes a regular vitamin supplement, based around a B-complex stress vitamin. She

THE WORLD'S FAVORITE MUSIC STORE!™

GUITARS & BASSES		DRUMS & PERCUSSION
DIGITAL HOME PIANOS		ELECTRONIC KEYBOARDS
RECORDING EQUIPMENT		STAGE & CLUB LIGHTING
PRO SOUND SYSTEMS		COMPUTERS & SOFTWARE
DJ EQUIPMENT		BRASS & WOODWINDS
SHEET MUSIC & BOOKS		STRING INSTRUMENTS

*If within 30 days of your purchase, you find the same item advertised in a local or national paper by an authorized dealer at a lower price, we will refund the difference. Demo models, factory seconds, discontinued merchandise and floor samples not included. Advertisements must be factory sealed new product.

The Sam Ash® Credit Card
Quick Approvals • Convenient
Apply for yours today!

Sam Ash

MUSIC STORES
FAMOUS FOR DISCOUNTS SINCE 1924

Call Toll-Free!
1-800-4 SAM ASH
(1-800-472-6274)

New York, NY (212) 719-2299	Forest Hills, NY (718) 793-7983	Carle Place, NY (516) 333-8700	Paramus, NJ (201) 843-0119	Cherry Hill, NJ (609) 667-6696	Margate, FL (954) 975-3390
Brooklyn, NY (718) 951-3888	White Plains, NY (914) 949-8448	Huntlagton Sta, NY (516) 421-9333	Edison, NJ (908) 572-5595	New Haven, CT (203) 389-0500	Miami Lakes, FL (305) 628-3510

Can't Get Through? Write: Sam Ash Music, Department X, P.O. Box 9047, Hicksville NY 11802

TOTAL MUSIC RECORDING™ DIPLOMA PROGRAM

6 Months F/T • 9-12 Months P/T • Licensed by the NY State Dept of Education
24 track recording & mixing • Computer based Digital Audio
MIDI • Sampling • Music Theory • CD Mastering & printing • Keyboards • Externship
CLASSES STARTING EVERY 8 WEEKS WITH 8 STUDENT MAXIMUM PER SECTION
162 West 48th St, New York NY 10036 • (212) 719-4572
world wide web: <http://hudson.idt.net/> • e-mail: samlnyc@mail.idt.net

also takes Chinese herbs, one with a quaint name—Voice Gasping—that she says has been of great help.

Away from home, Reeves finds that she's basically OK as long as she gets sufficient sleep, which is a mere five to six hours a night. "Of really good sleep," she emphasizes. "The people with me are very considerate of my rest. One way is to make sure we schedule press work and interviews in the afternoon, so that I can sleep afterwards if I need to. Sometimes, I'll miss the soundcheck and sleep, but since I've been working with many of the same people for so long [Torkanowsky has been with her for several years], we can often pick it up on stage in a tune or two."

Reeves finds that a three-week road stint is just about right. "I need to rest my voice, particularly if I'm going to Japan, where I usually work the Blue Notes in Tokyo, Yokohama and Osaka. Then it's 36 straight shows," she says, referring to the club's six-nights-a-week, two-shows-per-night policy.

While in Europe, Reeves prefers to travel by tour bus. "That way, we can travel by night and get in early and get to bed and rest. In the States, we travel mostly by plane, because of distance."

All in all, the road, though necessary for a career, is not a great place to be, Reeves concludes. "It gets old fast," she says. But then there are always the audiences, fellow musicians and manager Conan Reynolds to help take the edge off.

DB

TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW

Sometimes a veteran jazz artist will embrace an up-and-comer on the same instrument, sometimes he or she won't. Singer Dianne Reeves has had it both ways.

The great Carmen McRae was always supportive of Reeves, often offering her encouragement. But Sarah Vaughan, who just happened to be Reeves' favorite singer, would have none of the youngster.

This was made very clear after Reeves, just starting out, came on before Vaughan at the Wichita (Kan.) Jazz Festival in the mid-'70s. Reeves will never forget Vaughan's angry chide: "After my set, she said to me, 'Don't you ever open for me again in your life!'" —Zan Stewart

EQUIPMENT

Dianne Reeves uses two mics, primarily: a Sennheiser 451 or an AKG 535, depending on both the room size and the sound system.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

THE GRAND ENCOUNTER—Blue Note 38268
THE PALO ALTO SESSIONS—Blue Note 36545
QUIET AFTER THE STORM—Blue Note 29511
ART AND SURVIVAL—EMI 28494
I REMEMBER—Blue Note 90264
NEVER TOO FAR—EMI 92401
DIANNE REEVES—Blue Note 46906

with various others

STRAWBERRY FIELDS—Blue Note 53920
 (Bob Belden)

THE NEW GROOVE—Blue Note 36594 (various artists)
SHADES OF BLUE—Blue Note 32166 (Bob Belden)
SONGBOOK—MusicMasters 65134 (Benny Carter)

E.M. Winston

* Custom Pro 2000 Tokyo Series *
 Handcrafted Saxophones
 The Vintage Sound—Today's Technology



EMILIO LYONS
 "The Sax Doctor"



MODEL

MODEL	MUSICIAN'S NET PRICING
2001GL	Curved Soprano, Gold Lacquer Finish \$ 1,395.00
2001NG	Curved Soprano, White Nickel Body w/ Gold Plated Keys 1,695.00
2001BN	Curved Soprano, Black Nickel Body w/ Nickel Keys 1,595.00
2020GL	Straight Soprano, Gold Lacquer Finish 1,395.00
2020NG	Straight Soprano, White Nickel Body w/ Gold Plated Keys 1,595.00
2020BG	Straight Soprano, Black Nickel Body w/ Gold Plated Keys 1,595.00
2020BS	Straight Soprano, Black Nickel Body w/ Silver Plated Keys 1,595.00
2050GL	Alto, Gold Lacquer Finish 1,495.00
2050NG	Alto, White Nickel Body w/ Gold Plated Keys 1,595.00
2050BG	Alto, Black Nickel Body w/ Gold Plated Keys 1,595.00

Available at:

Rayburn Music, Boston, MA
617-266-4727, Ext. 14

Sam Ash Music, Roberto's (New York City); Washington Music (MD);
 All County Music (Tamarac, FL); U-Crest Music (Cheektowaga, NY);
 Oleg Music (Los Angeles, CA); Royal Music (Royal Oak, MI);
 Zapf's Music (Philadelphia, PA); Harry's Music (Honolulu, HI).

Dealer Inquiries: E.M. Winston Saxophones, NYC
 Tel: 212-463-7197 • Fax: 212-229-0642

Band of Gypsies



 M E D E S

The first time you hear Medeski Martin & Wood, you'll swear that you're listening to a quartet or quintet. It's all right there: Drums, percussion, bass, organ and lead line all lock into a mysterious-sounding yet surprisingly simple groove. Count the layers of rhythmic activity, and it adds up to four, maybe even five. Then remember: That's a trait shared by some of the best trios.

Together, multi-keyboardist John Medeski, drummer/percussionist Billy Martin and acoustic/electric bassist Chris Wood are probably best described as a "power" trio. And, like the finest three-man outfits, from the Bill Evans Trio to Cream, they achieve a focus and directness that's seldom found in larger ensembles. They play music thick with improvisation and group interplay, a mixture of catchy hooks and spacey extended jams bearing obvious links to jazz, blues, rock and native African rhythms. They'll hit you like a B-3 organ dropped from a 10-foot stage, but you'll still be able to get right up and spin-dance with the Deadheads who pack their live shows.

Medeski Martin & Wood have created their funky sound and bohemian fan-base by following a very definite plan. But there's no corporate or commercial marketing scheme at work here; rather, it's a mission of sorts, beautiful in its simplicity and quite in character with the group's experimental mindset. "We set out to see just what would happen if we went out on the road," says the outspoken Medeski, 31, of an insanely ambitious tour schedule that began some five years ago. "We went out in a van and a camper, slept in campsites all across the country and found out what's going on—that's how we developed our music. If you want to build something from the bottom up, you've got to be out there checking it out. Some record label executive sitting in his New York office has no idea what's going on."

"We're out there getting the real reaction, the testing fields," adds 33-year-old Martin, the trio's most laid-back member, before the trio's recent gig at Chicago's Cabaret Metro.

Wood, the quiet one at 26, chimes in, "We're definitely proud of what we're doing. It wasn't calculated at all."

Medeski Martin & Wood have taken a step up in their touring accommodations

since the early days: They travel by bus (complete with driver, bunkers, a living room and a tiny kitchen), employ a couple of support-staffers and actually make a profit from their live shows. Self-declared "food snobs," they can even afford to occasionally indulge in their dinner of choice, sushi and saki. But they remain a totally independent entity, free to play exactly what and where they please. They appear frequently on the rock circuit at venues like Cabaret Metro or the Fillmore in San Francisco and open up for groups like Los Lobos and Morphine. But you're just as likely to catch them at a jazz haunt like New York's Knitting Factory, where they held a series of shows and workshops in September and October featuring guest musicians like John Lurie, John Zorn, Marc Ribot, Steve Bernstein and DJ Logic.

"Nobody finances us, nobody gives us a penny to tour," Martin says.

"A lot of groups need it because it's expensive to go on the road," Medeski explains. "But nobody wants help from the label because you just owe that money back to them. We don't have that problem; we're totally self-sufficient on the road."

Medeski Martin & Wood don't have a label now, anyway. *Shack-man*, their third CD for Gramavision/Rykodisc (which entered Billboard's Top Contemporary Jazz Albums chart at number-seven in November) marks the end of their latest recording contract. And despite a buzz about the group being ripe for major-label picking, they roll on without looking too far ahead. "We really have no idea what's going to happen," Medeski admits, visibly pleased that he and the others are free of label expectations. "We're not working at it, not thinking about it. The priority is the music."

"Although, it is an exciting thing in the back of our heads," Martin notes. "But now we have time to think about what's important to us. We've been reveling in

the fact that we're completely free right now. It's been some four to five years now. We have no obligations, no contracts with anybody. ... 's wonderful."

Indeed, the group values freedom over money or major-label attention. "If we wanted to make money, we wouldn't be on a tour bus," Medeski points out. "We want to do what we need to do to make the music the best it can be, and that is not driving the RV anymore. Because after three years, with the RV and the van ..."

"... That's OK for a couple of weeks," Martin says, "but then when you have to tour for five weeks straight and the pressure is on every night, the responsibility is too much. It's a lot safer, and we're feeling better when we get on stage. So now it's about quality living on the road. We're more like gypsies than just musicians who do a jazz festival now and then."

With their tip-top chops and considerable experience playing with formidable improvisers on New York's downtown jazz scene, this band of gypsies could easily be working individually as sidemen with well-known jazz names on the festival circuit. Instead, they choose to pursue their own creations on alternative circuits like the H.O.R.D.E. tour. Wood, who once played a stint with pianist Steve Kuhn, puts it simply: "We'd rather do what we need to grow and be better."

"And we could definitely be more commercial than we are," reminds Medeski, a former member of the avant Either/Orchestra and onetime collaborator with rambunctious guitarist David Fiuczynski. "We don't play funky music to be commercial; we play it because that's what we grew up listening to." James Brown, Booker T and the MGs, Tony Williams Lifetime, electric Miles Davis, George Clinton, Ahmad Jamal and Herbie Hancock all come to mind.

At least one critic has described Medeski Martin & Wood as the best "crossover" act since Pat Metheny, another artist known for his jazz chops, extensive travels and popular appeal.

"I think in some ways our success is similar to Metheny's in that we got in a van and started touring ourselves, independently," says Martin, who, in addition working with such heavy hitters as Bob Moses, Dave Liebman and Jaco Pastorius, has played extensively with pop-jazz flugelhornist Chuck Mangione. "But musically we're coming from a different place. In Metheny's music, I

didn't hear much of the pop music of the time. I didn't hear him incorporating that as much as we're incorporating the hip-hop thing and the funk thing and all that nuance."

And what about the jazz thing? Medeski Martin & Wood have made their jazz sensibilities clear from the beginning, when they started out as a piano trio playing at New York's Village Gate. Their first album, 1992's *Notes From The Underground*, included covers of the Duke Ellington hit "Caravan" and Wayne Shorter's "Orbits" and "United," plus horn parts and some pretty serious group improvisation. *It's A Jungle In Here* (1993), which saw Medeski switch to organ as his primary keyboard, also featured guest horn players and included renditions of Thelonious Monk's "Bemsha Swing" (fused with Bob Marley's "Lively Up Yourself") and John Coltrane's "Syeeda's Song Flute." And the group recorded Ellington's "Chinoiserie" on 1994's *Friday Afternoon In The Universe*. Catch a live show and you'll likely hear them play Horace Silver's "Cape Verdean Blues" or quote from Charles Mingus' "Goodbye Porkpie Hat." According to their Web site (<http://www.netSPACE.org/mmw>), which offers audio snippets from live performances, they've even thrown in a bit of Miles Davis' "All Blues," although they don't quite remember actually doing it.

"As far as we know, we've never played 'All Blues,'" Martin insists.

"I think we were playing a tune and I just quoted 'All Blues,' and somebody stuck it on the internet," Medeski suggests. "That's really funny."

"I heard it, and that was it," Wood claims. "I said, wow, it sounds very similar."

Medeski Martin & Wood have definitely opened the doors of jazz and other less-than-popular music forms to young listeners, as evidenced by their fan-mail postings on the Web site. But when asked if they feel like evangelists, they answer with a resounding "Nah!"

"I think it's cool that maybe our music is linked to some great jazz," says Medeski, who grew up listening to recordings by Evans and Bud Powell. "In one way, there are some really fanatical fans, and when they hear us doing 'Chinoiserie,' I know they're out there trying to find the original version. And occasionally we get to tell them, hey, that was Duke Ellington, or that was 'Lonely

Woman,' which Ray Charles sang—check it out."

Medeski Martin & Wood give no explanation for the emergence of their crowd, many of them fans of the band Phish and latter-day followers of the Grateful Dead. "It's a phenomenon," smiles Martin, who claims he wouldn't recognize the Dead if he heard them. "I



Keyboardist John Medeski (left), drummer Billy Martin and bassist Chris Wood: a "power" trio.

think we were chosen, we were adopted by a wandering lost tribe."

"It's really because of our touring," Wood says, more seriously. "Cause these are the kinds of kids that don't go to the force-fed MTV world of pop culture. They are out there to check out live bands, and unfortunately there aren't a lot of other bands with higher levels of improvisation out touring the U.S."

Phish themselves perhaps tipped the scales in Medeski Martin & Wood's favor by playing the trio's tapes at their gigs. "They'll play tapes of Monk, and they'll play us," Medeski says of the group, well known for its hep alternative scene and vast musical repertoire. "Between sets, they play the kind of music they like to listen to. And their audience, the reason they go to see Phish is they want to be edu-ma-cated."

Medeski Martin & Wood have certainly educated their unexpected and unwashed multitudes, though not in a classroom sense. And the Phishheads, in turn, seems to be an amusing source of inspiration for them. "In an immediate sense, we respond to everything that's going on around us, what's going on in the room," Wood says. "If we played every night to a European crowd that sat and listened quietly and clapped their hands politely at the end of every song, as opposed to a roomful of kids dancing, we'd play a lot differently."

Medeski Martin & Wood have mined the current scene like no one else, and they offer plenty of reflection and advice to bands who feel the call of the road.

"Leave your ego in the bathroom," Medeski says bluntly. "You could be the greatest musician in the world, and if the promoter hasn't heard you, he doesn't give a shit, and he shouldn't because you're not going to bring people into the

club. And the most important thing to remember is that it's like any business. If you're going to start a restaurant, a dental practice, you've got to sink something into it to get something out of it. Just because you sit in your room and practice doesn't mean that you deserve to make money for what you do. So you've got to get out there. Jazz musicians spend so much time studying their craft, they think they're owed something more. That's why they can't get any gigs."

The band has stuck to its philosophy of non-stop exploration, a determined open-mindedness that's led them away from busier, headier forms and more toward what they call "groove" music. "We're just naturally gravitating more and more toward

contemporary pop song forms," Medeski clarifies.

And as long as the musical breakthroughs and magic moments keep happening, the band will stay together and on the road. "When it stops changing, we'll stop doing it," Medeski promises. "We're trying to find a way to play grooves and song forms that have happened since 1950, and try to dig in for some more emotional depth and ambiguities in terms of the content."

"We'll keep at it as long as we continue to learn and create something that's satisfying and rewarding," Martin predicts. "Forever, you know?"

DB

EQUIPMENT

John Medeski plays a Hammond B-3 organ with Leslie speaker, a 140 Wurliizer electric piano, a Yamaha D6 clavinet and a Yamaha CS01 II keyboard. His amps include a Fender Pro Reverb and a Mouse. He uses a Vox King wah-wah pedal, a Yamaha Tremolux, a Mutron and a Lexicon reverb/delay.

Billy Martin plays a Rodgers Holiday drum kit with a 12" rack tom and 16" floor tom. He uses Zildjian K cymbals, Regal Tip BG sticks and Pete Engelhart Metal Percussion, and an assortment of bongos and rattles. His bass drum is a Jamaican-made Nyadingi.

Chris Wood plays a Pfretzschner acoustic bass made in the 1920s and a Musicman electric bass. He uses Goetz acoustic bass strings and D'Addario electric bass strings, a Walter Woods amp, SWR and JBL speakers. For effects, he uses Boss distortion, EQ and T-wah pedals, plus a Mutron octave pedal. He also plays a Hofner Beatle bass and a Danelectro electric bass.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

SHACK-MAN—Gramavision 79514

FRIDAY AFTERNOON IN THE UNIVERSE

Gramavision 79503

IT'S A JUNGLE IN HERE—Gramavision 79495

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Accurate 5010

soundtracks

GET SHORTY—Antilles 529310 (various artists)

Jack Teagarden

Keep On Plugging

By John Tynan

*Jack Teagarden, star trombonist and vocalist with popular jazz groups of the late '20s, '30s and '40s, came into his own as a bandleader in the 1950s. The following "Classic Interview," which originally appeared in our March 6, 1957, issue, is reprinted here to mark the release of *The Complete Capitol Fifties Jack Teagarden Sessions*, a 4-CD/6-LP box set now available on Mosaic Records.*



This 20 percent tax is murder," said Jack Teagarden.

"Take myself for example. Where we're working now, at Astor's in the Valley, I can't sing a note because of the tax. It isn't only that I like to sing, but people come to the stand all night wanting me to sing particular tunes. It keeps me busy explaining why I can't."

Now in his 44th year as a trombonist, Teagarden, 51, hopes for early abolition of the 20 percent entertainment tax, which is seriously limiting his scope in clubs as musician and entertainer. Since his first vocal recording, on Red Nichols' "After You've Gone" in 1930, Jack's warm, wooly singing style has become synonymous with jazz vocalizing.

"Since my Capitol album was released," Teagarden continued, "people seem to want to hear me do the tunes we recorded. The worst of it is, they're all vocal numbers and, if I did sing a chorus, the place could get into trouble, very serious trouble with the tax officials. It's particularly rough on us because, for one thing, it cuts our repertory in half." He shrugged. "But what can you do, except hope they kill it soon?"

After decades on the road—with Paul Whiteman in the '30s, his own big band from 1939 until 1947, then with the Louis Armstrong small group till '51—Teagarden today is settled in a big home perched on a cliff in the hills above Hollywood with wife, Addie and son, Joe, now 5.

"Sure wish I could stay put," he said wistfully. "It takes me less than 15 minutes to drive to the job from here. I'm tired of traveling," he sighed. "Why, one year we didn't have but three weeks to relax at home."

"One year?" put in Addie. "Believe me, there were many years."

"Guess I'll be off to Europe in March," Jack continued. "Gotta admit I'm looking forward to the tour though. Joe Glaser's setting it up right now."

Aiming to cover "as many countries as possible," the Teagarden itinerary will definitely include England and Germany, skipped when he was last in Europe with Louis Armstrong.

"Right now," said Jack, "it looks like I'll have Bobby Hackett along. And I'd sure like to get Bud Freeman, too. ... There's a young fella from New Orleans, Pete Fountain, plays clarinet, that I'd love to have along. Heard him at a concert last year and he sure knocked me out.

"One thing, though, is that I'd want everybody in the band to be pretty well-known over there. I think it'd help a lot. I'd rather have a real good outfit and not make a cent on it than to take a band where I'd have to carry the load myself."

A grin split his broad, leathery face. "Tell you something: Unless I've got good guys around me, I'm no good. Louis is that way, too. He's gotta be in good company. The better the company, the better Pops will

blow."

Close association with Louis Armstrong over the years has firmed a conviction in Teagarden's mind that "Louis can't do anything wrong. The sound is there—and the beat. There's never a doubt in his mind as to what he's going to do.

"Funny thing about Louis," he continued, "I've seen him play jazz for audiences that go for Lombardo and that kind of music. Yet when he's through playing, they come up and tell him, 'Louis, that's the sweetest trumpet I've ever heard.' I used to get a real kick out of that. Something else, too: I've never yet seen Louis Armstrong fail to please anybody with his playing. It's something innate with him—he just can't miss."

Although Jack has completed a second album for Capitol (a collection of spirituals including "Lonesome Road" and "Jericho"), he's already thinking ahead to the next one, which will probably be set within the format of a smaller jazz band.

"I just wish there was more material," he said, troubled. "Sure wouldn't want to rehash the old dixieland standards. I've done them all over and over. Take 'Fidgety Feet.' Everybody's played the heck out of that one. I think the next album could probably



be show tunes. There are so many good ones to choose from. Main thing is, if we can hit on material that'll get played on the air, then we'll have something."

Making records "that'll get played on the air" seems important to Teagarden's these days. Playing his kind of jazz, he feels, forces him into a special category anyway, but he doesn't want to find his records restricted to just the two-beat disc jockeys.

"I don't want to put down the disc jockeys," he emphasized. "They're thinking of their listeners—and their sponsors. They try to slip in a dixieland record now and then, but most of them are scared of becoming typed as dixie jockeys, which is easy, I guess, in their business. But they could do a lot to help jazz—all kinds—if once in a while they played good jazz.

"For me, especially, this would be important. I'm bending over backwards these days trying to please the people with my kind of music, but I don't know if I'm reaching them. It's frustrating trying to fit yourself into this new world of music. You feel so insecure in what you're playing."

For all the uncertainty of being a recording artist necessarily competing for sales in today's long-play jungle, Jack Teagarden's

musical integrity in what he plays and sings—on or off the record—remains unquestioned. Paying just tribute to his honesty, Johnny Mercer, in an intriguing note on the liner of Jack's album *This Is Teagarden* (Capitol), noted also that the big Texan "has never had a headache."

Queried on this, Jack laughed. "Well, it goes back to our [Paul] Whiteman days," he chuckled. "See, on the bandstand Johnny used to sit right above the trombone section. He was, and I guess still is, a chronic sinus sufferer, and always had a headache, it seemed. He'd look down at me

and ask, 'How ya feel tonight, Jack?' I'd say, 'Why, just fine, Johnny. How you?' Then he'd moan, 'Man, my head is killing me. Don't you ever have a headache?' And the truth is, I never have."

Aside from the immediate future for Teagarden, which includes his European tour and more recording, he clearly states his credo, which he's always followed—a past and present conviction, a future guide:

"Just want to go on playing as long as I'm able. I don't want to show off or outplay anybody. Just want to stay in the race—and to keep on plugging." **DB**

Don't know who was blowin' trumpet?

Ask Pete

The Computer Jazz Library

Rare video and sound clips from the Pete George Jazz On Records radio program and festivals.

5,000 Albums ~ 48,448 Song titles ~ 10,700 Musicians

- ✓ Search by album, song title, artist, instrument or any combination.
 - ✓ Album details include label, song titles, artist by tune, side, track . . .
 - ✓ Many albums with reviews and tune times.
 - ✓ Sound and comments fields for artist and tunes.
 - ✓ Add your own review or comments to tunes or albums.
-
- ✓ Find the tunes of Jack Teagarden and Louis Armstrong vocal duets...
 - ✓ Find the album and tune that Ray Charles performed on alto sax...
 - ✓ Find the tune the Dorsey Brothers and Bix all were blowin' trumpet on.
 - ✓ Find a particular artist without knowing their full name! Just Ask Pete!

Ask Pete is the easiest way to catalog any music collection. If the tune or musician is already in the library, no need to type, just click. Add your albums to the Ask Pete Database or in its own separate database. Reference the same way as Ask Pete!

Great for teaching Jazz history!

**Order the Ask Pete
Library the easy way!**

Just call: 1-800-571-4771

**Just \$ 59.95 + \$ 5.05 Shipping
& handling anywhere in the USA.**

Orders outside the USA
add \$ 8.55 Shipping & handling

**Dixieland Modern Be Bop Ragtime
It's in the Ask Pete Library.**

**This is a quality collection...
Over 3,000 of the albums rated
3 stars *** and up.**

Be sure to visit our web site!

<http://www.askpete.com>

CD REVIEWS

FEBRUARY 1997

KEY

Excellent
Very Good
Good
Fair
Poor

★★★★★
★★★★
★★★
★★
★



Joe Lovano

Celebrating Sinatra
Blue Note 7243

★★★★

In 1962, Frank Sinatra and Gordon Jenkins created a starkly magisterial ode to solitude and remembrance called *All Alone*. Some of the album's songs concerned the loneliness that the dead inflict on the living, and Jenkins represented the spirit of these lost objects of aloneness with an ethereal soprano voice that provided the requisite otherworldliness. Even under the cover of literary intent, though, it still seemed intrusive and a little too much.

This is a view not shared by Joe Lovano and Manny Albam, who have deployed the "vapor voice" of Judi Silvano on *Celebrating Sinatra*, a collection of songs associated with Ol' Blue Eyes. Her lovely sound drifts in like a ghostly whisp of tobacco smoke and coils around Lovano's lyrical, martini-dry tenor. There are no programmatic motives, though. She just sounds pretty. Thirty-three years after *All Alone*, it's still intrusive, save for "One For My Baby," where voice, tenor and soprano sax intersect for some climactic contrapuntal improvising.

But mostly this album intends to be pretty, and it happens to be very good as well. Albam has crafted eight low-key, chamber ensembles of various sizes. His string voicings echo without imitating Nelson Riddle's string quartets on the *Close To You* LP of 1958. The intimacy Albam achieves on a variety of the voicings using woodwind and string combinations is the heart of the music on *Celebrating Sinatra*. "All The Way" (from *The Joker Is Wild*, not *Pal Joey*, as the notes say) is one of several magnificent miniatures of mood and emotion, with shadows of Gil Evans. The other five tracks, mostly up-tempo except for "Imagination," feature Lovano with rhythm.

The repertoire itself is of the highest pedigree. It may be that jazz by nature is not dependent upon the quality of its material, which is why so many musicians often feel entitled to fill their albums with empty originals." Even a "composer" such as Thelonious Monk is a lowly amateur weighing in against the full-time pros heard here. Lovano draws palpable strength, challenge and inspiration from the melodic and harmonic substance of these serious songs, suggesting that maybe jazz is more dependent on

good material than it would care to admit.

—John McDonough

Celebrating Sinatra—I'll Never Smile Again; Chicago; I'm A Fool To Want You; Imagination; I've Got The World On A String; All The Way; South Of The Border; In Other Words; I've Got You Under My Skin; This Love Of Mine; Someone To Watch Over Me; One For My Baby; The Song Is You. (72:00)

Personnel—Lovano, tenor saxophone; Dick Oatts, Ted Nash, Tom Christiansen, Billy Drewes, reeds (1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12); Michael Rabinowitz, bassoon (1, 6, 8, 12); John Clark, French horn (1, 6, 8, 12); Mark Feldman, Sara Perkins, Lois Martin, Erik Friedlander, strings (1, 6, 8, 12); Kenny Werner, piano; George Mraz, bass; Al Foster, drums; Judi Silvano, voice (1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12).



Pat Metheny Group

"Quartet"
Geffen 24978

★★★½

According to Pat Metheny's liner notes, *"Quartet"* is "music that was assembled with little rehearsal, or improvised entirely." Recorded at the end of a yearlong tour last May, the album is a balance between open-ended ruminations and actual songs. The songs suggest the work of repeated performances, while the more impressionistic material shows the

kind of searching and spontaneity one would expect from *"Quartet"*'s stated purpose. All of it comes from Metheny's longstanding quartet of 14 years (a rare feat in this age of shifting personnel and all-star recorded collaborations).

The fully composed, one-minute "Introduction" reflexes into Metheny's "When We Were Free," a swinging, lilting jazz waltz featuring solos from Metheny and pianist Lyle Mays along with a fair amount swishy cymbal work from drummer Paul Wertico. "Montevideo" is a rather drab Latinism that serves more as a transitional device into the album's one hot swinger, Metheny and Mays' uptempo burner "Take Me There." Metheny's nimble fretwork can dazzle, especially when his note choices are chock full of ideas, as they are here. The rhythms fluctuate between a rolling rock beat and out-and-out swing, thanks largely to Wertico's tasteful, sympathetic work. The song is over before you know it, and we are listening to the first of four lovely songs on *"Quartet"* that spell quiet, Metheny's "Seven Days." "Seven Days" and its ilk may sound like cocktail-lounge music to some; still, there's an intimacy and tenderness devoid of irony and detachment, not to mention sentimentality. As with "Seven Days," Mays' "Oceania" is built around an arrangement that leaves wedges of time for a solo here and there (including a guitar-synth spurt toward the end). There's a repeated emphasis on group interaction and a kind of devotion to melody more than improvisation per se.

There is little to suggest that *"Quartet"* is anything more than a "typical" Metheny album (with Metheny the primary soloist) until we get to "Dismantling Utopia," one of a few totally improvised pieces. Here, we begin to see the flipside of a band that, one moment, revels in warm, moody, sometimes dark lyricism, the next, out-and-out playful experimentation. Wertico gets some great percussive sound effects as "Dismantling Utopia" gets downright funky about halfway in. Acousticisms abound, with some light, slightly bent bossa nova taking

THE HOT BOX

CDs	CRITICS	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	John Ephland
JOE LOVANO <i>Celebrating Sinatra</i>		★★★★	★★½	★★★★	★★★
PAT METHENY GROUP <i>"Quartet"</i>		★★½	★★★	★★★	★★★★½
THOMAS CHAPIN TRIO <i>Haywire</i>		★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★
CONRAD HERWIG <i>The Latin Side Of John Coltrane</i>		★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

it out. The continental drift continues through "Glacier." Along the way, we hear a return to shadow music, dreamtime material in the case of Metheny's "Mojave," a feature for bassist Steve Rodby. Built around one chord, the piece moves slowly as Rodby makes selective, somber note choices. The one-chord, rubato musings continue on "Badland," featuring Metheny on acoustic guitar. Once again, no one really solos as they all wind their collective ways through the murky, open-ended terrain. "Glacier" serves as a kind of short (arranged) coda to the moody atmospherics. There are intriguing moments in this section of "Quartet," featuring the band's unique instrumentation. Apart from the occasional sonic exploration, however, much of this music kind of just lays there.

It isn't until we reach the bright "Language Of Time" that more distinct forms reemerge. The only real rocker on "Quartet," Metheny and Mays' "Language Of Time" is a heated guitar-synth feature for Metheny, who's surrounded by Mays' lush, acoustic pianisms. At points, both follow each other note for note in thematic statements, everything ending with Rodby's woody cool-downs. Metheny's "Sometimes I See" and "As I Am" take us from the image of a packed, stadium-sized venue to a quiet, lyrical place: a jazz room late at night where maybe half the tables show customers, where the music played is exquisite, a room intimate despite all the reverb.

—John Ephland

"Quartet"—Introduction; When We Were Free; Montevideo; Take Me There; Seven Days; Oceania; Dismantling Utopia; Double Bind; Second Thought; Mojave; Badland; Glacier; Language Of Time; Sometimes I See; As I Am. (66:15 minutes)

Personnel—Metheny, acoustic and electric guitars, 12-string guitar, 42-string pikasso guitar, e-bows and slide, soprano guitars, fretless guitar, guitar synth; Lyle Mays, piano, non-tuned spinet piano, celeste, pedal harmonium, auto-harps, electric piano, clavinet; Steve Rodby, acoustic bass, piccolo bass; Paul Wertico, drums and percussion.



Thomas Chapin Trio Plus Strings

Haywire

Knitting Factory Works 176

★★★★

Versatility is the ticket to many destinations, and as far as jazz travelers go, Thomas Chapin has a slew of possible arrival points. Instrumentally, he plays alto, flute, bari and soprano; stylistically he blows with grace, even while choosing to grunt, which is often. OK, it's not exactly a unique esthetic these days. But the

way Chapin works the combo—that is, the manner in which he merges these elements—has reached a zenith on this live Knitting Factory date. The wire of the record's title are the strings added to the gig. The hay is what's made while the sextet romps through the whirling, extremely fertile landscape that the bandleader concocts for them.

Unlike many modernists, Chapin has the talent to craft riffs and combine ostinatos with enough aplomb to make them function as melodies. In several of these pieces there are themes alternate themes and group improv so well defined that they too assume the role of thematic motifs. Though in performance they take on an admirable poise, no one will confuse them with Tin Pan Alley lushness. The angles and animation of Raymond Scott as well as the prog-jazz outfit Curlew are more often conjured, especially on the arms akimbo bash "Geeks Gawkin'." But the flow between the movements is undeniable. Though herky-jerky by definition (Chapin calls them "an energetic bundle of loose ends" in the liners), the highly limber aggregate keeps these pieces well-oiled. *Haywire* is an arranger's record.

It also displays the breadth of Chapin's compositional sense. "The Devil's Hopyard," which takes up the bulk of the disc, is a suite of sorts, actively welcoming amorphous, mercurial passages into territory that is rigorously defined. It's here that Chapin's versatility is most eloquent. Each of the five sections is distinct, and almost every one has a memorable personality. "Eidolon" and "Bump In The Night" are ominous, a salutation to ghosts. "Hoofin'" is much more corporeal; drummer Michael Sarin gives

it a jaunty lilt. Later, the sax/bass/drums contingent fire shotgun blasts of sound into the middle of a sedate string trio section of "Bugbears." Their aim is precise, and the ploy is witty, enhancing the tension without resorting to clichéd swells of sound. As "At Peace With My Demons" brings up the rear, Chapin discloses a possible fascination with Erik Satie while the band glides with the elegance of the Modern Jazz Quartet.

Though the ensemble work defines the disc, soloing has its significance. There's an Arthur Blythe bitterness to Chapin's alto tone, but it helps to bolster his power of expression, and he does spend a lot of time braying. On "Geek Gawkin'" he proves that *he* runs the bari, the bari doesn't run him—there are plenty of woodwind players who lose the fight with the big horn. Along the way, Chapin references "Salt Peanuts" and a smidge of "Yackety Sax." Like violinist Mark Feldman quoting Gershwin and Monk at opportune moments on "Hoofin'," it adds a useful lightheadedness to the music.

The disposition that the band ultimately evokes has resonances of Henry Threadgill's Sextet, circa *Just The Facts And Pass The Bucket*. That was in the early '80s, when the esthetic of freedom-swing dominated the liberal side of New York jazz. Chapin may have been working with Chico Hamilton or Lionel Hampton at the time, but he's well-versed in the style's vernacular. As the term implies, it's about balancing elements that are sometimes seen as adversaries. *Haywire* makes a case for Chapin being an effective diplomat, sorting out the pros and cons of each side. Subsequently, he's also a good candidate for a major-label jump. If you ever

"WOW, I can't believe you have that CD!"

Imagine a record store that offered every CD in print. Your selections, no matter how obscure, would be there. Imagine discovering that your favorite artists made twice the CD's you thought. Imagine being able to easily order every selection you wanted and never paying retail. You have just imagined 1-800-EVERY-CD.

1-800-EVERY-CD is a wholesale music club. Members receive a 500 page catalog offering every CD in print. All CD's are offered at wholesale, which is guaranteed to be the lowest price you can find. We do not send unsolicited CD's, and there is no minimum required to order.

Call today and tell us the last CD you bought. We'll have it, too. We'll also have the items you've been wanting to buy but couldn't find. Call and let us live up to our name, 1-800-EVERY-CD.

1-800-EVERY-CD

<http://www.everycd.com>

thought about getting on his trip, now's the time.

—Jim Macnie

Haywire—Haywire; Diva; The Devil's Hopyard; Geek Gawkin'. (70:03)

Personnel—Chapin, alto, mezzo-soprano and baritone saxophones, flute, miscellaneous instruments; Mario Pavone, bass; Michael Sarin, drums; Mark Feldman, violin; Boris Raskin, cello, Kiyoto Fujiwara, bass.



Conrad Herwig

The Latin Side Of
John Coltrane
Astor Place 4003

★★★★

Coltrane and clavé. It's not such a stretch or such a revelation: As pianist Eddie Palmieri and Bob Belden (co-producer of the record)

suggest in the notes, a clear African subtext links the great saxophone aviator and the Afro-Cuban sound. What makes this record tick isn't the haut concept of a meeting of those musics, but the strength of the participants and their ground crew of adapters and arrangers. And the most interesting twist is that Herwig and company manage to do it all without a soprano or tenor sax in sight, sticking to the decidedly more Latinate brass and baritone mixture.

Having masters like Palmieri and percussionist Milton Cardona aboard doesn't hurt the cause; Cardona bookends the program with short intro and outro consecrations for voice and percussion, and '60s innovator Palmieri keeps the record's most rhythmically driving numbers ("Blue Train," "Impressions") brutally honest (both those cuts also feature voluble bari solos by Ronnie Cuber). Punchy, rollicksome and insistent, the well-tempered trombone has a sacred place in salsa instrumentation; recall Willie Colon and the 'boned bands of Oscar D'Leon. Leader Herwig holds up his end of the tradition while maintaining composure: On "A Love Supreme," he takes a confident, searching solo; he trades bits of "Rockin' In Rhythm" with trumpeter Brian Lynch on "Blue Train." "Naima" gets a florid flute- and trombone-led run-through, arranged by pianist Richie Beirach; the melody's edge is lost in the lush, slick take.

The most obvious Trane selection, Mongo Santamaria's "Afro-Blue," is treated to a stimulating arrangement by Lynch, who elongates the theme in interesting ways before Dave Valentin's flute solo with vocalized multiphonics, another limber workout for Herwig and a convincing piano break from Danilo Perez. Lynch

gets the best-arranger prize for his intelligent reinvention of "Satellite," which starts with a mainstream Latin feel, then moves into contrasting, disparate sections (too bad for the arrangement that the track fades out; it's so much more convincing when a piece is given a compositional terminus). Herwig and Palmieri's arrangement of "Impressions" is bold, brash, with active percussion and a karate-kick five-horn orchestration, while "India" utilizes a septet with Adam Cruz alone on kit. "After The Rain" pares it down to a peaceful duet between Herwig and Beirach.

—John Corbett

The Latin Side Of John Coltrane—Blessing; A Love Supreme; Blue Train; Afro-Blue; Naima; Satellite; Africa; After The Rain; Impressions; India; The Drum Thing; Blessing. (70:05)

Personnel—Herwig, trombone; Brian Lynch, Alex Sipiagin, Mike Ponella, Ray Vega, trumpet; Dave Valentin, flutes; Ronnie Cuber, Gary Smulyan, baritone saxophone; Danilo Perez (4, 6), Eddie Palmieri (3, 7, 9), Edward Simon (10), Richie Beirach (2, 5, 8, 11), piano; John Benitez, Andy Gonzalez (7), bass; Adam Cruz, drums; Jose Clausell, timbales, percussion; Richie Flores, congas; Milton Cardona, vocals, bata drums, congas, percussion.



Stéphane Grappelli & Michel Petrucciani

Flamingo
Dreyfus 580

★★★★½

While we're extolling, and rightly so, the amazing powers of Doc Cheatham and Benny Carter at 91 and 89, respectively, let's not forget that founding member of the Quintet of the Hot Club of France: Monsieur Grappelli. A musically vigorous 87 when these sides were made in the summer of 1995, the French fiddler, like his above-mentioned American colleagues, is astounding.

In fact, as heard here—and in a live concert in Los Angeles a month or so later—Grappelli seems to have lost little zest from his '50s and '60s work. Oh, when he plays a fast "Sweet Georgia Brown" or "I Got Rhythm," he only solos for a chorus or two, rather than five or six. But those are strong choruses, with gutsy, rhythmic drive, loping scalar ideas, leaping arpeggios. Octagenarian or no, this cat can still play.

But it's not really the solos that matter; it's how Grappelli interprets the melodies. His masterful version of the title track, done as a duo with Petrucciani, is characteristic. He begins with his bow dragging slowly across strings: a hushed, mournful whisper. Then he adds bow

NEW

Reservoir

Nick Brignola's seventh release on Reservoir—a baritone saxophone tour de force. A superior addition to what the *Penguin Guide To Jazz* considers "the finest collection of baritone records in recent times".

NICK BRIGNOLA
THE FLIGHT OF THE EAGLE
RSR CD 145

U.S. DISTRIBUTORS:

CITY HALL RECORDS
SAN RAFAEL, CA (415) 457-9080

NICK BRIGNOLA
THE FLIGHT OF THE EAGLE



KENNY BARRON RUFUS REID VICTOR LEWIS

WRITE FOR FREE CATALOG
RESERVOIR MUSIC

278 PEARL STREET KINGSTON, NY 12401



DISTRIBUTION NORTH AMERICA
CAMBRIDGE, MA (617) 354-0700

NORTH COUNTRY DISTRIBUTORS
REDWOOD, NY (315) 287-2852

speed and pressure and the melody notes pour forth, sometimes preceded by exquisitely placed neighboring tones; sometimes it's just the theme itself—unadorned, but in these hands, magnificent. Either way, Grappelli's natural gift for tone and phrasing is sublime and the listener is left in awe.

Petruciani and his wondrous cohorts Mraz and Haynes are here mainly to serve the maestro: They accompany him with delicacy, with loving care. But there are plenty of superb piano outings, as on "These Foolish Things," where, in turn, Petruciani plays a snappy bebop idea based on a D major triad; a smooth trill that runs for four bars, his left-hand chording dancing underneath; and a series of small, repeated intervals that rise gradually. Nothing fancy, that; yet here, once more, romance emerges in a place you'd least expect it. On "I Got Rhythm," the pianist reveals a bit more of his patentable rambunctiousness, but mostly he's a melodic marvel. Mraz and Haynes couldn't have been better: They flow with whatever's happening and solo with the imagination we've long known them for. —Zan Stewart

Flamigo—*These Foolish Things; Little Peace; Flamigo; Sweet Georgia Brown; I Can't Get Started; I Got Rhythm; How About You? (I Love New York In June); Misty; I'll Remember April; Lover Man; There Will Never Be Another You; Valse du Passé.* (55:11)

Personnel—Grappelli, violin; Petruciani, piano; George Mraz, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.



Sonny Rollins

Silver City

Milestone 2-2501

★★★★

This double CD acknowledges that critical consensus on Sonny Rollins' work over the last two-and-a-half decades has been less than glorious. Writer Gary Giddins asked critics to rank their top five all-time Rollins records for a piece in the *Village Voice* last year, and an overwhelming majority of the resulting lists (mine included) had no post-'60s Newk whatsoever. But consensus is not unanimity—Giddins, for one, pitted himself against the popular tide, suggesting a collection of gems from Rollins' Milestone period as proof of the misjudgment. *Silver City*, already in the works before the *Voice* piece, makes the case, and pretty successfully.

The collection culls from the full spectrum of Rollins' output since he emerged from his second "sabbatical" in 1972; there are five cuts from the '70s, eight from the '80s and six from the '90s (too bad they included two tracks from last year's +3—

THIS ONE'S
FOR

Frank!

SAXOPHONIST SUPREME JOE LOVANO TIPS HIS HAT TO THE GREATEST SINGER OF OUR TIME ON CELEBRATING SINATRA.

LOVANO, JAZZ ARTIST OF THE YEAR IN THE 1996 DOWN BEAT CRITICS AND READERS POLLS, PUTS HIS UNIQUE SPIN ON THIRTEEN TUNES MADE FAMOUS BY FRANK SINATRA, IN ARRANGEMENTS FROM DUO TO SMALL ORCHESTRA. WITH AL FOSTER, JUDI SILVANO, KENNY WERNER, GEORGE MRAZ. ARRANGEMENTS BY MANNY ALBAM.



37718

—FINEST JAZZ SINCE 1903—
BLUE NOTE

J&R MUSIC
WORLD

To Order Pre-recorded Cassettes and Compact Discs 24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week, Call Toll Free 1-800-221-8180 Plus Shipping and Handling

it's a bit too fresh for compilation, and anyway why not pluck more material from the 19 other Milestone records to demonstrate how strong they are?). With the thrilling, unaccompanied romp that initiates "Autumn Nocturne"—taken from *Don't Stop The Carnival*, one of Rollins' few generally beloved records from this period—the tenor master is cast as the sole center of attention. That's a smart decision on *Silver City*, since one of the main gripes with Rollins' Milestone-era work has been the mediocrity, or perhaps better, the mere *adequacy* of his bands. Not that there aren't plenty of strong supporting musicians in these groups, but aside from Tommy Flanagan and George Cables (whose playing on "Skylark" is especially nice), there's hardly a soloist near on par with Rollins. Clifton Anderson is a solid trombonist, but he can't build the raw, unbridled ex-

citement of in-flight Rollins. And while Rollins' turn to electric bass and keyboards might have been an attempt to tap into the budding urban-contemporary and proto-smooth jazz markets, the music didn't have to sound quite as lightweight as it does on "Just Once" or the disco-fied "Harlem Boys." No problem with black pop or even disco, but these cuts don't have the edge or interest of the best of those fields.

If those few tracks don't convince me that the Milestone-era Rollins is misunderstood, other parts of the compilation proceed much further in that direction. The absolutely astounding "G-Man," for instance, is 15 minutes of sheer genius. Rollins blows one of the great recorded solos of his career, returning to the short, hard theme, then treating it as a punching-bag, uncorking daring streams of thought, unoccluded,

flowing at an unreal pace. At one point he shoots an overblown ultrasonic splinter into outer space (he's apt to squeak freakily, also on "McGhee," "I'm Old Fashioned" and "Tell Me You Love Me"), while later he rides out one extremely long tone, inflecting and filtering it in myriad ways. Joyful calypso/jonkanoo tunes like "Mava Mava" and "Duke Of Iron" are bubbling wonders, with Rollins' horn a constant wellspring of amazement and energy. Jaunts through standards like "Someone To Watch Over Me" and "Skylark" are consistently rewarding, too, and the Jimmy Heath-arranged brass choir on "Darn That Dream" is a sweet touch.

Silver City assembles peak recordings over a quarter-century span from the guy who showed us where the peak is. Is it great? Damn right! It had better be. —John Corbett

New York Flute Center

Largest Selection of Flutes in New York
New and Used, Professional and Antique
All Makes

Repair Shop with Professional Staff
Headed by Phil Unger

The Music Store/Carl Fischer
44 West 62nd St. New York, New York 10023
212.541.6236

Corner Columbus Avenue opposite the Metropolitan Opera at Lincoln Center

Headquarters
for Pearl Flutes

Silver City—Autumn Nocturne; Duke Of Iron; Cabin In The Sky; Harlem Boys; Where Or When; To A Wild Rose; Mava Mava; Tennessee Waltz; G-Man; McGhee; Someone To Watch Over Me; I'm Old Fashioned; Just Once; Lucky Day; Darn That Dream; Silver City; Skylark; Tell Me You Love Me; Biji. (69:53/69:01)

Personnel—Rollins, tenor saxophone; Clifton Anderson, trombone (2, 5, 7, 9, 12-15, 18); Jon Faddis, Byron Stripling,flugelhorn (15); Alex Brofsky, french horn (15); Bob Stewart, tuba (15); Mark Soskin (1, 2, 4, 7-9, 11-14, 16, 18), piano, electric piano, keyboards, DX7 synthesizer; Stephen Scott (3), Tommy Flanagan (5, 15, 19), Stanley Cowell (6), George Cables (17), piano; Aurell Ray, electric 12-string guitar (1, 16); Yoshiaki Masuo (6, 10), Bobby Broom (10), electric guitar; Jerome Harris, electric bass (1, 2, 4, 13, 16), electric guitar (8, 11, 14); Bob Cranshaw, electric bass (3, 5, 6, 8-11, 14, 19), acoustic bass (6, 17); Russel Blake, electric bass (7, 12, 18); Tony Williams (1, 16), Marvin "Smitty" Smith (2, 9, 13), Jack DeJohnette (5, 8, 10, 15), Al Foster (4, 19), David Lee (6, 17), Tommy Campbell (7, 12, 18), Steve Jordan (11, 14), drums; Bill Summers (4), Mtume (6), Lucille Rollins (7), percussion.

ARBORS RECORDS



WHERE CLASSIC JAZZ LIVES ON



John Bunch with Phil Flanagan: Struttin'
ARCD 19157



Ruby Braff and Ellis Larkins Duets Calling Berlin Vol. 2
ARCD 19140



Gary Campbell

Thick & Thin
Double-Time 115

★★★★

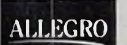
Bruce Gertz 5et

Discovery Zone
Ram 4524

★★★★½

These two discs are by artists who definitely deserve more exposure. Both utilize outstanding tenor saxophonists—Campbell and Bergonzi—in conjunction with Abercrombie's singular guitar approach, both

Free catalog: Arbors Records, 1700 McMullen Booth Rd. Suite C-3, Clearwater, FL 34619
Toll free: (800) 299-1930 Fax: (813) 724-1745 e-mail mrd@gate.net
Internet: <http://www.arborsjazz.com>
Exclusive distribution by Allegro.
Toll free: (800) 288-2007 Fax: (503) 257-9061



employ the powerhouse drummer Nussbaum, both investigate originals and classic repertoire. Yet the albums are easily distinguished.

Boston bassist Gertz's intrepid, exploratory compositions and arrangements here (and on his previous Ram CD, *Third Eye*, with the same players) encourage his crew to readily mix those dissonant tones that give contemporary acoustic jazz its forward-leaning edge with sounds that are mellifluous. Surprises abound.

There's the title track, done in a pulsating 13/4 (3-3-3-4) with three key centers. Here, relative freedom reigns: Bergonzi, his style reminiscent of Trane with traces of Joe Henderson, and Abercrombie, his tone wide and ringing throughout due to a sonic delay, let their imaginations out to play. Equally wild is "Mileage," where Nussbaum's rock-ish thumping kicks behind. Then there's "To Go Boldly," a medium-tempo treatment based on the changes of "You Stepped Out Of A Dream" that is angular and spatial. Here, Bergonzi is sometimes lyrical—his "Soultrane" essay is all that—sometimes manic, as when he double-times, manhandling the time with asymmetrical ideas. Pianist Calderazzo alludes to the chords, then doesn't—he does the same on Mancini's "Days Of Wine And Roses" trio feature. And Abercrombie at first plays brief darting-in-and-out lines, then works with more flow. "Inner Urge" is a duet with the leader, who solos with a horn-like fluidity popping double-stops that ring sweetly, and Nussbaum.

Teamed with colleagues from his New York days in the '60s and '70s, Miami resident Campbell's tradition-rooted presentation is direct, unselfconscious. In his strong compositions, he evinces a solid allegiance to chordal tones and their kin, allowing for a muscular brand of swing in a setting that is at once soundly structured and very listenable.

"Light Strokes" is medium-paced. Here, Campbell—whose buoyant sound and rhythmic delivery reveal an obvious fondness for Joe Henderson (along with Parker, Rollins and Coltrane)—is both leisurely, dipping easily into his fat lower register, and excited, as he executes agile, twist-turn 16th-note runs. Under him, Abercrombie offers his trademark floating chords that give the tune air. "Would Be" and "You Stepped" are fast and the leader plays clean, lengthy lines; he's like a fullback criss-crossing the field on his way to the goal line. Bassist McClure's "Final Decision" starts low-key but grows way hot as Abercrombie drops in gritty funk lines over Nussbaum's insistent bashes. On "We'll Be Together," the guitarist plays lines that weave in and out of rhythm as well as those that are precise and punchy.

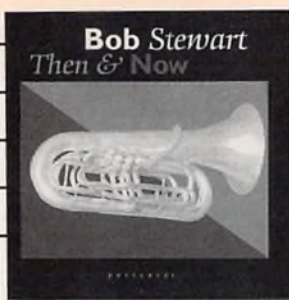
—Zan Stewart

Thick & Thin—*Light Strokes; Final Decision; Would-be Blues; Three-four Fable; We'll Be Together Again; Con Alma; Thick & Thin; Veils; You Stepped Out Of A Dream; Good Bait.* (72:28)

Personnel—Campbell, tenor saxophone; John Abercrombie, guitar; Ron McClure, bass; Adam Nussbaum, drums.

Discovery Zone—*To Boldly Go Where Everyone Has Gone Before; The Reach; People From The Past; Traffic On The Bridge; Inner Urge; The Days Of Wine And Roses; Soultrane; Mileage; My Romance; Discovery Zone; Blues For Ram.* (68:46)

Personnel—Gertz, bass, electric bass (2, 5); Jerry Bergonzi, tenor saxophone (1-4, 7, 8, 10, 11); John Abercrombie, guitar (1-4, 7-11); Joey Calderazzo, piano (1-4, 8, 10, 11); Adam Nussbaum, drums.



Bob Stewart Then And Now Postcards 1014

★★★★

Bob Stewart says, "The tuba was phased out of most jazz ensembles around 1923. *Then And Now* is my effort to bring the tuba back into the modern ensemble and redefine both the repertoire and the techniques needed to accomplish this." Despite the verbiage, *Then And Now* is mostly about rambunctious fun.

His big horn has added ballast to the orchestras of Gil Evans, Carla Bley, Frank Foster and Lester Bowie as well as hipness to Arthur Blythe albums like *Lenox Avenue Breakdown*. But here Bob Stewart is fully in charge. His endeavor to make the tuba relevant again succeeds through breadth of repertoire ("King Porter Stomp" to

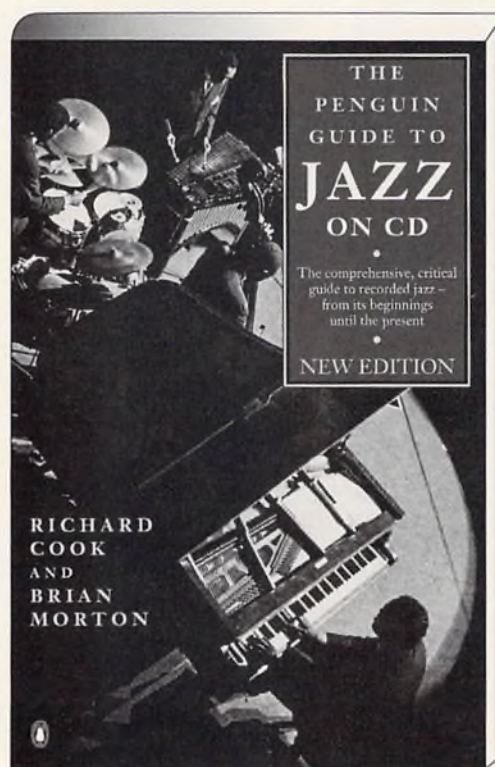
Ornette Coleman's "Law Years"), through four varied ensemble configurations (a brass choir, a jazz quintet, a trio with piano and drums, and blues singer/guitarist Taj Mahal with french horns), and through his own complete command over the most recalcitrant of instruments. He often functions as the "bassist" in his bands, aggressively syncopating "King Porter Stomp" and laying a walking line through "Tunk." But he is more often a primary melodic voice, intermingling ideas with soloists as fluent as trumpeters Stanton Davis and Graham Haynes, trombonist Steve Turre and alto saxophonist Carlos Ward.

His rendition of "You Don't Know What Love Is" is affecting; listen to him slowly and painfully trace the melody, given the beautiful darkness of his basso voice. But Stewart then reworks the song into his own deep language. His short, powerful syllables decorate around the pensive progress of Dave Burrell's piano, and build to the devastating, drawn-out, existential catharsis at the song's end: "Until you've faced each dawn with sleepless eyes/You don't know what love is."

In its short history, the Postcards label has established itself as one of very few imprints whose presence on a jazz release guarantees spectacular sound quality. Engineer Joe Barbaria's digital recording is stunning in its immaculate clarity and dynamic impact. Check out the opening of Carlos Ward's "Nette." Buddy Williams' drums kick through your speaker grills; Stewart's tuba blasts you fully awake; Graham Haynes' trumpet slashes into the air of your listening room like a Samurai sword.

—Thomas Conrad

NOW COMPLETELY UPDATED WITH 2,000 NEW LISTINGS!



The comprehensive, critical guide to recorded jazz.

Looking to find a complete set of Ella's songbook recordings? Or perhaps you're wondering who influenced some of today's rising stars, such as Wynton Marsalis or Joshua Redman? Find the answers in this compendium from two leading jazz critics—includes ratings, bios, line-ups, accurate label and number details, a complete index, and more.

"Impressive and exhaustive."
—*Billboard*

IN BOOKSTORES NOW
FROM PENGUIN



Then And Now—Hambone; Big Kneed Gal; King Porter Stomp; You Don't Know What Love Is; Rambler; Fishin' Blues; Nette; Tunk; Law Years; Nubian Stomp. (55:28)
Personnel—Stewart, tuba; John Clark (1, 3, 5), Fred Grifflin (2), Marshall Sealy (2), trench horn; Stanton Davis (1, 3, 5), James Zollar (1, 3, 5), trumpet; Graham Haynes (7-10), cornet, trumpet; Steve Turre (1, 3, 5), trombone; Carlos Ward (7-10), alto saxophone; Taj Mahal, guitar, vocals (2, 6); Jerome Harris, guitar (7-10); Dave Burrell, piano (4); Buddy Williams (1, 3, 5, 7-10), Aaron Scott (4), drums.



D.D. Jackson

Rhythm-Dance

Justin Time 89

★★★★

This second recording suggests that pianist D.D. Jackson's virtuosic skills determine the virtiginous route of his compositions.

Indeed, as on his debut, last year's *Peace-Song* (Justin Time), all the tunes are Jackson's. His approach, governed in part by prodigious dexterity and left-handed grooveship, drives melodies to their fulcrums. Jackson deconstructs the lyric he's pursuing at upper registers into elements of sharp contrast. Booming chords collide with voluminous harmonies while rhythms flux in velocity. Apart from "Guitar Song," with its rolling figure that nearly disguises the snippets of tribute to both Keith Jarrett and McCoy Tyner, most Jackson tunes depart dramatically from their first statements.

Replete with runs ending in percussive detonations, his style is likened to Pullen's. The late pianist's churchified soulfulness also surfaces in rhapsodic runs by Jackson ("Some Thoughts About You" and in the elegy "For Mama"), but no less so than from David Murray or Abdullah Ibrahim, who relish sanctifying a ballad. On both title tunes and "Peace Of Mind," Jackson gives a special nod to Ibrahim by folding polyrhythms into spacious contours. Unlike the direct translations within "Monk-Sake" on *Peace-Song*, Jackson's current Monkisms on "DD Blues" or of the "Ugly Beauty" sort on "Motion Sickness" quickly meld into his own sonics.

Typically, after Jackson plunders jackhammer chords, a whack to the tom tom by Jean Martin signals a change-up. Too soon sometimes, Jackson clips the momentum ("DD Blues") when he passes the mantle to his bassist. Fortunately, though, John Geggie unfurls a sonorous bottom of rich arco drones.

—Zoë Anglesey

Rhythm-Dance—DD Blues; Nueva Canción; No Boundaries; Some Thoughts About You; Motion Sickness; Rhythm-Dance; Ayşe; Dreams; Guitar Song; For Mama; Peace Of Mind. (64:02)

Personnel—Jackson, piano; John Geggie, bass; Jean Martin, drums.



Oscar Peterson

Meets Roy Hargrove And Ralph Moore

Telarc 83399

★★★★

Exclusively For My Friends— The Lost Tapes

Verve 529 096

★★★★

It's not so rare finding an elder statesman in the studio with young veterans, but it is uncommon to have a session turn out as well as Oscar Peterson's encounter with Roy Hargrove and Ralph Moore did last June. Of all the talented under-30 musicians on the go, Hargrove appears to have the strongest emotional ties with the blues and he makes an ideal partner for the blues-loving pianist. Moore's also in synch: His vigorous sound on tenor draws in part from a convincing blues feeling.

All three musicians appreciate the value of filling their swinging music with subtle nuances, and their feature spots on bebop chestnuts like "Just Friends" and "Tin Tin Deo" as well as several Peterson originals speak clearly of an authority earned through intense self-study. Without the horns, Peterson, nudged by bass and brushes, picks just the right notes to express the great, sad beauty of his tribute composition for Ella Fitzgerald, "She Has Gone." With no drop in artistry after a stroke sandbagged his left arm a few years back, Peterson provides his '90s label, Telarc, with another album worth hearing again and again.

The explanatory title of *Exclusively For My Friends* is *The Lost Tapes*, meaning these 12 tracks recorded by Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer in his home recording studio in Germany between 1963 and '68 are seeing their first light of day. (The six classic Peterson/Brunner-Schwer LPs of the '60s are collected in the MPS/Verve four-CD set *Exclusively For My Friends*.)

Peterson's busier than a hive of angry bees when stringing arpeggios in fancy curls and making emphatic left-hand punctuations. But his artistry doesn't suffer for his amazingly speedy

Berg Larsen



Precision Mouthpieces

Berg Larsen, Inc
 2201 Industrial Parkway • Elkhart, IN 46516
 (219) 293-6514 • Fax (219) 293-9465

attack; his notes are articulated quite clearly. Furthermore, his rhythmic invention and harmonic knowledge are gargantuan, and a perfervid sort of genius is on display when he reconfigures evergreens like "Let's Fall In Love" and "My Romance." Peterson transforms "Tenderly" and "I Will Wait For You" at a relaxed pace, while his passion for the blues pervades, in particular, sections of "Put On A Happy Face." Two different rhythm teams—Ray Brown or Sam Jones on bass and Ed Thigpen or Bobby Durham on drums—are alert to his remarkable playing at all times.

—Frank-John Hadley

Meets Roy Hargrove And Ralph Moore—*Tin Tin Deo*; *Rob Roy*; *Blues For Stephanie*; *My Foolish Heart*; *Cool Walk*; *Ecstasy*; *Just Friends*; *Truffles*; *She Has Gone*; *North York* (61:40)

Personnel—Peterson, piano; Roy Hargrove, trumpet; Ralph Moore, tenor saxophone; Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

Exclusively For My Friends—*The Lost Tapes*—*Gravy Waltz*; *Three O'Clock In The Morning*; *Squeaky's Blues*; *Tenderly*; *I Will Wait For You*; *Let's Fall In Love*; *Put On A Happy Face*; *Stella By Starlight*; *Moanin'*; *Never Say Yes*; *It's Impossible*; *My Romance*. (73:28)

Personnel—Peterson, piano; Ray Brown (1-4), Sam Jones (5-12), bass; Ed Thigpen (1-4), Bobby Durham (5-12), drums.



Jack McDuff & Joey DeFrancesco

It's About time
Concord Jazz 4705

★★★½

Essence All Stars

Organic Grooves
Hip Bop Essence 8010

★★★

Joey DeFrancesco

The Street Of Dreams
Big Mo 2025

★★★½

Joey DeFrancesco has appeared in a variety of settings of late. Here are three. The McDuff-DeFrancesco date, *It's About Time*, boils with B-3 energy on such deep-fried funky McDuff originals as "Pork Chops & Pasta" and

"Black Jack." When one urges the other further into the groove, the set soars. However, each organ ace inexplicably goes it alone with his respective band for a number. McDuff and DeFrancesco sound so great together that the energy loss is immediately noticeable. The B-3 engine sputters momentarily despite the spirited saxophone riffs by Andrew Beals and Jerry Weldon on McDuff's rendition of Todd Cameron's "Our Delight" and DeFrancesco's rousing solo sprint on his interpretation of Rodgers and Hart's "The Most Beautiful Girl In The World."

But it's back onto the roaring and rippling track when they shake and bake their way through another of McDuff's funky gems, "Rock Candy" (the tune that little Joey, age 10, played for Brother Jack at one of the elder's club gigs ages ago). When the two aren't setting small brush fires here, they hit the soul-stirring mark with delicious B-3 blues on Percy Mayfield's "Please Send Me Someone To Love" and Jerome Kern's "Yesterdays."

On *Organic Grooves*, the latest disc in the Essence All Stars dance-jazz series on Hip Bop, DeFrancesco swings with B-3 fervor on three of the five tunes. For the lead-off number, "Broadway," he goes keyboard-to-keyboard with fellow organist Dr. Lonnie Smith. It's a fun jam—cool and hip but not as earthshaking as a lofty B-3 summit. Smith adds fine touches on a couple of other numbers here, including "Smokin'," which spotlights Kenny Garrett yelping out a sax storm, and "True Blue," where Garrett links up with Grover Washington Jr. for some exciting sax jamming. DeFrancesco stars on Larry

Young's hot "Luny Tune." He applies the funk heat and then cruises with the support of a terrific makeshift band consisting of Garrett, guitarist Tony Purrone and drummer Lenny White. Overall, the session smolders with B-3 fuel but never fully combusts.

As if to prove that there's jazz life for him beyond the B-3, DeFrancesco features his versatility by playing piano, trumpet and—surprise!—singing on *The Street Of Dreams*, an album dedicated to McDuff. The organ still figures prominently on the disc, especially on power-packed jaunts through Wes Montgomery's "Twisted Blues," Wayne Shorter's "Black Nile" and Irving Berlin's "Puttin' On The Ritz." DeFrancesco also swings into a juicy B-3 groove on McDuff's "A Real Goodun" and Bobby Timmons' "Moanin'," then closes the set with a

Figure Out Solos

all by yourself!



Two Speeds Half speed slows down those "fast licks" to help you figure them out.
Pitch Control Tunes the tape to your instrument.
Quick Review Saves steps in rewinding.

AC or Battery Operation • Built-in Speaker & Microphone • RCA Type Line Jacks (TS & UTR)

[Info] **800-543-6125** Workshop Records
[Price] Box 49507 Austin, TX 78765

D'Addario®
Guitar Strings

E-SERIES

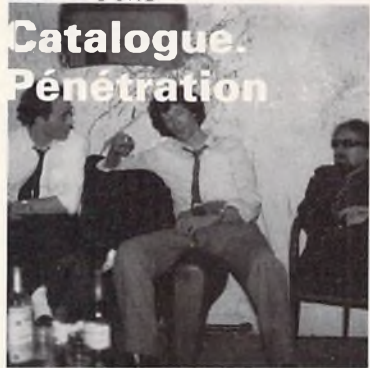
AL DI MEOLA
PLAYS EJ26S LIVE
AND ON HIS
BLUEMOON RELEASE,
"DI MEOLA PLAYS
PIAZZOLLA."

Photo: Richard Haughton

J. D'Addario & Company, Inc. • PO Box 290, Farmingdale, NY 11735 USA
E-Mail: strings@daddario.com • Home Page: <http://www.daddario.com>



hatART CD 2-6172



hatART CD 6187



hatART CD 6188



hatART CD 6197

Ask for hatART in your favorite record store
DISTRIBUTION: North Country Distributors
 Phone 315.287.2852/Fax 315.287.2860
MAIL ORDER: Cadence Phone 315.287.2852
MARKETING: Hat Hut Records USA:
 Phone/Fax 916.455.4239
 E-mail: 102043.2462@compuserve.com
CANADA: Scandinavian (SRI)
 Phone 705.748.5422/Fax 705.748.5628
 Sponsor:  Saxophone Book Corporation
 Hat Hut Records, Box 461,
 4106 Thruway, Switzerland 

slow, reflective cover of the ballad "What's New."

As for his bold experiment, DeFrancesco's no Chairman of the Board. But he does hold his own as a Sinatra-influenced vocalist on four of these tunes. Highlights include the gently swinging beauty, "How Little We Know," where he accompanies himself on piano and overdubs an eloquent trumpet solo, and a hearty sail through "Stop Leading Me On," which bursts wide open with raging B-3 fills.

—Dan Ouellette

It's About Time—Pork Chops & Pasta; Please Send Me Someone To Love; Secret Love; Our Delight; Yesterdays; The Most Beautiful Girl In The World; Rock Candy; Funk Pie; Black Jack. (63:20)

Personnel—McDuff, DeFrancesco, Hammond B-3; Paul Bollenback, John Hart, guitar; Andrew Beals, alto saxophone; Jerry Weldon, tenor saxophone; Byron Landham, drums, percussion; Rudolph Petchauer, drums.

Organic Grooves—Broadway; Luny Tune; True Blue; Old Wine New Bottles; Smokin'. (46:31)

Personnel—DeFrancesco (1, 2, 4), Dr. Lonnie Smith (1, 3, 5), Hammond B-3; Tony Purrone, guitar; Kenny Garrett, alto saxophone (2, 3, 5); Grover Washington Jr., tenor and soprano saxophones (3, 4); Idris Muhammad (1, 3-5), Lenny White (2), drums.

The Street Of Dreams—How Little We Know; Twisted Blues; Incognito; Stop Leading Me On; Black Nile; The Street Of Dreams; Puttin' On The Ritz; Moanin'; I Wish You Love; A Real Goodun; What's New. (55:18)

Personnel—DeFrancesco, Hammond B-3, piano, trumpet, vocals; Paul Bollenback, guitar; Byron Landham, drums; Keter Betts, bass (1, 9); Pete Berrenbregge, saxophones; Bruce Gates, Rick Sigler, trumpet; Rick Lillard, Doug Elliot, trombone; Dudley Hinote, bass trombone.

telling stories rather than simply stringing licks together. The album is actually named after the South Carolina town where Pope was born, but the title might as well refer to the release date, for the music is resolutely contemporary, always cognizant of the past but never imitative.

The opening "Gone Now" sets the somber mood, with Pope snaking pungent bluesy lines over Brown's stubby vamp and Roker's hissing 5/4 beat. Pope gives a dark spin to Coltrane's winding "sheets of sound" on "Knot It Off" and "Coltrane Time," and pays calypso tribute to Rollins on the jaunty title track. Taking a dry-eyed approach to ballads like the standard "For All We Know" and his own "Portrait," he uses a vibrato-free tone to convey nostalgia without bathos. He plumbs the depths of the blues on "Terrestrial" and ascends to the cosmos on "WL," trading abstract a cappella solos with Roker and Brown until all three return to Earth together somewhere in the Middle East. The drummer and bassist are brilliantly supportive throughout, with Roker stretching far beyond his bebop roots.

—Larry Birnbaum

Ninety-six—Gone Now; Knot It Off; WL; Overture; For All We Know; Terrestrial; Coltrane Time; Portrait; Ninety-six; Triology; Convictions. (54:06)

Personnel—Pope, tenor saxophone; Tyrone Brown, bass; Mickey Roker, drums.



Odean Pope Trio

Ninety-six
 enja 9001

★★★★

Pope, a Philadelphia-bred tenor saxist best known for his long tenure with Max Roach, has emerged in late middle age as a master musician in his own right. No mere pastiche artist, he has thoroughly digested such influences as John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins and Rahsaan Roland Kirk, integrating them into a distinctive personal style.

His deep, penetrating, rough-edged tone is displayed to full advantage here in the spare context of a pianoless trio featuring veteran drummer Mickey Roker and Pope's longtime bassist Tyrone Brown. Over odd, shifting meters and ominous ostinatos, Pope develops short bluesy riffs into complex, coherent structures,



Myra Melford

The Same River, Twice
 Gramavision 79513

★★★½

Pianist Melford made her initial impact in a trio format, impressing with the exuberance and volatility of her playing. *The Same River, Twice* continues the transition that began with her extended ensemble on *Even The Sounds Shine* (hat ART, 1994). Melford's new quintet, with a front line of Dave Douglas on trumpet and Chris Speed on reeds, serves as an elastic working group and test lab for her increasingly complex, episodic compositions. Melford explores the use of improvising subdivisions within her group, favoring the combination of Douglas' trumpet, Speed's clarinet and Erik Friedlander's cello on "Crush" and "Changes I & II." In the process, she too often relegates her playing to a secondary role.

After her energetic performance on "Bound Unbound" and turbulent, impassioned playing on "Crush," Melford leaves the limelight to her soloists. Speed (on tenor and clarinet) and Douglas take advantage of extensive room to develop heated, almost chaotic solos, and to

interact with each other and with Friedlander. Melford comps, embellishes and supports, but is infrequently the center of attention.

The Same River, Twice will be Melford's most available CD (her vanishing hat ART discs should be bought on sight), though not her most accessible. Her compositions are searching and thought-provoking, especially

the long-form "The Large Ends The Way" that generates a flood of conflicting emotions. Listeners expecting to hear Melford's piano in a more prominent role may be left wanting more.

—Jon Andrews

The Same River, Twice—Bound Unbound; Crush; Changes I & II; Drawing In The Dark; The Large Ends The Way. (62:55)

Personnel—Melford, piano; Dave Douglas, trumpet; Chris Speed, tenor saxophone and B^b clarinet; Erik Friedlander, cello; Michael Sarin, drums.



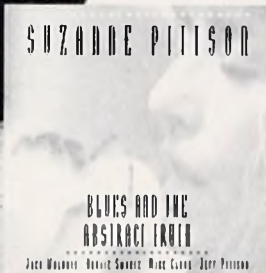
Suzanne Pittson Blues and the Abstract Truth

Jack Walrath, Trumpet Harvie Swartz, Bass
Mike Clark, Drums Jeff Pittson, Piano

"When you listen to the lovely Ms. Suzanne Pittson, you are being made privy to the artistry of someone who is setting the pace and creating new standards for those who follow and dare to call themselves *jazz singers*." —Buster Williams

"Suzanne is a singer who takes you in, lets you really listen and makes you understand a song as if you could hear a horn talk."

—Michael Handler, *Jazz Now*



To order (VLCDD7753) call:
1.800.7VINELAND OR
NorthCountry Distributors 315.287.2852

©1996 Vineland Records
P.O. Box 880397
San Francisco, CA 94188-0397
E-mail: pittson@sirius.com



Billy Childs

The Child Within
Shanachie 5023

★★★

After several wistful West Coast albums, most for the Windham Hill label, this California pianist has taken a tougher stance, surrounding himself with New York heavies for his Shanachie debut. At times, his adept, assertive sidemen—especially trumpeter Terence Blanchard, bassist Dave Holland and drummer Jeff Watts—threaten to run away with the session, but Childs manages to hold his own on material ranging from ballads and bebop to modal and free-jazz. Even at his most daring, though, he breaks no new ground, and his sentimental tendencies often get the better of him.

Childs' debt to Freddie Hubbard, his boss for six years, is apparent on his "Red Clay"-ish version of the Billie Holiday classic "Lover Man." His own "The Loneliest Monk" hangs Thelonious riffs together like beads on a string, eliminating any trace of surprise. On "Aaron's Song," Childs recaptures the gauzy melancholy of early '70s Chick Corea or Keith Jarrett, with Steve Wilson swooning smartly on soprano sax. On "The Hunted," Childs takes a gingerly space walk, like an astronaut on a tight tether, as Wilson, Blanchard and the blistering rhythm section conjure up Miles Davis' high-energy mid-'60s quintet.

Blanchard croons on the lugubrious "Theme From Chinatown," crackles on the effervescent "Alone Together" and, together with Wilson, trombonist Luis Bonilla and tenor saxist Ravi Coltrane, makes joyful noise on Childs' gorgeously voiced mini-big-band arrangement "Dream." But the pianist is most impressive playing with a trio on his Bud Powell-like "Just Another Day"; in a rhapsodic duo with Holland on "I Have A Love," or unaccompanied on "Pannonica," where he uses classical motifs to put a sort of reverse warp on Monk's quirky original.

—Larry Birnbaum

The Child Within—Lover Man; The Loneliest Monk; Aaron's Song; The Hunted; Theme From Chinatown; Alone Together; Pannonica; Just Another Day; Dreams; I Have A Love. (70:44)

Personnel—Childs, piano; Terence Blanchard, trumpet; Dave Holland, bass; Jeff Watts, drums; Steve Wilson, alto and soprano saxophones (3, 4, 9); Ravi Coltrane, tenor saxophone (9); Luis Bonilla, trombone (9).

NEW RELEASE

DREYFUS RECORDS

richard galliano

NEW YORK TANGO



DREYFUS CD-36581

RICHARD GALLIANO: ACCORDION,
BIRELI LAGRENE: GUITAR,
GEORGE MRAZ: BASS,
AL FOSTER: DRUMS

FOR MAIL ORDER
SERVICE CALL:
800-688-3482

"The great thing about playing musette waltz with jazzmen is that anything can happen...The transformation of the waltz into a jazz groove".

—Richard Galliano

MEMBER OF NAIRD



EXCLUSIVELY DISTRIBUTED BY KOCH INTERNATIONAL

JAZZ

Turn Out The Stars (And Turn Off The Tape!)

by Paul de Barros

As the jazz canon is repackaged into boxed sets, an esthetic of authenticity and completeness is glutting the market with outtakes, half-finished takes, discards, radio broadcasts—and now, bootlegs. As valuable and loving as their work often is, the new documentarians seem to have lost perspective.

Bill Evans: *The Secret Sessions, Recorded At The Village Vanguard 1966–1975* (Milestone 8 4421–2; 72:02/69:26/68:39/70:36/67:39/69:00/71:27/67:14; ★★½) and *Turn Out The Stars, The Final Village Vanguard Recordings June 1980* (Warner Bros. 9 45925–2; 69:13/62:42/70:09/68:46/63:45/63:22; ★★★★★½) illustrate the virtues and vices of this new esthetic, with outcomes ranging from the almost completely sublime to the truly tiresome.

In the late 1950s, Evans, bassist Scott LaFaro and drummer Paul Motian reinvented the piano trio as a supple, interactive three-part organism that breathed with an oceanic, aching romanticism. When LaFaro died prematurely in a car accident, in 1961, Evans eventually settled on the excellent Eddie Gomez as a replacement, and worked with him 11 years (1966–'77), using a variety of drummers. In 1978, two years before he died, Evans formed a new trio, first finding young bassist Marc Johnson, then drummer Joe LaBarbera. Anyone who saw Evans during this period remembers the sudden flood of emotional energy, technical mastery and creativity that suffused his playing, as if he had been waiting all those years to get back to where he'd left off.

These two boxed sets document the Gomez years and the final, glorious period. *The Secret Sessions* were compiled from 80 reels of tape recorded surreptitiously at the Village Vanguard (the bulk from 1965–'68) by an avid amateur pianist named Mike Harris. (According to the notes, all parties concerned have been compensated.) The set features multiple versions of many tunes associated with Evans, including "Time Remembered," "Very Early," "Turn Out The Stars," "Waltz For Debby," "Who Can I Turn To (When Nobody Needs Me)," "Round Midnight," "Blue In Green," "My Foolish Heart," "Nardis," "Emily" and "Polka Dots And Moonbeams."

While the average listener may share the fleeting thrill of eavesdropping, the distractingly bad sound and the sheer glut of material is ultimately defeating. (We're not just talking about clinking glasses here: Harris' tape recorder was placed under his table; you can imagine what Philly Joe Jones' drums did to it.) If these performances had been exemplary, or had in some way filled a gap in Evans' recording history, they might make sense, but



Bill Evans: a crystalline sound even more complex

they are simply 104 poorly recorded live shots of familiar material, made during Evans' least interesting period.

There are some pearls, to be sure, particularly a few of the 25 tracks with Philly Joe Jones, including one version of "Blue In Green" that builds from a translucent pool to an enthusiastic, big-band ride. But just as often, the trio works itself into tight corners from which there is no exit. When things aren't jelling, Evans presses like a baseball player in a slump, making for a jumpy, notey, sometimes turgid landscape. One of the set's pleasures is watching Gomez grow as a soloist.

One of the persistent clichés about Evans is that he was an "introspective" player. But both of these sets reveal him to be an expressive, outgoing swinger. Though the six discs of *Turn Out The Stars*, recorded over four nights in June 1980, could have been edited to three or four, they are nevertheless a treasure, exposing a robust and exuberant Evans who has multiplied his virtues by geometric proportions. His crystalline sound has become even more complex, his technical facility astounding, as he gleefully sweeps through 32nd-note slaloms and splashy tremolos. "My Romance," recorded on the second night, ends with a rip-

ping, Tatum-like coda the liner notes attribute to Evans' then fascination with Rachmaninoff. Though Johnson's nasal, pickup-produced bass sound has gone out of style, he and LaBarbera respond empathically at the micro level to Evans' every move (and he to them).

Evans himself was experiencing a surge of creativity, reflected in four originals written for the session—"Tiffany," "Yet Ne'er Broken," "Your Story" and "Knit For Mary F."—as well as in a higher percentage of originals overall. In his liner notes, Harold Danko notes that the big change in Evans was rhythmic. Whereas drum solos are rare on *The Secret Sessions*, LaBarbera solos all the time on *Turn Out The Stars*. All three 15-minute explorations of Miles Davis' "Nardis"—a highlight of the set—include drum solos. After many years of resisting, it seems Evans finally heard the drummer. The result is a new sensuousness, and a sense of joy and release.

Warner Bros. has graciously issued a one-disc *The Artist's Choice* of tunes chosen by Evans as an alternative to the six-disc set. I hope other documentarians will consider offering listeners a similar choice in the future. (The Warner Bros. set is also available as a 10-LP, Q-disc boxed set from Mosaic Records.) **DB**

The Greatest Jazz Recordings in History!



Hal Galper Trio VJ-001

At the World's #1 Jazz Club!



Charles McPherson VJ-011

Captured LIVE... On the vartan jazz™ label.



Andre Kitaev Trio VJ-012

"Where REAL jazz deserves to be!"SM

Vartan Jazz, Inc.
191 University Blvd.
Suite #334 Denver, CO 80206
TEL: 1-800-700-8498
Outside the U.S. call
(303) 388-9800

In-House Audio Provided by
Bang & Olufsen Denver

Purveyor to H.M., the Queen of Denmark
Member of
NAIRD
Paintings on CD covers by Jan Zakrzewski

BEYOND

Super Bad

by John Corbett

Meister-mixer DJ Shadow has a simple line of acknowledgement in the notes to his new disc *Endtroducing* (Mo Wax): "All respect due to James Brown and his countless disciples for inventing modern music." An overstatement? Nope, just a fact: When the Godfather of Soul sired forth funk, popular music was never the same again. Without a milligram of hyperbole, Brown must be considered one of the seminal figures in 20th-century sound.

Over the last few years, Polydor's "Chronicles" series has been steadily trickling out fantastic compilations of primo Brownia, including a two-CD all-instrumental set called *Soul Pride* and a mind-grinding double-disc of recordings by the JB's, *Funky Good Time*. And now they've unleashed a batch of painfully great compilations that demonstrate just how huge any "best of" James Brown anthology has got to be. In the '70s he was calling himself "Minister of the New New Super Heavy Funk." No handle was too big. No handle was big enough.

Foundations Of Funk: A Brand New Bag 1964-1969 (Polydor 1165; 72:46/77:59; ★★★★★) On two CDs the initial post-r&b tale is told, from the explosive horns of "Out Of Sight" down to a scorching, never-before-released live version of "Mother Popcorn." (There are also unreleased live takes of "Out Of Sight/Bring It Up," "Licking Stick" and several complete and extended versions and original mixes.) The set includes a potpourri of uptempo, high-energy material drawn from the key King Records years, including mandatory cuts like "I Got You (I Feel Good)," "Cold Sweat" and "Funky Drummer," lurking monsters like "Money Won't Change You," "I Can't Stand Myself (When You Touch Me)," the insinuating sleeper-beat of "There Was A Time" and Melvin Parker's machinic press rolls on "She's The One." Amid these cuts, some of them already available in one form or another, *Foundations Of Funk* dredges a fascinating bit of studio patter in which Soul Brother No. 1 instructs drummer Clyde Stubblefield on the correct inflection for "Cold Sweat" ("... get it? That's a *pop*, OK?"), followed by a previously unissued seven-minute version of the song. It's a package sure to please specialists, and anyone else with ears on their head.

Funk Power—1970: A Brand New Thang (Polydor 1684; 78:30; ★★★★★) For a single year, Brown and his overdriven working band unamicably parted ways, leaving room for a group of teenage unknowns that included future P-Funk bass stargod Bootsie Collins: These were the original JB's. The feel is indeed different from his needle-sharp earlier band, but the funk gets longer, shaggier, messier—and not in a bad way. Check the difference between "Give It Up Or



Old bandmates Bobby Byrd (l) and Bootsie Collins (r) with the Godfather of Soul

Turnit A Loose" on this and its '68 version on *Foundations*: Bootsie's elephantine bass pushes the cut ever forward, while the earlier version sits back in the tidier groove. On the unreal "Super Bad," JB calls out for tenor saxist Robert McCollough to "blow me some Trane, brother," and 'deed the squealer does. The original "Get Up I Feel Like Being A Sex Machine" is augmented by a different 10-minute version, and all over the collection Jabbo Starks' drumming adds buoyant life, Catfish Collins' guitar counterlines providing tension. More pure, gritty joy-juice.

Make It Funky—The Big Payback: 1971-1975 (Polydor 3052; 77:28/76:45; ★★★★★) Into the era of the blaxploitation flick—Brown's '70s material is the diamond mine for hip-hop samplers, par excellence, and this comp details why. Long, booty-shake romps like "Make It Funky" (13 minutes worth in parts 1-4), the equal-length "Papa Don't Take No Mess" (presented complete for the first time) and the ghetto dirge "King Heroin" (with Billy Cobham on drums) come from the four-year period in which trombonist Fred Wesley was the musical director for the JB's. Along with regular hornmen St. Clair Pinckney and (after 1973) Maceo Parker, some of the groups here included the Brecker Brothers, Joe Farrell, Seldon Powell, David Sanborn, Jon Faddis, Lew Soloff and Marvin Stamm. Brilliant, revealing selections, once again, by producers Harry Weinger and Alan Leeds.

40th Anniversary Collection (Polydor 3409; 71:33/77:33; ★★★★★½) For the Brown-impaired, this broader but still in-depth overview surveys work from 1956's "Please, Please, Please" to 1979's "It's Too Funky In Here," arranged in chronological order. Where the other compilations delve for original mixes, extended and unedited versions, these are the as-heard singles, 40 of them, in all their funky pop glory. For an artist collected and compiled ad nauseum, as Brown has been, this is arguably the ideal sampling of his corpus, chosen from his top-shelf stock, ranging from known-by-all to slightly more obscure: "Good Good Lovin'," "I Don't Want Nobody To Give Me Nothing (Open Up The Door, I'll Get It Myself)," "Down And Out In New York City." Great vantage from which to hear JB invent modern music.

DB

REISSUES

Dexterity

by John Corbett

After his hugely promising start in the 1940s—playing with various big-name big bands, dueling with Wardell Gray, helping forge bebop and leading small groups—Dexter Gordon spent most of the '50s on the sidelines in two drug-related prison terms. Who knows what imprint he might have made on the infant hard-bop had he been a major figure in that decade. But by the time of his return to the field in 1960, straight-ahead jazz was a well-demarcated territory. It was probably that lacuna that kept Gordon from being remembered alongside Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane as the era's primary tenor sax colossi.

The Complete Blue Note Sixties Sessions (Blue Note 34200; 74:00/73:03/76:11/77:36/57:53/63:24: ★★★★★) Fortunately, shortly after his parole Blue Note signed him up, and over the course of five years he made 11 full-length sessions for the label, laying down some of the strongest music of his career and confirming his awesome presence on the horn. This deluxe six-disc set compiles all eight of the records that have already been upgraded to CD, as well as one, *Landslide* (originally rejected by Blue Note honcho Alfred Lion as "no good"), which only made it to LP in the early '80s, and was never digitized. In addition, a never-released track is included from a collapsed session pairing Gordon and Sonny Stitt, a collegial spar session of "Lady Be Good" with Stitt's solid organ-trio backing them. Not a gemstone, but it does make one wonder how a harmonically advanced front-man like Gordon would have sounded working a whole date with an organ group.

In hindsight, Lion was hasty in his assessment of *Landslide*. Though it's not the best of these sessions (with nimble trumpeter Freddie Hubbard sharing solos, pianist Barry Harris, bassist Bob Cranshaw and drummer Billy Higgins in the rhythm section), it's still fabulous. But consider what the producer had to compare it with: the third disc of this set contains two dates from August 1962, both featuring the same quartet: Dex, Sonny Clark on piano, Butch Warren on bass and Higgins on drums. Party line seems to be that the earlier of the two, released as *Go*, is the better; but I find *A Swingin' Affair* equally scintillating, particularly its Gordon-penned samba "Soy Califa" (Higgins is pure chrono-pleasure!), Warren's "The Backbone" (cool unison for tenor and bass) and a wrenching version of Lady Day's melancholy ballad "Don't Explain." Of course, *Go*'s got Gordon's original "Cheese Cake," as well as deadly strong blowing over several standards. Though he's not prominently featured, Clark is the quintessence of economy here, packing so much to do into so little time. As well as these two pinnacles, Gordon's first couple of records for Blue Note were also nothing-but-net, swish!—with Philly Joe Jones on skins and Paul Chambers on bass (*Dexter*



Dexter Gordon: consistently terrific

Calling) and Horace Parlan on keys (*Doin' Allright*), how can you miss?

Gordon moved to Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1962, a disappointment to the Blue Note staff who wanted to establish him as a force in New York. In Europe, the saxophonist made two of the relatively rare non-Rudy van Gelder record dates released on the label, both recorded in Paris, both somewhat less acoustically magnificent. The wonderful first session, 1963's *Our Man In Paris*, united Gordon with two fellow expat bop legends, pianist Bud Powell and drummer Kenny Clarke, for a set of standards. Gordon's extensive, adventurous solo on "Broadway" and Eastern scales and overblown chirps on "A Night In Tunisia" suggest he was tuned into the what Rollins and Trane were doing at the time; Bud's in great form and Klook swings "Willow Weep For Me" like a hard blues.

The second European session, '64's *One Flight Up*, introduced 18-year-old Danish bassist Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen to the world. This is the most "progressive" of the music of the box, with modality at the fore of pianist Kenny Drew's "Coppin' The Haven" and trumpeter Donald Byrd's "Tanya," while Dex's own "Kong Neptune" underscores drummer Art Taylor's supple groove. (For comparison's sake, it's interesting to listen to the longer stretching solos on live dates Gordon was playing around this time, with Pedersen and pianist Tete Montoliu, available on SteepleChase's "Dexter In Radioland" series.)

Back in the States for a spell, in '65 Gordon made his last '60s recordings for Blue Note, *Gettin' Around*, with label mainstay vibes player Bobby Hutcherson (as well as pianist Harris, though the two harmonists knew well how to stay out of the other's way as well as complement each other). The combination of Hutcherson's light touch and Gordon's hard

tone make a vibrant contrast on Frank Foster's "Shiny Stockings" and Gordon's coy "Le Coiffeur," while Hutcherson's just a shimmering, oscillating ambiance on the ballad "Who Can I Turn To."

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this package, however, isn't the music; most of these sides have long been available, for Blue Note has wisely kept them in at the top of the stack of in-print necessities. But the liner text includes a fascinating, unusually candid exchange of letters between Gordon, Lion and partner Francis Wolff. These reveal the level of involvement of the label in these records, how much the material and even approach was shaped by the producers. "I don't want any complicated music," wrote Lion regarding Gordon's Blue Note debut, "but rather some good standards in medium, medium-bright and medium-bounce tempos. ... A slow, walking ballad should also be considered. ... I'd like to make something that can be enjoyed and played on jukeboxes stationed in the soul spots throughout the nation. I think you know what I mean." This all-too-rare glimpse behind the scenes is augmented by four tracks that feature Dex talking about his art, as well as characteristically sensitive and insightful play-by-play by Dan Morgenstern. The one thing this set might have included is the original liner notes—in this case by Ira Gitler, Nat Hentoff, Leonard Feather and others. Such views can be of real historical interest, suggesting how the music was viewed at the time. Nonetheless, it's a splendid box, bringing together a consistently terrific period in the up-down life of Long Tall Dex. **DB**

Initial Down Beat ratings:

- *Doin' Allright*: ★★★★★ (11/9/61 issue)
- *Go*: ★★★★★ (2/14/63)
- *Our Man In Paris*: ★★★★★ (2/27/64)
- *A Swingin' Affair*: ★★★★★ (12/17/64)

BLINDFOLD TEST

FEBRUARY 1997

Jeff Hamilton

by Zan Stewart

The "Blindfold Test" is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and 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.

Jeff Hamilton is having a ball. After spending close to 20 years under Ray Brown's aegis—first with the L.A. Four (1978–'88), then the bass great's trio with pianist Benny Green (1988–'95) and, finally, the Oscar Peterson Quartet (1990–'94)—the sublime big band and trio drummer is on his own. A Richmond, Ind., native who now lives in Southern California, the 43-year-old Hamilton reveres his posts as co-leader of the Clayton-Hamilton Big Band (with John and Jeff Clayton) as well as his now-and-then appearances with Monty Alexander and the WDR Big Band in Cologne. Still, his trio is the apple of his ear: The compact band features pianist Larry Dunlap and bassist Lynn Seaton.

"Trio drumming is one of the things I am best at," Hamilton says. "I think there's a direct correlation between big band and trio drumming, weaving in and out of the figures, making the ensembles feel good, knowing how to set somebody up, knowing when to make your statement. I also love some particular aspects of trio playing: using brushes, playing softly. I love to float—not play the high-hat on 2 and 4, and four beats on the bass drum. I love piano players like Larry, who have a great time, and I love trio bass players like Lynn."

Hamilton's new release, *Live!* (Mons), recorded live in Germany last May, is a follow-up to his little-known debut, *It's Hamilton Time* (LakeStreet). This is his first Blindfold Test. He was given no advance knowledge of the recordings.

Bernard Purdie

"Iko Iko" (from *Soul To Jazz*, ACT, 1996) Purdie, drums.

This is tough because there's a whole school of drummers that have come from that "Bernard" feel. A lot of them have gotten very close to his fatness with the beat. When you listen to a guy play time like this on this kind of groove, and do it consistently, then it's probably going to be Bernard. I was first turned on to him in college [at Indiana University] in 1971. He was on something by Aretha Franklin. I was never into r&b, never into anything other than a swing feel in jazz; even eighth notes in jazz didn't get to me. I didn't listen to fusion. So I'm not real knowledgeable about these kinds of grooves. I did play some of this in college, and to get those kinds of grooves down, I listened to Bernard. 4 stars.

Oscar Peterson

"Just Friends" (from *Oscar Peterson Meets Roy Hargrove And Ralph Moore*, Telarc, 1996) Peterson, piano; Hargrove, trumpet; Moore, tenor saxophone; Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, bass; Lewis Nash, drums.

A jam session. It felt like Oscar at the center of it, calling shots, and sounded like Ralph Moore on tenor. Maybe Christian McBride, and that's definitely Lewis Nash, though they didn't get his drum sound. He has a fuller, more present sound, and it's wallowing a little bit.

My hat is off to Oscar for continuing to play and continuing to strive for the greatness that is so built into his psyche. Because of that, I'll give it 4 stars. He doesn't deserve less in my book. But this was an obvious jam session; they didn't really know how they wanted to end, or who to do what, when. I'll take a shot on the trumpet. If it's him, I know he plays better than this and that



he wasn't really comfortable with the goings-on, and that's Roy Hargrove.

John Scofield

"Tom Thumb" (from *Bob Belden's Shades Of Blue*, Blue Note, 1994) Scofield, guitar; Larry Goldings, organ; Bill Stewart, drums.

If I were 20, 25 years old and played drums, I'd want to play like Bill Stewart. I love his looseness, his wide-open sound. He has a great cymbal sound, he has so much creativity, got a great flow, he's humble, he's got the whole package. He's my favorite drummer of the under-30 crowd, along with Brian Blade. The fact that he's very identifiable at his age says something. He's got a niche carved out. 5 stars, which I would give to anything that I think will still sound great in 10, 15 years.

Thad Jones/Pepper Adams

"Mean What You Say" (from *Mean What You Say*, Fantasy/OJC, 1966) Adams, baritone saxophone; Mel Lewis, drums (brushes).

[Hamilton recognizes the band immediately] Mel was a master at economizing notes, motion, energy. He never used more than what was needed. His brush movements would fit on half of the drum. It was almost like dealing cards—that would be his motion. His left hand went around in a little circle about the size of a compact disc and the right hand would interject the time. I was amazed at how much sound he got. He never had any flair to his brush playing, unlike Philly Joe Jones, who told me in the one lesson I took with him, "You've got to be pretty when you play the brushes." He'd take his right brush up as if he were combing his hair, and then let it come down his left arm, like a ramp, onto the head. That was part of his sound, the prep motion. Mel would say, "Hey, it's just an eighth note." Philly would say, "Yeah, but it's a pretty eighth note." Mel was a minimalist. 5 stars.

Joshua Redman

"Cat Battles" (from *Freedom In The Groove*, Warner Bros., 1996) Redman, tenor saxophone; Peter Martin, piano; Peter Bernstein, guitar; Brian Blade, drums.

I love this! [after the track ends] Wow! Can I listen to that again? [after second hearing] Sounds like Billy Drummond. Just guessing. It's great. All right, who is this? [Hamilton is told the players.] I never would have guessed it. That's Brian? That's great. I'm going to have to buy that. 5 stars.

This is a good band. Brian, in a good sense, has—at least on this track—tightened up his time. He can have a rumbling, wide-open kind of beat, but this thing was really pinpointed. The quarter note is now 'ding' like this [spreads his arms about a foot apart] instead of 'wah' [spreads arms about three feet]. Both ways are good. I love Brian. I like his rawness, his love for the music. He's done his homework: You hear the guys who have come before him, yet he comes out. There's a real pure joy to his playing.

DB