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Sustain Oscar Peterson & Dave Brubeck

Wynton Marsalis
Bunky Green • Bill Watrous

CLASSIC INTERVIEWS:
Dave Tough & Eddie Condon



18 Oscar Peterson & Dave Brubeck

Sustain

Pianists Oscar Peterson and Dave Brubeck led two of the most popular jazz groups of the '50s and '60s. And both leaders disbanded the groups that brought them to prominence long ago. Yet, somehow, amid a wide array of musical projects and personnel changes, they've managed to sustain their creativity, musical integrity and popularity over the last three decades.

By Bob Blumenthal

Cover photograph by Steve J. Sherman. Piano lid provided by Baldwin Piano Concert & Artist Division, New York City.

FEATURES

26 Wynton Marsalis

Blood Brothers

By Zan Stewart

30 Bunky Green

Keeping It Real

By Michael Jackson

34 Fanfare For The Working Band, Part II

Theory & History

By John Corbett

40 The 20th Annual Down Beat Student Music Awards

Plus Down Beat's 6th Annual Achievement Awards For Jazz Education

54 Tradin' Fours:

Bill Watrous The Holmes Brothers
Ron Affif Andy Statman

DEPARTMENTS

6 On The Beat

8 Chords & Discords

10 Riffs

60 CD Reviews

76 Caught

78 Woodshed

82 Jazz On Campus

86 Blindfold Test



MARCY J. APPELBAUM

30 Bunky Green



60 The Jazz Mentality

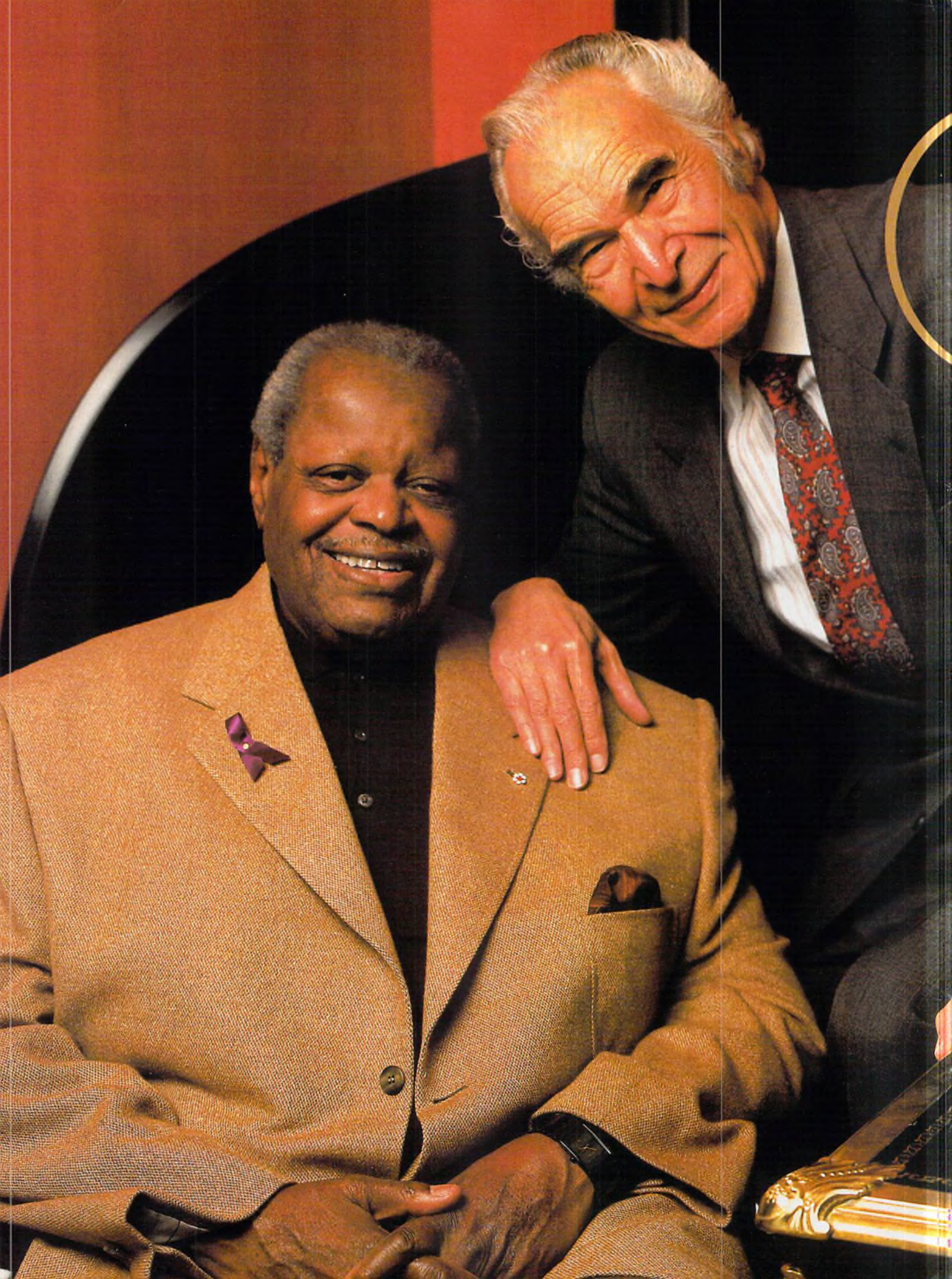


Mingus Big Band



Benny Green

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SUSTAIN

Down Beat Hall of Famers

Oscar Peterson & Dave Brubeck

Strike a Common Chord

Oscar Peterson had flown to New York from his Toronto home to receive a Lifetime Achievement award from NARAS as part of the 1997 Grammy ceremonies.

Dave Brubeck, who had been similarly honored one year earlier, lives in Connecticut, and drove down with his wife, Lola, and manager Russell Gloyd to pay a visit to Peterson and his family. Which is how two of the most imposing jazz pianists of the past half-century found themselves together for the following interview.

They play the same instrument, and they share an active recording career on the Telarc label. (The recently released *A Tribute To Oscar Peterson Live At Town Hall* finds Peterson making music with over a dozen old and new friends; Brubeck's latest, *In Their Own Sweet Way*, finds him collaborating with four of his sons.) In other respects, however, we do not tend to think of Brubeck and Peterson together. Peterson is acknowledged as the musician to whom Art Tatum passed the crown, the virtuosic nonpareil of jazz piano. Peterson's environment of choice has been the trio, although he is also widely recognized as a supreme accompanist for both instrumentalists and singers. Brubeck's interest in composition and his fondness for risky improvisation led him to explore ideas of polytonality, complex rhythms and counterpoint that offered jazz new possibilities. His preferred setting was the quartet, with the alto saxophone of the late Paul Desmond an integral component of the Brubeck sound.

Yet these near-contemporaries (Brubeck turned 76 in December, while Peterson will be 72 in August) also have much in common. They led two of the most popular jazz groups of the '50s and '60s. Peterson's extensive touring with Jazz at the Philharmonic and Brubeck's numerous college appearances did much to establish jazz in the concert hall, and both enjoyed great success with their concert recordings. By the end of the '60s, each pianist had disbanded the ensemble that

brought him to prominence; yet both have managed to sustain their creativity and popularity over the past three decades, despite a wide array of musical projects and significant health scares that might have led less dedicated artists at comparable levels of success to sit back and take it easy.

The most challenging part of our interview session, which took place in Peterson's hotel suite, involved finding a suitable way to place the Baldwin piano lid that photographer Steve Sherman had obtained for the occasion. After some serious and not-so-serious poses, these two Down Beat Hall of Famers settled in for a discussion that looked way back, and even peeked into the future.

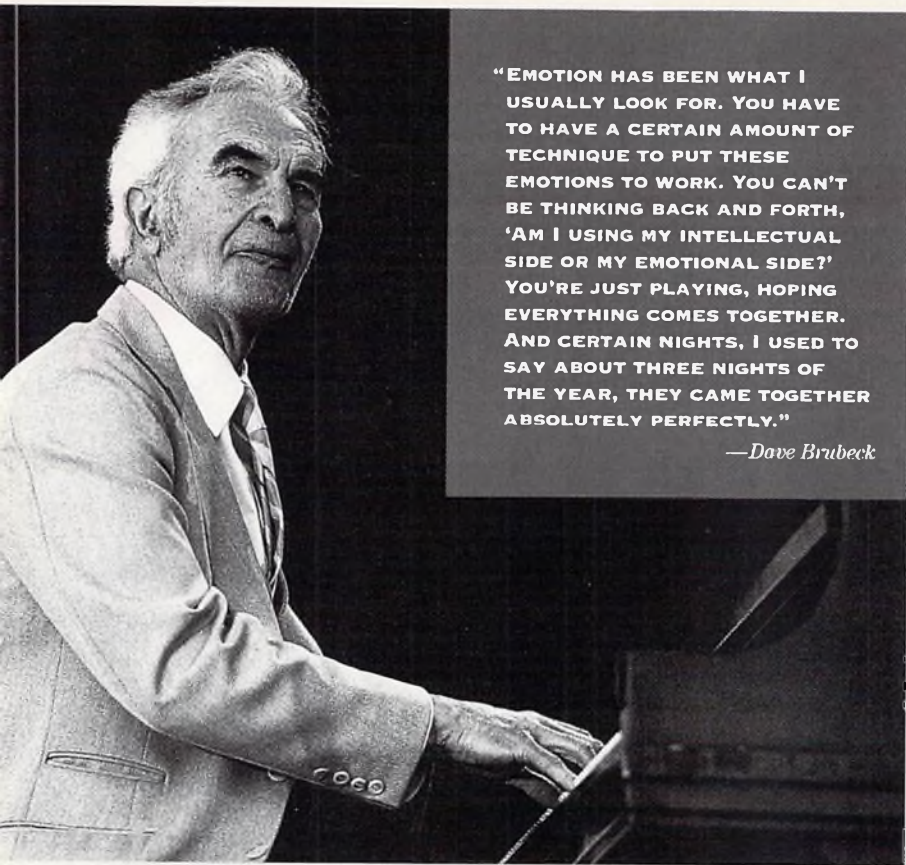
BOB BLUMENTHAL: *Neither of you had what is often considered the "traditional" jazz upbringing of hanging out in New York on 52nd Street. You were from the "outlands." Could each of you talk a little bit about how you came to jazz and jazz performance?*

OSCAR PETERSON: The reason I got into it was because of my older brother, who I think was the best pianist in the family. He died at 16. When we were doing our practice times, he would play this unknown music. I didn't know what it was at the time. I found out later it was jazz.

DAVE BRUBECK: My mother was a classical pianist and both my older brothers were in classical and jazz, especially my eldest brother. He played with Gil Evans' first band in Stockton, California.

BB: *You each have achieved amazing success in playing your own music. Certainly, there was some struggle and some determination. Describe the progression of your careers to the point where, by the mid-'50s, you both were very dominant influences on the music.*

DB: I remember dealing with a lot of traveling musicians coming through San Francisco with the big bands, the well-known bands who'd come to the club where I was working. I was amazed they



"EMOTION HAS BEEN WHAT I USUALLY LOOK FOR. YOU HAVE TO HAVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TECHNIQUE TO PUT THESE EMOTIONS TO WORK. YOU CAN'T BE THINKING BACK AND FORTH, 'AM I USING MY INTELLECTUAL SIDE OR MY EMOTIONAL SIDE?' YOU'RE JUST PLAYING, HOPING EVERYTHING COMES TOGETHER. AND CERTAIN NIGHTS, I USED TO SAY ABOUT THREE NIGHTS OF THE YEAR, THEY CAME TOGETHER ABSOLUTELY PERFECTLY."

—Dave Brubeck

would know about me and know the club and would take the time to come in and hear a local guy. That kind of made me think that something was happening. The first kind of break-throughs were John Hammond writing about us in New York when we were still in San Francisco and winning the Down Beat and Metronome New Band of the Year awards. I think they called it something like that. New Combo of the Year. I thought, boy, people *are* aware of who we are.

OP: My affirmation came a different way. You probably know this story: I got frightened to death by having Art Tatum walk in on me one night. I just about had a stroke then. [laughs] I remember he took me to an after-hours spot and said, "C'mon, play something for me." I couldn't do it. "I can't play." He said, "You've gotta play." So I finally played about three of the neatest choruses of "Tea For Two" you ever heard. I got off the piano as soon as I could. I went back home, and I dreamt about keyboards attacking me. I did! I had the worst nightmares in the world. And he used to drop in at different points. We'd be in the same cities occasionally together, and he'd come and hear me. I used to come apart, I admit it. He had that kind of impact on me. I remember one night he took me to one side and he said, "You know, I want to tell you something. I think you can play. But, I'm not ready to let you have it right now." [laughs] He said, "I wanna tell you something. Now I don't say this to everyone, but when I'm finished, you got it! And apart from that, I don't want to hear any more of these breakdowns when I walk in. If you have to hate me, you've gotta make me react to what you're doing." I guess the real affirmation of that is when he came in suddenly in L.A. He came in one night, and someone said, "Uh-uh, T's in the house!" and I said something not too kind, like, "The hell with him," or something, and went for it. And I remember him yelling out, "Whoa-whoa. Oscar, whoa!" when I played something. That was my confirmation that I had something to give and something to say.

BB: Dave, we think of your classic band as a quartet, but you had a trio and an octet before that. Oscar, we think of your classic band as a trio, but you made a lot of solo and duo recordings with Ray [Brown] before the trio. Talk a little, if you could, about the process of getting

to the right ensemble for presenting your music.

DB: When I think back to the octet, I think it was musically the most advanced group that I had. But we couldn't work. So finally, after years of just a couple concerts a year, Jimmy Lyons, a great disc jockey and the fellow who started the Monterey Jazz Festival, suggested that we have a trio with just the rhythm section, which was Cal Tjader on drums and later on vibes, and [bassist] Ron Crotty. That was kind of the breakthrough for me, the trio. The trio got a lot of attention until I got hurt in an accident and I had to quit playing for a while. Then I wrote to Paul Desmond, who always wanted to be in the trio, that now was the time to start the quartet. The quartet didn't take off like a rocket like most people believe. The trio really laid the groundwork.

OP: Well, I went through quite a few changes. It started as a duo with myself and Ray Brown, then it went to a trio for a while with Major Holley on bass and Charlie Smith on drums.

DB: I sure remember Major Holley! [laughs]

OP: Then it sort of went back and forth then. We ended up, first of all, with Barney Kessel to set the trio format. When Barney had to leave, we decided to ask Herbie Ellis to come in. He came in, and that trio sort of set it up for us. That was the first real trio of that kind. It stayed that way for quite a while. Over the years it changed from occasionally a trio to a quartet, then at one point Duke [Ellington] got into it. While we were playing one night, he was saying, "You should be doing something else. We want to hear him play solo piano also." It isn't easy to jump out of a trio or quartet and start playing

solo piano. Duke came to me and he said, "Oscar"—you know how he used to go [*imitating Duke*]"—"Oscar, do you ever figure people would like to enjoy the caviar [*then bluntly*] *without the eggs and onions?*" [laughs] So I took a shot for a while at a solo thing, which I enjoyed. It gave me a certain type of freedom. But my heart was always with the trio and quartet.

BB: Can you recall when you first heard each other's music? Did it strike any responsive chords?

DB: I remember, "Three O'Clock In The Morning"! [laughs]

OP: I'm glad you remember. I can't remember what it was I heard that you played, but I remember hearing you, it was from the quartet. Because of indecision on my part, I thought maybe we should go to a horn up front. Then I said, "No, if I can't carry this with three, then it's not going to work." ... You may or may not remember, we were booked at one place together. Do you remember that?

DB: Was it in Toronto?

OP: No, the Blackhawk in San Francisco. The overlapping contracts? They goofed. You were in there. And somehow, doing the contracts, they blew it, and they had our group starting on a Sunday night, which was your closing night. So I called and I said, "We'll have to leave. You won't bother with me until Monday." They said, "No way." I said, "What do you mean? Dave's in there." They said, "We don't care, we want both of you guys in there at the same time." And we played that night together. I think it was a tremendous night. Nobody recorded it. They should have.

BB: Dave, you say you weren't an overnight success, yet relatively quickly after the quartet started recording, and during the college concerts, you were on the cover of Time magazine. Tell us about the impact that had on things.

DB: It wasn't all good. In the first place, I didn't want to be on the cover before Duke Ellington. We were on tour together, and I got a knock on the door about 7 in the morning. It was Duke, and he handed me Time magazine. He said, "You're on the cover." Instead of being all excited, I was really embarrassed that Duke would be the one to bring me the cover. And then he was on the cover not too long after that.

BB: It's often said when people discuss Count Basie's music that there was the old testament and the new testament of the Basie band, when he broke up the band and he reorganized it a few years later. Looking over both of your careers, there seems to be a point in the mid- to late '60s when the personnel that had been in place for a while suddenly was not. I wondered if you could each talk about the decision to move away from that personnel that everyone was so familiar with and either use different people or go off into other instrumentation.

DB: It makes a big change in your life when you break up a group that's really made it and is accepted. My next quartet had musicians that were equal to the last quartet, but it was hard to make that transition. Instead of Paul Desmond, you had Gerry Mulligan. Instead of Joe Morello, you had Alan Dawson, and Jack Six instead of Eugene Wright. And they were all great musicians. But the public gets fixed on a certain thing, and it's very hard to determine how to get them away from that and into the next one, or into a lot of sacred music and other things that I wanted to do.

OP: I have to say my thinking on this is different than Dave's. Whoever came in, it was still my trio. When I brought in different people [Louis Hayes on drums, Sam Jones on bass], I didn't say you had to try to play like Ray Brown or any of the others. I just wanted them to do the best they could. The bass solos didn't sound like Ray Brown, but there was no way they could. But there's another side to it, too. I felt I was curious about what was going to happen to me, the effect of the band on me. Maybe it's the refreshment that we need once in a while. You can't always be that comfortable. I think you have to have that challenge once in a while. When Ray left to do studio work, everybody said, "What's going to happen now?" I was still playing the way I knew how to play. The background may have had a different impetus to it, but it was still me playing. In time, it melted into that other group, which was still unsatisfactory to me. I use [bassist] Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen now and then in the trio, Martin Drew on drums and Lorne Lofsky on guitar. And I expect from them the same thing I



Oscar Peterson (left) with Ray Brown

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NEW RELEASE



Photographs: Herman Leonard, Chuck Stewart, Carol Friedman

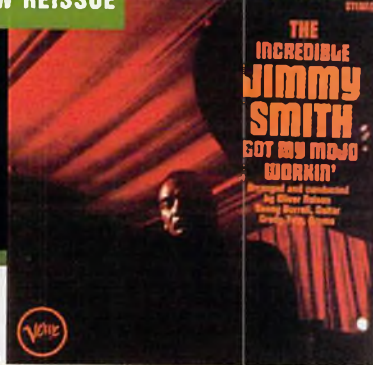
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"YOU HAVE TO GAIN A TECHNIQUE ON THE PIANO. IT'S LIKE A LANGUAGE. IF YOU DON'T HAVE CONTROL OF THE LANGUAGE, YOU CAN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY. WHEN I SIT DOWN TO THE PIANO, I DON'T WANT ANY SCUFFLING, I WANT IT TO BE A LOVE AFFAIR. I DON'T WANT TO BE SITTING THERE SAYING, 'WHERE DO I PUT THIS FINGER?' YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THAT, 'CAUSE THE GROUP IS BUSY SMOKING BEHIND YOU. YOU'VE GOTTA COME UP WITH SOMETHING."

—Oscar Peterson

expected from Ray and Ed [Thigpen], but in a different way, because they are not the same people. Their ride was different, but I still expect the same kind of impact on me.

BB: Now you describe it as a comfort zone. Some people would probably say, "Gee, I wish we had the luxury of arriving at that comfort zone," but that's history. You can't even keep a group together in the 1990s. The work isn't there, the whole traveling situation and the economics are different. You guys were lucky.

OP: You can keep a group together. I think you can. You know what the problem is today? Nobody wants to be hungry for a day. Everybody's looking around at what people in the other fields are getting, and they're thinking, "I gotta make that kind of money." We weren't making that kind of money when we started. We just wanted to play and to be paid something. And I could do that. [to Dave] I'm pretty sure you didn't have that when you started. You had the love of playing, didn't you?

DB: We often played for nothing or the lowest scale.

OP: I played to seven people in the Tiffany Club in L.A. on our opening. With Ray Brown! [chuckles]

DB: I remember the first time I went to hear Art Tatum. I think it

was called The Streets of Paris in Hollywood. I was the only person in the club, and the bartender. And here's the greatest player in the history of jazz. And there's nobody there.

BB: Speaking of Tatum, he was sometimes criticized, and I think that the criticism has been leveled at the two of you as well, as being consumed with technique.

DB: Not me! [laughs all around]

BB: Well, with the polyrhythms and letting perhaps the intellectual side of the music dominate the emotional flow, if you will. As artists, is this an issue that you grapple with personally: keeping the intellectual and emotional in balance? Or is it something you just allow to happen as it happens?

OP: What you hear is what you get. I count myself as a reasonably intellectual person, and that's the way I play. I forget who said this to me, but I think it was my piano teacher who said you have to gain a technique on the piano. It's like a language. If you don't have control of the language, you can't have anything to say. I still look at playing that way today. When I sit down to the piano, I don't want any scuffling, I want it to be a love affair. I don't want to be sitting there saying, "Where do I put this finger? I wonder if I can ... ?" You don't want to do that, 'cause the group is busy smoking behind you. You've gotta come up with something. That's the way I've always looked at that.

DB: Well, emotion has been what I usually look for. Like Oscar just said, you have to have a certain amount of technique to put these emotions to work. You can't be thinking back and forth, "Am I using my intellectual side or my emotional side?" You're just playing, hoping everything comes together. And certain nights, I used to say about three nights of the year, they came together absolutely perfectly. I would play better than I normally did. I often wondered how I could get to that point every night, and you just can't. There are some nights where everything works in balance. That's what I look for: to try and keep that happening as much as possible.

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BB: If you had to pick one example of your work to put in the time capsule for future generations to review, to say this is what Dave Brubeck and Oscar Peterson were about, what would it be? I'm going to ask you each to pick one of your own and one of the other's.

DB: I would probably pick the least likely, because it's so different: "Over The Rainbow," recorded at Storyville in Boston. Because as one critic recently pointed out—and I hadn't realized it—there isn't a note of syncopation in the whole solo. It's just right on the beat, and it's just chords. And I was able to play the bridge and the first eight at the same time, just even

notes. When I go back and listen to that, I think how simple but how complex it was, and how creative it was. Because I hadn't worked it out. I didn't know this was going to happen. So that's one of my favorite tunes of mine. With Oscar, "Tenderly" [the original 1950 studio version recorded for Clef Records].

OP: I have to say—Dave's going to hate me for saying this, but I have to go with exactly how I feel—his rendition of the 5/4, "Take Five" [from the album *Time Out*]. I pick it for a specific reason. I'm a waltz lover, believe it or not. I love waltzes. Sometimes I have to check myself from playing them. When I heard this

performance, I thought, "Who would come up with something like this?" Obviously, it was you. I admired that. I still admire that today. The popularity and the longevity of it attests to my feelings that it was something that made players think. I started thinking, "I should be changing some time signatures here." Remember, this came at a time when things were going pretty well for me. We started to move, and we figured we were on our way. And it isn't that we weren't listening; we were listening. But you had to suddenly confront us. And we did start doing some things in different time signatures after that, as a result of that. It did have an impact on us. It's not easy to pick a work of my own, there's so much of it! [laughs] I'm going to pick a blues thing I did with Ray and Milt [Jackson] and Norman [Granz]. It was a date where it didn't start off too well because Ray was detained and Grady Tate was late to the date. So it wasn't a placid feeling in the studio. Norman opened the date up as usual and said, "If you want to start, you can always start with some blues." We got into this one blues thing, a tune that I still use today, even when I teach, to play it for the students and sing. This is the feeling I think you should have, because the time feel on this particular thing was constant throughout; there was no deviation. There were no changes. But it was so together that I think I played the best I maybe have ever played. Yet, it's probably one of the simplest solos I've ever played. But everything was working, as you were saying earlier, Dave. It came together, and I remember Roy Eldridge had come down and was sitting down in the control room with Norman. Norman had to fight him from grabbing his horn and coming out to play because he wasn't supposed to be on the date. Roy kept saying, "I sure wanted a piece of that. Boy, you guys had it." He knew that we had done something. It was on an album called *Ain't But A Few Of Us Left*. It's the opening blues thing on the album. It settled. Grady Tate was just wonderful. Bags played beautifully.

DB: Do you remember playing with Buddy Rich?

OP: [laughs] Who could forget playing with Buddy Rich?

DB: There was a solo that you played on "I Got Rhythm," and it was so locked in.

OP: Buddy was exceptional. We used to call him the monster. He and I never got along; we loved each other. Buddy had a temper, as you may know by now. But once he got into the playing thing [he was OK]. He used to love playing with Ray, Herbie and myself. He always said that. He'd look over at us with that grimace that he had, then he'd snarl, but we knew he was fine. [all laugh]

BB: You've each had lengthy careers, and you're past the point where you could just retire, be comfortable and enjoy life. What keeps you going, and do you ever consider



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saying, "That's enough, time to stop"?

OP: I'm afraid to answer this question because I know somebody's going to be frowning after you find out. ... [laughs] I'm at a point in my life, to be very honest with you, I don't know if there's any more left as far as traveling and the weight of having to be there and turning out the type of performance I would like to turn out. Until

I settle that in my mind, I am virtually on the verge of that.

DB: Well, I would like to keep playing as long as I can. The road is getting longer and tougher. [chuckles] The whole thing is more of a trial. We used to do 120 one-nighters in a row. Now I ask for only four in a week and get some breaks along the way. I feel that life is a lot easier now, but to me it's getting to be a real tough call when every week somebody asks me to go someplace halfway around the world. In the old days, I would have taken it. But I'm trying to avoid those kinds of things now, as much as possible. And still play in a way

that won't tire me out so much.

BB: You've each talked about the obligation you have on stage to deliver. But I'm curious about what you get back from the audience. How much of that is in the equation when you decide how much more to pursue?

OP: My whole thing takes place on the stage. If the group is operating with me the way I would like it to, that's my reward. It has to happen on stage for me. I'm not really that aware of any audience reaction.

DB: I agree with Oscar. If you're making it and you know it, and you're creating, that's the main thing. If the audience likes it, that's the dessert. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Oscar Peterson is a Bosendorfer artist. Dave Brubeck is a Baldwin artist.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Dave Brubeck

IN THEIR OWN SWEET WAY—Telarc 83355
TO HOPE! A CELEBRATION—Telarc 80430
A DAVE BRUBECK CHRISTMAS—Telarc 83410
YOUNG LIONS & OLD TIGERS—Telarc 83349
JUST YOU, JUST ME—Telarc 83363
NIGHTSHIFT—Telarc 83351
LATE NIGHT BRUBECK: LIVE FROM THE BLUE NOTE—Telarc 83345
ONCE WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG—MusicMasters 65083
QUIET AS THE MOON—MusicMasters 65067
MARIAN MCPARTLAND'S PIANO JAZZ WITH GUEST DAVE BRUBECK—Jazz Alliance 12001
LIVE AT THE BERLIN PHILHARMONIC—Columbia/Legacy 64820 (with Gerry Mulligan)
JAZZ IMPRESSIONS OF N. Y.—Columbia/Legacy 46189
TIME FURTHER OUT—Columbia 64668
THE REAL AMBASSADORS—Columbia/Legacy 57663 (with Louis Armstrong)
TIME OUT—Columbia/Legacy 65122
GONE WITH THE WIND—Columbia/Legacy 40627
JAZZ IMPRESSIONS OF EURASIA—Columbia/Legacy 48531
DAVE DIGS DISNEY—Columbia/Legacy 48820
INTERCHANGES '54 FEATURING PAUL DESMOND—Columbia/Legacy 47032
JAZZ AT COLLEGE OF THE PACIFIC—Fantasy/OJC 047
JAZZ AT OBERLIN—Fantasy/OJC 046
TIME SIGNATURES: A CAREER RETROSPECTIVE—Columbia/Legacy 52945 (includes "Over The Rainbow" and "Take Five")

Oscar Peterson

A TRIBUTE TO OSCAR PETERSON LIVE AT TOWN HALL—Telarc 83401
OSCAR PETERSON MEETS ROY HARGROVE AND RALPH MOORE—Telarc 83390
AN OSCAR PETERSON CHRISTMAS—Telarc 83372
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A TRIBUTE TO MY FRIENDS—Pablo 2310-902
PORGY & BESS—Fantasy/OJC 829 (with Joe Pass)
OSCAR PETERSON & DIZZY GILLESPIE—Pablo 2310-740
OSCAR PETERSON & HARRY EDISON—Fantasy/OJC 738
OSCAR PETERSON & ROY ELDRIDGE—Fantasy/OJC 727
THE GOOD LIFE—Fantasy/OJC 627
HISTORY OF AN ARTIST—Pablo 2-2625-702
THE TRIO—Verve 823 008
EXCLUSIVELY FOR MY FRIENDS—Verve 513 830
BLUES ETUDE—Verve 818 844
TRIO PLUS ONE (with Clark Terry)—Mercury 818 840
NIGHT TRAIN—Verve 821 724
VERY TALL (with Milt Jackson)—Verve 827 821
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SLAVERY: NOW THAT'S A THEME TO SINK YOUR TEETH INTO. WYNTON MARSALIS THOUGHT SO,

and he has—emotionally, mentally, spiritually and musically. With his current “epic oratorio” *Blood On The Fields*, featuring the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and singers Miles Griffith, Cassandra Wilson and Jon Hendricks, the intrepid Marsalis has taken a personal look into one of the most ignominious chapters in our nation’s history (see accompanying review).

Marsalis chose to focus on slavery because it’s a subject that “resonates in U.S. history,” he says. “I feel it is the defining issue in our national identity. It still is a major deterrent and stumbling block on our way to really enjoying democracy, enjoying the life of our country and of us enjoying each other.”

The piece originally debuted on April 1, 1994, at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fischer Hall. Marsalis, a self-taught composer and orchestrator (he attended the Juilliard School in 1979–’80, but studied trumpet, not composition), began to write just two months before the performance. The piece was difficult.

“Trying to get the orchestral voicings, to interweave the words and the music, was hard,” he says. Asked how many hours a day he wrote, he says, “More frantically as it got closer” to deadline. Can he write six or seven hours a day? He laughs softly. “It depends on how late [for the deadline] I am.”

Aiding Marsalis in all stages of the composing was David Berger, former conductor for the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. “He copied the piece,” Marsalis begins. “I would send it to him, he would look at it, and when-ever he saw something he didn’t think would work, he would tell me. I wasn’t very confident at first, but he kept telling me, ‘Man, this stuff looks good.’ He told me that it looked like I was going in the right direction, and that gave me more confidence to write.”

Marsalis also tried the piece out on selected members of his then-touring septet. “Occasionally when we were on the road, he’d call Wessell [Anderson] and me to his



BY ZAN STEWART

ROTHERS



Left: Wynton Marsalis. Right (from top): *Blood On The Fields* vocalists Cassandra Wilson, Jon Hendricks and Miles Griffith.

room to check out different sounds he had written," says Victor Goines, the 35-year-old reedman who has known Marsalis since they were both 12 years old in New Orleans. "He'd work in bits and pieces. His way of thinking is always little bit different."

Also of considerable help were the singers, who suggested slight changes in the libretto. "He would ask me and Cassandra how the lyrics sounded, and we'd tell him," says Miles Griffith, the 27-year-old Brooklyn-born-and-raised vocalist who was recommended to Marsalis by their mutual friend, Jamal Haynes, and who plays the captured African prince, Jesse. There weren't many changes, he says, though at one point Marsalis wrote out scating parts that were nixed. "We just felt that we should do it on our own," Griffith says.

Ten days of rehearsals preceded that April Fool's debut, and this was demanding work, according to all the musicians Down Beat talked to.

"Wynton's music is always complex," says Goines, who has been performing in Marsalis-led outfits since 1993. "He ends up writing what he hears, and requires you to figure out how to play it. But conceptually, once you understand this story, it makes everything easier.

"Before I started rehearsing this, I thought I read pretty well," says St. Louis-based trumpeter Russell Gunn, whose first appearance with Marsalis was the debut of *Blood*. "I was shocked, like some of the others, when I saw how difficult the music was. Lot of syncopation, long rests, technically demanding. He writes stuff that nobody can play, and then they have to learn it. The real challenges were first to deal with all these time signatures, and then to put emotion into it. That was a bigger challenge than playing the notes."

Drummer Herlin Riley, 40, a Marsalis associate for almost a decade, talked about the way Marsalis allowed his musicians to personalize this piece. "He mostly writes with people who have worked with him, and he knows their sounds," says Riley, another New Orleans native and resident. "Like on this piece, he gave me a guide—the music that's on the paper—but he didn't write out specific rhythms. He lets me come up with my own parts, which is his standard way of working."

Marsalis listened to *Blood On The Fields* a lot prior to the current tour, especially in the mixing of the CD. He says he didn't really get to hear it at the 1994 premiere. "I had too much to do, too much to concentrate on." Asked now if he's pleased with it, he says, "I don't know. It's just music. It's hard to describe what my relationship is to my music. I don't sit around and listen to any of my albums. I work on the music for the recording, then work on it when I go out to tour and try and play it. Then I go on to the next project."

The players' general response to the recording is that it went well. But what's got them really excited is the current tour, and the series of performances of what they say is the leader's most important work. Night after night, in places like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Washington, D.C. and St. Louis (and later spots in Europe), the piece keeps changing, offering new developments, challenges, rewards.

"It's becoming more alive," says Riley the day after the ensemble performed in St. Louis. "Each night, we seem to find little nuances to make it unique. And as the music becomes familiar, we internalize it, make it our own."

"As I get more comfortable, a lot of things are changing," says Griffith. "Cassandra [who plays the African commoner, Leona, who is captured along with Jesse] and I are really getting into the lyrics. On *Blood On The Fields*, we're getting into the actual feeling of the work. And when I sing 'Oh, What A Fool I've Been,' I sense that this is really the way Jesse feels."

"The piece unfolds every day because people keep trying something different," says Goines. "I'll always play different cadenzas, I might try to hum or scream through the instrument. Then there's the bass-clarinet duo which we call the 'heartbeat,' where Gideon and I play together."

This piece, delivered in the middle and at the end of the concert, has become the ensemble's own private mini-concert. Goines and Gideon Feldstein play as the rest of the band leaves the stage, chanting, 'Oh, Lord.' Finally, the two clarinetists depart.

But backstage, the "heartbeat" continues. "Sometimes, we'll go on for 15 min-

Strong Swing, Weak Words

Wynton Marsalis has no qualms about setting hefty goals for himself, and *Blood On The Fields*, his first work for big band, is perhaps the most gargantuan of these goals. Having said this, *Blood* is not Marsalis' masterwork, nor perhaps even his best work. At Los Angeles' Dorothy Chandler Pavillion in late January, in its second performance of a U.S.-European tour that ended in March, this overly long (three hours) story of slavery resembled a patchwork of style and moods—from bluesy Ellingtonia to raucous passages that Mingus might write, from brass bands to churchy horn choirs—that somehow did not make a quilt. But these isolated moments often made for interesting, provocative listening.

As might be imagined, *Blood* was strongest where Marsalis was most at home—in the swinging instrumental arena—and weakest where he has little experience: the libretto. The compositions, liberally revealing Marsalis' desire

to be a modern outgrowth of Ellington, were mostly impressive in their grandeur, their sense of the subject's seriousness. However, the words Marsalis affixed to his numbers ranged between dead-on and dead-wrong.

The problems existed in both the

text, which was sung by Miles Griffith (Jesse, an enslaved African Prince), Cassandra Wilson (Leona, an African commoner) and Jon Hendricks (in the dual role of slave trader and Juba), and the lines where the band members acted as a sort of Greek chorus. For example, when protagonists Jesse and Leona are being transported from Africa, there's the line, "I think we better ride this wave on out," referring to the horrendous voyage in quite contemporary terms. Later, the band intones, "But Jesse has learned to play the blues," also a modern colloquialism.

On the other hand, the title track—sung gloriously by Griffith, a stout man with a resounding voice, and Wilson, whose alto was its usual rich timbre but was hard to hear over band accompaniment—was strong stuff. As was the long number that Hendricks uses to introduce Juba, its rhythm resembling a New Orleans second-line shuffle. Still, many of the best vocal passages needed tightening.

The band played these numbers, divided into 23 sections, with remarkable crispness and authority. Marsalis' writing was original sounding on "You Don't Hear No Drums" (section III), where the ensemble tossed edgy lines back and forth, and Marsalis offered wailed tones that resonated; and on "God Don't Like Ugly" (VIII), featuring thickly textured dissonances from trombones and trumpets.

The Ducal cast, ultimately quite appealing, was often heard in the saxes, as on "Move Over" (II), "Lady's Lament" (VII) and "The Sun Is Gonna Shine" (XVI). And there were two exquisite sections, including the piece's final moments, where Gideon Feldstein and Victor Goines played bass clarinets, one offering a repeating pattern, the other improvising with feeling.

—Zan Stewart

utes, chanting and singing and clapping like a jam session," says Riley. "Sometimes, we'll form a circle and dance and make up lyrics and sing. That's the spirit and fellowship that goes on backstage."

The humor that Marsalis has injected into the libretto of *Blood* gets varying reactions from some of the players. It's completely apropos, says drummer Riley. "The work deals with the blues," he says. "And the blues is still optimistic. Life can't be all blue; something has to lighten up."

Gunn has mixed feelings about the same subject. "First, I don't know what people are thinking when they laugh at this," he says. "I know from my own experience that

laughter can be the best way to deal with things, relieve tension, particularly if you are black. But some of the words here are funny. When Wynton writes that the 'massa' wants his slaves to worship a merciful and just God, that is funny, because people do think that way. I have to laugh when I think about how ignorant that is."

Each of the players Down Beat spoke with had at least one highlight—general or specific, either of their own doing, or another's—that they found to be a delight.

Griffith recalls a hot night of scatting in Iowa City, Iowa. "That was the first time that I scatted [at length on the tour]," he

says. "Usually I got one chorus, but that night, Wynton signaled me, and I couldn't believe it. I said, 'OK.' That night was really tight, and the people responded, cheering after I scatted."

Gunn, who plays several fiery solos, also had a fondness for scatting—by that master of the form, Hendricks—and for his sectionmate Printup's improvisations as well. "I always take the most pleasure in checking out Jon's scat solos," Gunn says. "And Marcus, I think he has the best sense of melody since Booker Little."

"It has opened up my whole view of the clarinet," says Goines. "I have been playing it for 27 years, but before Wynton Marsalis, I considered myself a tenor saxophonist."

Drummer Riley had a personal spotlight from the St. Louis show he wanted to impart. "On 'Forty Lashes' [where Jesse is punished for attempting to escape; he finally does, with Leona, at the work's end], I played a good one. It just felt right for me," he says. "Here I have to play within a specific theme, that of the guy who administers the ass-whipping. I try to go with tones, as opposed to just playing a drum solo. I ended it by holding the ride cymbal, hitting and then choking the sound, as if I were an angry parent spanking a child. I said to it, said out loud, 'Didn't I tell you not to try to get away?' Last night, that just came out."

Again, while these musicians regaled Marsalis' *Blood On The Fields* as monumental, Gunn stressed the emotion in the work: "This piece touches me. Who wouldn't it touch? I always found it disturbing that people wouldn't put any energy into addressing this issue, and I resent the fact that that it's downplayed in history. This is a story about two people, but the number that slavery touched is immeasurable." **DB**


EQUIPMENT

Wynton Marsalis plays a Raja trumpet with integral mouthpiece manufactured by David Monette. Russell Gunn plays a Bach Stradivarius trumpet with a Bach 7C mouthpiece. Herlin Riley plays Yamaha drums. Victor Goines plays a Selmer Mark VI tenor saxophone with a Dave Guardala mouthpiece (Branford Marsalis facing) and Vandoren #3 reeds; a Selmer Mark VI soprano saxophone with a Bari mouthpiece (70 facing) and Vandoren #3 reeds; a Selmer 10G B-flat clarinet with mouthpiece and barrel made by James Pyne and Vandoren #3 reeds; a Buffet 913 E-flat clarinet with a Vandoren B45 mouthpiece and Vandoren #3 reeds; and a Selmer B-flat bass clarinet with low C, Brillhart mouthpiece and Vandoren 2 1/2 reeds.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

(For additional entries, see Down Beat, May 1995)

BLOOD ON THE FIELDS—Columbia 57694
THE MAJESTY OF THE BLUES—Columbia 45091
CITI MOVEMENT—Columbia 53324
IN THIS HOUSE, ON THIS MORNING—Columbia 53220
BLUE INTERLUDE—Columbia 48729
SOUL GESTURES IN SOUTHERN BLUE—Columbia 47975-7 (three volumes)
MARSALIS STANDARD TIME—Columbia 40461
STANDARD TIME VOLUME 2, INTIMACY CALLING—Columbia 47346
STANDARD TIME VOLUME 3, THE RESOLUTION OF ROMANCE—Columbia 46143



BUNKY GREEN

Keeping It Real

By Michael Jackson

*Photography By
Marcy J. Appelbaum*

There appears to be an absentee in the pantheon that hallows the inimitable voices in jazz. The omission isn't glaring, though, because the musician in question has shied somewhat from the limelight in recent years.

The story of Bunky Green is unquestionably one of success, despite his less-than-neon-clad profile in the public eye. The alto saxophonist hit the Chicago jazz scene in the early '60s and was soon touted as a star soloist, playing and recording in the company of such benchmark beboppers as Sonny Stitt. Eventually, though, his astute awareness of the pitfalls of a life dependent on nourishment from the rays of the limelight led him into education, which has afforded him the independence to be selective about the extra-curricular projects he undertakes.

Having taught from 1972-'89 at Chicago State University, Green, who has a masters degree from Northwestern University, took up an offer in the early '90s to direct the jazz studies program at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. Alongside these responsibilities, he has been an active member of the International Association of Jazz Educators for 11 years.

Yet Green's tale is paradoxical in that he has attempted to demystify jazz through his role as an educator and yet refuses to be swallowed whole by academia. "I tell my students, try to keep it *real*; by all means transcribe the work of the greats, assimilate the language, but also know that you don't *have* to be able to do this to be a great player. Once you know what the format is, look into yourself and search for your own wildest dream."

Green has a systematic approach to his playing, an underlying methodology that attempts to rationalize notes inside and outside of the changes through the use of chromatic and rhythmically audacious formulae. But the naked flame of his sound, his feverish eagerness to express himself on a deeper level marks him beyond virtuoso theoretician and further beyond the vagaries of fashion.

Originally from Milwaukee, Green came to Chicago in his early teens, and his first big gig was alongside Eric Dolphy and Johnny Griffin at Joe Segal's Jazz Showcase in 1959. It was a poignant inauguration: Bunky first became inspired to play saxophone when an aunt who was babysitting sneaked him out illicitly to hear Griffin. "I must have been about 10 at the time," Green remembers. "She said, 'Let's escape!' and took me to a dance where Lionel Hampton's band were playing. Griffin was still just a kid of about 17 or so, and it was very exciting hearing all that sound coming from a little guy with a big shiny horn and all the people clapping, urging him on."

Green describes how more established players could be intimidating when he was on the way up and remembers being pitched against the formidable Stitt on a mid-'60s record date, *Souls In The Night*. "I had played with him once before and had to follow one of his incredible solos," Green says. "Just as I'm getting into it and things are starting to go quite well, I hear this voice screaming in my ears, 'What are you doing, man? Open your eyes!' I used to play with my eyes closed, and Sonny had decided this was unacceptable. Needless to say, it threw me all off. I managed to get my own back before the recording, however, because when I turned up at the studio, Stitt had been practicing for a while and said to me, 'Well, aren't you going to unpack your horn and warm up?' And I said, 'No, I don't think that will be necessary.' He just stopped and stared, and I thought to myself, 'Gotcha!'"

Green cut his teeth on heady blowing dates, and during a spell in New York, when he was hanging out and living at the local YMCA, Lou Donaldson saw him jam with Cannonball Adderley at Small's Paradise. Donaldson, who already knew

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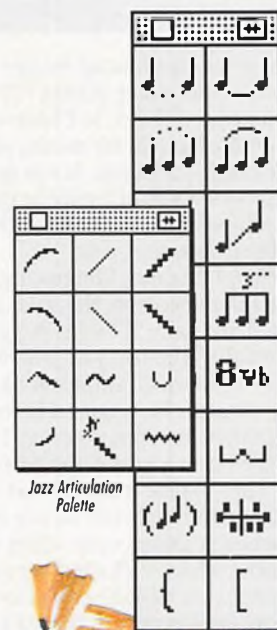
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Acid-Jazz Appreciation

Bunky Green has long had his finger on the pulse of jazz's cutting edge. What follows is his solicited opinion on the acid-jazz trend, which was covered in detail in the April 1997 *Down Beat*.

"It's very interesting," he began. "It does reflect the times and what's going on. We do live in those times; hip-hop is part of our thing, and so is the poetry that's involved in that culture. It comes from the earth itself. Even if they don't have a complete command of English and proper language skills, they put poetry together nevertheless that's incredible."

Green related a recent conversation he had with fellow saxophonist Steve Coleman, who was influenced by Green and who has produced substantial material that fuses jazz with hip-hop. "He said it's not a put-on, that he feels it's part of the culture. He said, 'I'm trying to dip into what's real.' I appreciate that. When you start closing your

ears and say the only thing that's happening is what I'm doing, that's not right.

"This music keeps changing. How can you say that's not what jazz was meant to be like? Who knows, in eight to 10 years it may change so much that we don't even recognize it. But you know what? I'll still be listening, because I want to learn. You have to keep your ears open as a writer, as a player. Maybe some people look down their nose at it. But not me."

—Ed Enright

of him through a mutual mentor, long-forgotten Milwaukee pianist Billy Wallace, recommended Green to Charles Mingus, then on the lookout for an alto player to replace Jackie McLean. It was in 1957, during Green's brief tenure in the tempestuous bassist's quintet, that his individual style took root.

"When I first met Mingus, I asked him where the music was. He acted almost insulted and said, 'If I write it, you'll never play it right.' The fact was that notation wouldn't have been sufficient to yield up all the nuances he required in terms of inflection, bent notes, etcetera. He would sit at the piano and play the parts, and you'd have to pick it up. He was using these long intervals and octave leaps at a time when scalar composition was more the norm, where melodies were easier to follow because definite scales and chordal patterns were involved. His statement that there was no such thing as a wrong note made a deep impression on me, and I started to develop my theories about tension and release, where I would stretch the harmony to a point where it alerts the listener and then provide a certain amount of release with respect to consonance."

Green's shrewd professionalism makes it easy to understand how he has had the strength to attain a highly strategic methodology for his own music. But this has not eclipsed the naked emotion in his playing, nor has it been realized without a radical rethink at a mid-point in his career.

In his early days as a recording artist, Green was marketed somewhat short-sightedly by the blatantly commercial

Cadet label, which at one time showcased him with a Latin band backed by the then-famous vocal group the Dells. "Yeah, they had me on the album cover wearing a big straw hat, holding a pineapple!" Green says. "I played the Varitone—I was the first person Selmer approached to use the electric saxophone, although Sonny Stitt and the Eddie Harris also used it eventually. There were various control dials—the only thing they should have had was a dial for 'fresh ideas!'"

But a fresh conception is what Bunky came up with when he hit creative paydirt in 1979, recording *Places We've Never Been*. Before *Places*, Green had already indicated that he was forging a new level of self-expression on his Vanguard recordings with Elvin Jones, *Summit Meeting* and *Time Capsule*, where he also demonstrated his arranging and composing skills. However, it was on the *Places* album with Randy Brecker and Eddie Gomez that his experiments with the timbre of his instrument and his audacious inside/outside playing really had space to breathe. Rhythmically, harmonically and in terms of lyricism allied to texture and experimentalism, here was an original approach, one that ultimately spawned Steve Coleman and Greg Osby's M-Base concept that went on to blow the cobwebs off the jazz world in the mid-'80s.

Green doesn't belong to the free-jazz camp, though he has respect for the likes of Roscoe Mitchell and Dolphy. Nor could he be remotely identified with the cool school, though he recognizes that Lennie Tristano was telegraphing where the music was going back in the '50s by

suspending and stripping down tonality. He does, however, acknowledge that he is perhaps essentially a ballad player, and this is borne out by some of the deeply melancholic material found on his last CD, *Healing The Pain*, which commemorates the death of both his parents.

But that CD is now more than six years old. Inevitably, Green has to deal with the contention that his low recorded output of late is a direct result of his teaching commitments. "It's a stigmatization, if a person is busy as an educator, then they don't deserve to be written up as a major player," Green laments. "But often in the thick of it, it gets so that you can't see the wood for the trees, and only certain calling cards are accepted: the ones that look familiar. I've gotten deeper. I've had time to look and search my soul. I play a lot alongside the students and pick and choose the gigs I want to do. And when serious players are around, they come looking for me because they know I know what I'm doing."

Last year, Green toured Europe with a lineup called the Renegades featuring Steve Coleman, Craig Handy and Joe Lovano. Lovano commented on the experience after a recent visit to the University of North Florida to conduct a workshop: "Bunky personifies what jazz is all about. He's combined all the inspiration of Charlie Parker and Dolphy and fused it into an individual voice. He's the kind of player I've always strived to be in my music, taking hold of the history and then moving on, through self-expression."

Indeed, Green's work as an educator has in no way prevented him from evolving as a player or developing his vision. "I am teaching advanced saxophone classes and still have a hands-on role on the playing front," he notes. And, he has another recording project brewing.

"I know what I want to do; it's in my head," Green says. "It'll be an extension of my last album, but going a little deeper into my concept. However, after 16 albums or so, I refuse to get scalped again. I want a decent deal and all the circumstances to be right, even if I have to finance it myself."

One thing's for sure, integrity, heart and exploration will be on the agenda. **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Bunky Green plays Julius Keilwerth alto and soprano saxophones. His alto mouthpiece is a Claude Lakey 4*4 jazz model, which he outfits with Acoustical Professional reeds.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

HEALING THE PAIN—Delos 13491-4020
PLACES WE'VE NEVER BEEN—Vanguard 79425 (out of print)
VISIONS—Vanguard 79413 (out of print)
TRANSFORMATIONS—Vanguard 79387 (out of print)
PLAYIN' FOR KEEPS—Cadet 766 (out of print)
THE LATINIZATION OF BUNKY GREEN—Cadet 766 (out of print)
TESTIFYIN' TIME—Argo 753 (out of print)

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Theory & History

By John Corbett



"Music is not so hard if you get with a bunch that's playing together. But it's an awful strain to play jazz with one fellow going this way and another fellow going another. That makes for hard work. It's like anything else. If you run an automobile and the gears are meshing easy you can run it pretty fast. But if the gears are meshing badly, they're going to hit each other. It's the same thing with music. Regardless of what the number is, if everybody's together, and if everybody knows his business, when the notes are joined they'll come out even."

—Warren "Baby" Dodds, 1953

Above: Duke Ellington and band at work and play, circa 1942. Left inset: Ellington mainstays (l-r) Sonny Greer, Tricky Sam Nanton, Barney Bigard, Ben Webster. Top inset: celebrating a milestone in a working band's lifespan, Freddie Green, Ellington, Greer and Otto Hardwicke mark 20 years in the Ellington establishment backstage at Washington, D.C.'s Howard Theater in 1942.

A news item in the Jan. 23, 1958, issue of *Down Beat* announced the return of tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffin to his hometown of Chicago after a long stay in New York, and Griffin's formation of a new working band with fellow tenor John Gilmore, pianist Jodie Christian (mislisted as "Jody Christenson"), bassist Richard Evans and drummer Wilber Campbell. "The group has been booked, on an indefinite basis, at Swingland, 6249 Cottage Grove, and Griffin told *Down Beat* that he hopes the group will be able to record soon."

They never did. And, when queried decades later, Griffin didn't even remember the existence of that appetizing band. Nevertheless, this vanishing act points out how central, how taken for granted the idea of the working band is in the jazz world. It's so central that it could almost be forgotten. Indeed, that same foundational idea—that a group of players will get together regularly to build something that goes under the banner of a band name (one as straightforward as "the Johnny Griffin Quintet" or as euphemistic as "Johnson's Joymakers")—traces back 80 years to the earliest days of jazz. Some version of the working band has appeared in every phase

of the music, accompanying each stylistic shift and the development of virtually all subgenres of the broad music called jazz.

The working band is jazz's *modus vivendi*, a practical solution to the question of how to make music live, how to create living music—and how to make a living in music. So when Griff put together his new hard bop unit, he was plugging into a kind of musical and personal organization that had always been part of the jazz program. At the same time, any attempt to look at the idea of the working band from a historical perspective should also take into account the fact that many different versions of such a concept exist simultaneously. (Hey, the Little Giant participated in more than his share of one-night-stands and ad-hoc jamborees, all across Europe!) And jazz is (or once was) populated by dogged individualists, some of whom have created their own idiosyncratic take on the working band—Sun Ra's Arkestra, for instance, which spent a good part of its life in a communal living and working situation, fits none of the available historical trends or models.

But the fact that working bands have been around since the dawn of jazz doesn't mean the concept hasn't changed. Working bands have always been primarily about



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three things: music, venues and money. The idea of working together consistently provides continuity for the music itself, allowing things that can't be done on an informal or ad-hoc basis; it also shows responsibility and commitment, professional qualities that a venue looks for when agreeing to book a band (either one-time or ongoing). And it creates a vehicle with a name that can be advertised, can gather fans, create its own audience and function as a relatively effective business venture. When venues disappear, the money dries up and the music is forced to change. The interrelation of these three variables has shaped the working band over the course of its long history. With shifts of general economics, eddies in popular reception of jazz and new developments in the sound of the music, the precise morphology of the working band notion has itself been subject to change.

Before jumping into a schematic history of the working band, there are a few other crucial variables that bear enumeration, aspects that have had an impact on the evolution of the working group concept and that therefore are worth keeping in the back of our minds when tracking through that history:



Reggie Workman



Coordinator of Instruction and full-time faculty member at the Mannes/New School BFA Jazz Program.

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- ① Size of band.
- ② Style of music.
- ③ Necessity of rapport.
- ④ Leader/sideman relationship.
- ⑤ Regionality vs. centralization.
- ⑥ Ability to tour vs. "local" bands.
- ⑦ Presence of record companies and management.

Changes in these variables over the course of jazz history have significantly impacted the notion of the working band. The first three deal specifically with the music. The working realities for a big-band, for instance, are quite different from those of a small group; to keep a working large ensemble really working in today's jazz

environs is virtually impossible, where in the late 1920s the size of a group was an important element of its ability to get work, and ironically small groups were more a luxury than economic necessity. The style of music played—amount of orchestration, complexity of arrangement, conventional vs. innovative structures—is another element in determining whether regular band practice and performance is needed. More complex and involved music, obviously, will benefit greatly (and may only be feasible) if played by a working band, while conventional forms (say, blues or "Rhythm" changes) and commonly shared standard tunes (say, "All The



VALENTINE WILMER

Tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffin: The cat takes off with an ad-hoc flock.

Things You Are") are appropriate in more ephemeral settings. The associated question of rapport—that is, how much group *feel* (once past the stage of just playing the material) is the point of the music—colors our understanding of the working band, as well. Charles Mingus' quintet music of the late '50s and Oscar Peterson's "classic" trio both utilized the intense musical bonds of a longterm working ensemble, while on the other hand there's plenty of excellent jam-session-style bebop or small-group swing that adopted an every-man-for-himself attitude.

The idea of "leadership," so predominant in jazz parlance, says a fair amount about the working-band notion. Charismatic individuals who assemble others to help bring their ideas to fruition or to germinate new ideas of their own in a hothouse environment (as in various of Duke Ellington's orchestras) assume the role of leader; the sideman submits to the will of the leader or subtly inflects the leader's concept with his or her own will. The working band always involves a power dynamic, a hierarchy, and the variable factor is how collective or impositional that dynamic turns out to be. Democracies

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In addition to the stylistic and internal-political variables, the working band has historically had different options as far as geography goes. Thus the regional dimension—where bands were from, where they had to go to find work—has influenced its development. And the impulse to go somewhere can be permanent (as with all the New Orleans bands that settled in Chicago or the wholesale relocation of working bands to New York in the bebop era) or it can involve the process of touring, a very different solution. Some bands don't concern themselves with going to the current "jazz capital," but are content to gig in one place, happy-go-lucky "locals."

Finally, the working band has been significantly influenced by the development of a jazz infrastructure. Record companies have fostered the existence of certain bands, in some cases *created* groups; an interesting project would be to look at the jazz industry from the same perspective as the film industry—the cultivation of a studio system, contracts, stars, publicity machinery—and the effect it has had on the working ensemble. It should be obvious, in a related way, that jazz agents and managers have a vested interest in the stability of working bands, which are often their bread and butter. Or, as in the case of Louis Armstrong's record director Tommy Rockwell and manager Joe Glaser, sometimes the concept of separating the star from his associates is more advantageous, hence selecting *against* the working band.

It is useful to consider the general status of the band in jazz as it has developed over time. It seems appropriate to suggest the broad significance of the working band in early contexts for African-American musicians—bands were a form of corporation, and the ability to congregate freely might be seen to echo slave ensembles of Congo Square and presage the emergence of black free entrepreneurship.

In fact, the earliest jazz situations set the stage for a great deal of what comes later in the history of working bands. For instance, because the jazz band was initially conceived in the same compartmentalized terms as the symphony or marching band—namely, in sections—the notion that different parts of the ensemble could stand apart from the whole arose. Thus, the later development of interchangeable parts, where a rhythm section (conceived as a sort of "team") could back a rotating cast of frontmen (often out-of-town stars) emerges as a result of the early sectionalization of the band. In New Orleans, there were professional dance-oriented working "society" bands with consistent personnel as well as more impermanent assemblages

working in various ill-reputed establishments in and around Storyville. Brothels, taverns, bordellos and dancehalls constituted an excellent venue infrastructure for nascent working bands—there was plenty of work! The idea of touring, too, was clearly in existence when jazz started, in minstrel shows and the vaudeville circuit; the Original Creole Band, for instance, toured the Southwest as early as 1908 and was a very extensive touring outfit through the 'teens.

Like New Orleans, Chicago's South Side district called "the Stroll" contained enough venues to bolster the development of numerous long-living jazz bands. The

Original Creole Band actually settled down in Chicago in 1918, though many of the musicians making that celebrated move came individually, not as members of ensembles. In Chicago by the '20s the idea of the studio band had already taken shape; Jimmy Blythe's State Street Ramblers, the Chicago Footwarmers and somewhat later the important pre-r&b blues-jazz band Harlem Hamfats stand as early examples of groups established exclusively for the purposes of making records. Bands were also assembled specifically for the purposes of touring, sometimes backing blues singers—tenorman Coleman Hawkins, for example, was a member of

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Mamie Smith's touring group the Jazz Hounds in 1921, hot on the heels of her hit record "Crazy Blues."

The widespread turn to big-band music in the 1920s, for instance, in bands like Bennie Moten's, shifted the requirements for working bands substantially. The big band is a larger corporation, and the administration of that body calls for much more calculation and bureaucracy—to keep all the members of the Duke Ellington Orchestra fed, clothed and happy necessitated

that they have a tremendous amount of work, so touring or long-term residency at a venue was mandatory. And, in turn, the music itself needs to be played a lot before it falls together in the orchestral way that it is designed to, thus requiring lots of rehearsal and stage time. But the extreme popularity of jazz in this period meant that there were lots of gigs to go around and enough money from them to support the band and its pit crew. Ellington, for instance, left the Cotton Club in 1931 on nearly four years of constant touring,



The Wolverine Orchestra (Bix Beiderbecke, right) survived only a short but intense two years from 1923-'25, recording, touring and playing every night for weeks on end.

setting the pace for the rest of his career.

That key year, '31, in the dusk of his long, important Cotton Club run, Ellington wrote: "What little fame I have achieved is the result of my special orchestrations, and especially of the cooperation of the boys in the band. I cannot speak too highly of their loyalty and initiative. During the past three years we have made the band our work and our hobby; all our creative powers have been put into its success, and the fact that our engagement at the Cotton Club, New York City, is now extending into its fourth

year is an excellent testimonial and a pleasant reminder that we have been appreciated." Ellington's ensemble concept was inherently one of the working band; it rested on achieving deep personal understanding of each member of the ensemble. As he put it in 1944: "You can't write music right unless you know how the man that'll play it plays poker." This much-lauded Ellingtonian precept is utterly unthinkable without a working band to execute it: a group of familiar faces to set a context for that more intimate musical getting-to-know-you.

With the general rise in popularity of jazz in the '20s came a rise in the number of venues wanting to book the music and an attendant rise in opportunities for bands—even smaller, less known ensembles—to work regularly. Apart from the dominant centers of jazz in Chicago, Kansas City and, by the mid-'30s, New York, this was the period of the so-called territory bands, countless working groups based in smaller regional centers in the Southwest and as far north as Omaha, Neb., and Milwaukee, Wis.

These bands could gig frequently enough without sojourning too far from their home base; thus the "local" band idea was solidified somewhere in the distance between those fantasized-about centers of action and keeping things close to home. It should be noted that some of the common jazz legends surrounding great cutting sessions and jam sessions—which usually involved an ad-hoc ensemble or visiting guests rather than a working band per se—emerged in the Kansas City era. As archetypical, take the famous night at the Cherry Blossom late in 1933, when Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Lester Young and Herschel Evans went at it in heroic tenor-to-tenor battle. These romantic images would fuel Jazz at the Philharmonic's institutionalization of informal jamming more than a decade later. This idea also helped codify the separability of the rhythm section from the soloists, a concept more difficult in either the improvised heterophony of New Orleans or the tight arrangement of slicker big bands—take as a significant indicator the fact that swing-epoch rhythm masters drummer Papa Jo Jones and bassist Milt Hinton made a duo record in 1960! Rhythm section stripped bare. **DB**

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Our next installment of "Fanfare For The Working Band" will trace the history of working bands and "classic" ensembles from the Great Depression to the present. —ed.



Bill Stewart Telepathy Blue Note 53210

★★★★

If someone were to play "Calm," and mention that it was written by a drummer, the typical response might be, "Huh?" A fairly serene number that could serve as the soundtrack to anyone watching a lazy river flow, the lovely "Calm" never picks up steam, composer Bill Stewart never picks up sticks; in fact, his drums play a back seat to what amounts to a feature for bassist Larry Grenadier.

The strengths of "Calm" stem largely from its core, a place where musicians meet inside the melody and arrangement, sharing solos, supporting and listening to each other. The same can be said for every other song on *Telepathy* aside from Jackie McLean's "Little Melonae," the four-minute closer played at medium-tempo, essentially a fully composed duet between Stewart and pianist Bill Carrothers. Indeed, the least interesting elements to *Telepathy* (when compared to what else is going on here) are the head and theme statements. No slight against Stewart, who wrote seven of the nine tunes, it's just that everything else outshines them. In fact, the Jackie Mac and (especially) Monk songs seem like your typical obligatory standards add-ons.

Returning from *Snide Remarks* (Blue Note), Stewart's very fine debut, are Grenadier and Carrothers. The front line of alto and tenor replaces *Snide Remarks'* trumpet and tenor. Nothing seems out of place; everyone plays his part with great care and empathy. Stewart's arrangements require nothing less. Take the medium-slow opener, "These Are They." A lean head leads into a brief, deft alto solo by Steve Wilson, who is joined by Seamus Blake on tenor for some limited counterpoint before Carrothers takes the music in another direction entirely, dropping tempo at one point, recalling early '60s Paul Bley the next. The spooky four chords that serve as the skeleton to "These Are They" are played by Carrothers more as a web than as a way to reel anyone in, enhancing the piano's position as more than "just" a rhythm section instrument. Listen to how Blake's tempered burn serves as the meat to "Mynah," a medium-tempo tune in the spirit of Wayne Shorter.

Telepathy moves from minor to major chords

with the bluesy "Happy Chickens," a bouncy swinger reminiscent of occasional boss John Scofield, and featuring Stewart's tasteful drumming against Grenadier's funky ostinatos and some more nice work from Wilson, this time on soprano. And so it goes.

Like *Snide Remarks*, there are moments on *Telepathy* that bring to mind Miles Davis' music from the middle '60s, when forms became playthings in the hands of great musicians, solos outshined the melodies and a strong piano worked hand in hand with a strong drummer, giving the music its backbone. Carrothers and Stewart are the focus here, and for good reason: They enhance everyone else's music even as they shine themselves. That a drummer wrote practically the whole damn thing makes it even better.

—John Ephland

Telepathy—*These Are They*; Mynah; Happy Chickens; Lyra; Rhythm-A-Ning; Dwell On This; Calm; Fano; Little Melonae. **Personnel**—Stewart, drums; Seamus Blake, tenor saxophone (1–6, 8); Steve Wilson, alto and soprano saxophones (1–6, 8); Bill Carrothers, piano; Larry Grenadier, bass (1–8).



Charlie Parker Yardbird Suite: The Ultimate Collection Rhino 72260

★★★★★

Assembling a compilation to represent the best of Bird must involve a tortuous paradox: You can't lose, but you can't win. You can't lose because any way you slice it the material is ultimately sublime, undeniably moving, and can be drawn from a large pool of available recordings. Unless you're deliberately trying not to, you're going to end up with a great set. You can't win because everyone who hears it (assuming they've ever listened to Charlie Parker) will find something missing, some fault or flaw in the logic of the package. Bird is so beloved, his work so thoroughly picked over and the phases of his career buffeted by jealously guarded opinion and assessment, that any would-be compiler is doomed from the start.

But the basic impetus to cull together a label-unspecific collection of his work is in itself an excellent one. Parker fans have grown used to strange listening practices: Listening to track after track of rejected alternate takes and half-

finished false starts, the complete Dial or Savoy or Verve sessions take on a peculiar quality of their own, like an audio-art piece built on excessive repetition or the primary materials for a documentary study. This strange form of compulsive listening is fascinating in itself, but in the process it's easy to lose focus on the finished masterworks. And after years of approaching Bird that way, I, for one, found it particularly useful to hear a full two CDs' worth of classic tracks—we could all hum the solos from many of them in our sleep—arranged in chronological sequence without any alternates and without regard for record-label loci. It helps take the music out of the hermetic land of recordings and puts it back into the context of Parker's work and life.

The music on *Yardbird Suite* has been evaluated to death, so that's not my primary aim in this review. What more are you going to say about Parker's luscious solo on "Embraceable You" or the miraculous Bird/Diz united front on "Groovin' High" or the alto saxophone lightning on "Ko Ko"? With four notable exceptions, which will be dealt with, the selections made by Bob Porter, James Austin and Patrick Milligan are super. What editorial decisions they made don't distort the story for space purposes. They manage to fit in most of the mandatory tracks—38 in total: Short bebop running times (the most extravagant clocking in at seven minutes) means lots of tunes per disc. Going back to the original releases for info, the compilation lists the band names as they appeared then; thus, Parker's name is often "Charley," and his bands are listed as the Ree Boppers and Ri Bop Boys, as well as the usual Quartet, Quintet, Sextet, Orchestra and All-Stars appellations. This attention to detail is telling: The package itself is very carefully put together, with introductory notes by Porter and a loving remembrance by Ira Gitler. All the material was remastered (a combination of tape and compact-disc sources from DAT and CD transfers, respectively), and it does sound great when A/B'd with earlier editions, especially the relatively awful-sounding Savoy reissues on Denon.

Of course, an integrative project like this is bound to run into label politics, and there are only five tracks from Bird's Verve catalogue. Verve already had two best-of comps of their own (as well as the complete sessions), so licensing fees must have been astronomical for these cuts. One can infer that the absence of any of Verve's controversial string sessions is due to the same problem. *Yardbird Suite's* solution to the problem is the single questionable move on the compilation; in place of those sessions, they included four selections (the last four cuts) with strings from a live recording made at the Rockland Palace in Harlem. Fascinating as these rare sides are—and Bird is utterly astounding on them, making the soggy backdrops seem that much more perverse—they are out of their league when put next to the other tracks. These don't belong on a set touting itself as "the ultimate collection." And certainly not four of them. It's a small, but important chink in the armor of an otherwise superb comp.

—John Corbett

Yardbird Suite—*Groovin' High; All The Things You Are; Dizzy Atmosphere; Salt Peanuts; Shaw Nuff; Hot House; Now's The Time; Ko Ko; Moose The Mooche; Yardbird Suite; Ornithology; Cool Blues; Relaxin' At Camarillo; Donna Lee; Chasing The Bird; Dewey Square; Bird Of Paradise; The Hymn; Embraceable You; Klactoveedsedstene; Scapple From The Apple; Out Of Nowhere; Don't Blame Me; Quasimodo; Klaustance; Parker's Mood; Bloomdido; Star Eyes; She Rote; My Little Suede Shoes; Confirmation; Blue N' Boogie; 'Round Midnight; Night In Tunisia; Just Friends; What Is This Thing Called Love?; East Of The Sun; Laura.* (59:46/63:47)

Personnel—Parker, alto saxophone; Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet (1-6, 8, 27, 32-34), piano (7); Miles Davis (9-1, 14-25, 28-29), trumpet; Al Haig (4-6, 31), Dodo Marmarosa (9-11, 13), Bud Powell (14-15, 12-14), Duke Jordan (16-25), Walter Bishop (28-30, 35-38), piano; Curly Russell (4-8, 26-27), Tommy Potter (14-25, 32-34), bass; Max Roach (7-8, 14-26, 28, 29, 31, 35-38), Roy Haynes (10, 12-14), drums; and various other musicians, including Wardell Gray, Howard McGhee, Lucky Thompson, John Lewis, Thelonious Monk, Erroll Garner, Barney Kessel, J.J. Johnson, Slam Stewart, Percy Heath, Cozy Cole, Big Sid Catlett and Buddy Rich.



Frank Morgan

Bop!

Telarc 83413

★★★½

While John Corbett ministers to Rhino's Charlie Parker collection in this Hot Box, I get to tell you about Frank Morgan's latest. Taken together, and particularly side by side, they remind us how persistent bebop remains as perhaps the central focal point of contemporary jazz. Considering how little amending Morgan has imposed on the constitutional texts as laid down by Parker, the resilience of the music across more than half a century is remarkable.

Morgan makes himself comfortable in the familiar bebop canon. (Did you ever notice the thematic similarity between "Well, You Needn't" and "Night In Tunisia"?) If there is a certain lack of ambition in the comfort he takes, that would seem to be precisely the point. The music requires no gimmicks or add-ons to justify our attention or hold our interest.

As one of the last working musicians of the original era, more or less, Morgan may be honored today as much for his longevity as his talent. As is often the problem in these cases, the former tends to filter the way we view the latter. As the giants die off, we grade increasingly on the curve of survivorship. To put it plainly, Morgan has sometimes, in my view, been over-rated. This compact disc seems thoroughly consistent with the virtues and faults of other recent Morgan recordings: a solid harmonic and rhythmic

fluency, but a mercurial attack with a penchant for letting phrases trail off, through either a lack of wind or interest. Nevertheless, he surely stands at the top of the second tier of bebop players.

The Rodney Kendrick trio—with Ray Drummond replacing Curtis Lundy on "52nd Street" and dropping an unexpected "Whispering" quote into a tune based on "I Got Rhythm"—constitutes Morgan's rhythm section. Kendrick is an especially interesting pianist who combines a Monkish ear for the eccentric with a discriminating awareness of what came after. His splashes of dissonance spice a fine bebop date.

—John McDonough

Bop!—*Milano; Well, You Needn't; K.C. Blues; A Night In Tunisia; Blue Monk; Half Nelson; Lover Man; 52nd Street Theme.* (62:42)

Personnel—Morgan, alto saxophone; Rodney Kendrick, piano; Curtis Lundy (1-7), Ray Drummond (8), bass; Leroy Williams, drums.



Wayne Horvitz & Zony Mash

Cold Spell

Knitting Factory Works 201

★★★½

The reason you see people dry-humping at club gigs by the Meters is because syncopation—I'm talking deep, lush, narcotic

syncopation—is one of our chief aphrodisiacs. The bare-bones funk the legendary New Orleans quartet has been honing for almost three decades is built on a lot of tantalizing kineticism and a little sleight-of-hand. They pull the rug out from under so many predictable grooves, surprise becomes their stock-in-trade. Keyboardist/composer Horvitz and his latest ensemble are modernists, residents of the Great Northwest, and, like all those with a groin and a brain, smitten with the stuff that the Meters waxed for the Josie label in the late '60s. On *Cold Spell*, they attempt to see if a G spot can be found anywhere near the gray matter.

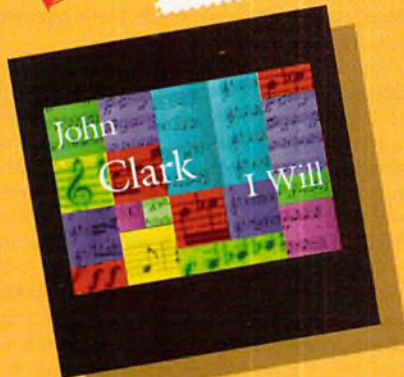
There have been a bunch of organ discs released over the last couple years, but *Cold Spell* is one of the most unique. Horvitz's B-3 musings bypass some of the genre's stylistic stereotypes, offering an anxious funk rather than torrid swing. But they also manage to parallel the realm's defining elements: the greasy swells of sound, the bluesy melodies, the suspense just underneath the frolic. Pigpen, the leader's last band (and the first he established after moving to Seattle several years ago), had a rather predictable crash & bash approach. But Horvitz's music has always been aided by a degree of preening. The Meters' songbook is reliant on precise moves; from "Pungy" to "Dry Spell" to the tune from which Zony Mash took its name, intricacy rules. Same thing with the pieces on *Cold Spell*. It's a music of angles. Though the fun comes from hearing them beveled a bit, the finesse expressed by the players is part of the reward as well.

You've got to be ultra tight to convince listeners of your funkateer prowess, and for the most part, the fingers of Zony Mash form a fist. On the nimble intro to "Smiles" they have the accuracy of a string quartet. Timothy Young's guitar isn't as limber as that of Leo Nocentelli (whose is?), but its harmonic tongue wags a lot more, especially on "Let's Get Mashed." There are parts of "Sex Fiend" that parallel the mathematic riffing of Metallica; the frenzy is nothing short of keen. Of course a band inspired by the Meters should be gauged by the way its rhythm section works. At some points bassist Fred Chalenor and drummer Andy Roth conjure images of the robot walk done by Jack DeJohnette's Audio-Visual

THE HOT BOX

CDs	CRITICS	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	John Ephland
BILL STEWART <i>Telepathy</i>		★★★★	★★★	★★★★½	★★★★
CHARLIE PARKER <i>Yardbird Suite</i>		★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
FRANK MORGAN <i>Bop!</i>		★★★½	★★★½	★★★★	★★★
WAYNE HORVITZ & ZONY MASH <i>Cold Spell</i>		★★	★★½	★★★½	★★★½

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Scapes band. But that may be a byproduct of attack. Their vehemence is generally tempered, allowing for all sorts of subtleties. In "Happens Like That" they couldn't be more pliant.

To a degree, *Cold Spell* is at cross purposes with its elements. Trying to morph hedonistic body music into improv-producing brain food ain't easy. But Horvitz's recombinant tendencies have always been part of his charm. Several of his new tunes could be deemed wan anthems, offering bravura but slipping in some melancholy. His solo on "Mel" is just as much a nod to Sun Ra as it is to Art Neville. And the disc's title track is both genteel and ominous, an unholy swirl of Mancini and Herrmann. Here's to his inspired if unholy alliances. May they continue to offer such seductive blends. —Jim Macnie

Cold Spell—With *The Space On Top*; *Happens Like That*; *Sex Fiend*; *Prudence RSVP*; *Cold Spell*; *Mel*; *Let's Get Mashed*; *Smiles*; *The Gift*; *Withdrawal Symptoms*; *Daylight*. (45:05)
Personnel—Horvitz, Hammond B-3 organ; Timothy Young, electric guitar; Fred Chalenor, electric bass; Andy Roth; drums.



Gary Burton & Friends

Departure
Concord Jazz 4749

★★★★

When *Departure* arrived, John Corbett's article in the March '97 issue of *Down Beat* came to mind. Titled "Fanfare For The Working Band," it ponders the ramifications of the working band's latter-day demise. It is interesting that the two most important vibraharpists in the history of jazz have followed such different career paths. Milt Jackson has played mostly in an ensemble that's stayed together for more than 40 years. Gary Burton exemplifies Corbett's description of a leader "more like a temporary node or shifting focal point ... through intermittent groups and one-off gigs."

The quintet on this album would make a most productive working band, but it won't happen. This is an all-star ensemble, each of whom is a leader of his own "intermittent groups." For his debut on the Concord Jazz label, he offers up his first album of standards in a recording career that spans 35 years. There is a distinctly conservative tone to the arrangements by Burton and Tommy Kamp, and even John Scofield plays like he's wearing a business suit. The instrumental blend of vibes/piano/guitar recalls the "Shearing Sound" (it is surprising to remember that Burton played with Shearing's popular quintet in 1963, when he was 20), yet the retro feeling is on the surface. When the solos begin, we are carried to *fin de siècle* spiritual spaces where Shearing

never took us. On "For All We Know," for example, Burton states the theme darkly, with unhurried poignance, and then proceeds to personal, elliptical cascades. Scofield's barbed variations and Fred Hersch's crystalline filigrees come before the theme returns in unisons and complex comminglings. "Poinciana" starts with Ahmad Jamal's famous 1958 arrangement but spins off into swirling densities.

The clarity of Burton's musical intelligence is continuously apparent. And the *sound* of his vibraharp—purely its sensual auditory stimulus—is one of the most reliable pleasures in jazz. The impactful, resonant attacks of those four mallets, and the emotionally evocative, hovering decays of those bars, could improve every song I ever liked. Too bad he hasn't had a Modern Jazz Quartet of his own. Make that a Quintet.

—Thomas Conrad

Departure—September Song; Poinciana, Depk; Tenderly; If I Were A Bell; For All We Know; Japanese Waltz; Tossed Salads And Scrambled Eggs (Theme From Frasier); Born To Be Blue; Ecaroh. (64:27)

Personnel—Burton, vibraphone; John Scofield, guitar; Fred Hersch, piano; John Patitucci, bass; Peter Erskine, drums.



Mingus Big Band

Live In Time
Dreyfus Jazz 36583

★★★★★

It's rare that a recording, especially a live one, preserves the visceral impact of a big band in full cry—rarer still that a revivalist ensemble conjures up a flesh-and-blood impression rather than just a ghostly image of a departed master. But listening to *Live In Time*—recorded in New York at the Fez, the Mingus Big Band's regular Thursday-night basement haunt—it's easy to imagine yourself front-row center, awash in glorious brass, while the hulking figure of the late Charles Mingus glowers from behind his bass.

Sprawling across two long CDs, the performances capture the Ellingtonian expanse of Mingus' vision—from blues and gospel to the classical avant garde—mixing familiar anthems like "Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting" with obscure masterpieces like "Number 29." More remarkably, the music evokes Mingus' tempestuous personality—balefully raging, joyfully shouting, sorrowfully weeping, tenderly caressing—with preternatural fidelity, as though the man himself were standing in the wings, waiting to fire the first musician who played a faint-hearted note.

The charts, mostly by veteran arranger Sy Johnson, rumble and swagger with brawling

authority, swelling from luminous, low-blow sonorities to jagged, eye-gouging crescendos. The dissonant, fiendishly complex "Number 29," shelved shortly after its 1972 premiere, roars back to life here, gnashing and snarling like a carnivorous beast. "Sue's Changes" flows from an elegiac ballad to a chugging, swirling maelstrom of cacophony and back again, while "Moanin' Mambo" charges its "Pink Panther"-like theme with the frantic energy of a buffalo stampede. Clocking in at nearly 17 minutes, "The Shoes Of The Fisherman's Wife Are Some Jive-Ass Slippers" shows the emotional range of a symphony, waltzing devilishly through fire and ice.

The soloists play as though they were under Mingus' stern gaze, rising to the peak of their prowess. Trumpeter Randy Brecker sizzles unflappably through the torturous changes of "Number 29," and alto saxophonist Gary Bartz kindles a dark modal flame on "Boogie Woogie Shuffle." On piano, John Hicks slips and slides from nervous frenzy to wistful melancholy on "Sue's Changes," while Kenny Drew Jr. launches cascades of white-water glissandos on "The Shoes Of The Fisherman's Wife." Ronnie Cuber's baritone sax coils and slithers with python force on "Moanin' Mambo," and Mark Shim's tenor cuts like a chainsaw on "Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting." Musical director Steve Slagle delivers potent alto solos on several tunes. By the final bar, the listener feels drained, but despite the set's length, there's scarcely a dull moment. If Mingus himself could hear it, even this most demanding taskmaster would surely be moved.

—Larry Birnbaum

Live In Time—*Number 29; Diane/Alice's Wonderland; Boogie Stop Shuffle; Sue's Changes; This Subdues My Passion; Children's Hour Of Dream; Baby Take A Chance With Me; So Long Eric; Moanin' Mambo; Chair In The Sky; E's Flat, Ah's Flat Too; The Shoes Of The Fisherman's Wife Are Some Jive-Ass Slippers; Us Is Two; The Man Who Never*

Sleeps/East Coasting; Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting. (71:19/72:42)

Personnel—Randy Brecker, Philip Harper, Ryan Kisor, Alex Spiagin, Earl Gardner, trumpet; Ku-Umba Frank Lacy, Robin Eubanks, Britt Woodman, Conrad Herwig, Dave Taylor, trombones; Ronnie Cuber, Gary Smulyan, baritone saxophone; John Stubblefield, tenor saxophone, flute; Seamus Blake, tenor and soprano saxophones; Mark Shim, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Gary Bartz, alto saxophone; Steve Slagle, alto and soprano saxophones, flute; Kenny Drew Jr., John Hicks, piano; Andy McKee, bass; Adam Cruz, Tommy Campbell, drums.



Stephen Scott

The Beautiful Thing

Verve 533 186

★★½

Eric Reed

Musicale

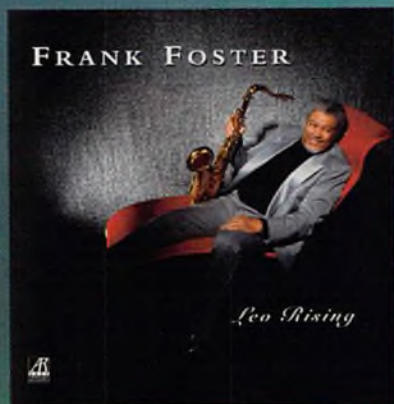
Impulse! 196

★★★½

Eric Reed, 26, and Stephen Scott, 27, are both impressive, firmly grounded young pianists with established chops and credentials who have logged quality time—Reed, with Wynton Marsalis; Scott, with Betty Carter and Sonny Rollins, among others. Both, however, face the challenge of how to make an excellent disc as a leader, from start to finish.

Reed has met the challenge best. Though *Musicale* can't decide if it's a piano trio or quintet album, and there are some questionable choices, overall, it is a muscular, smart and satisfying disc. Reed's firm attack, discrete articulation, fat sound and swaggering sense of swing shout Oscar Peterson. His precision of conception echoes Marsalis, specifically on the very long "Blues To Come," with its accelerando and ritard device. Reed dances on "Longhair Rumba," with a nod to New Orleans piano professor James Booker; floats on air through the zig-zagged, romantic waltz "Frog's Legs"; prays on "A Love Divine"; and stomps at a camp meeting, with Wycliffe Gordon's plunger growling testimony, on "Baby Sis." But "Cosa Nostra" panders to simple minds and "Shug" needs to go back to TV, where it belongs ("Pink Panther"?). And why, on an hour-plus disc, do we need three, fade up/fade down fragments of a throwaway called "Scandal"? The quintet tracks, with Nicholas Payton and Wessell Anderson, bristle with Blakey-ish joy and repartee, openly referenced on "Black, As In Buhaina," reprised on the exuberant "Pete And Repeat." Anderson's huge, warm tone and legato attack in the altissimo range ("Upper Wess Side") and his tumbling thickets on "Blues To Come" are particularly fine.

Stephen Scott's Monkish wit is a highlight in Sonny's current band. But he has sadly sidelined his sardonic edge in favor of syrup and surface on this star-studded (Branford Marsalis, Kenny Garrett) shot at smooth-jazz radio. Though this is



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a sophisticated, warm and well-executed effort, it smacks of false exoticism ("Forevermore," "Statement To Tariff") and Latin-lounge clichés ("The Beautiful Thing"). Kenny Dorham's "La Mesha" becomes department-store Muzak, and his Real Book warhorse, "Blue Bossa," stands unimproved. Scott even manages to turn Ornette Coleman's extraordinary "Lonely Woman" into something trivial.

Yes, there are some good moments. "What Words Will Never Say," a beautiful waltz with interesting changes, nicely highlights bassist Dwayne Burno's big sound.

Scott gets off a passionate, energetic solo on, of all things, the "I Love Lucy" theme. Jesse Davis' biting, crisply turned, Cannonball of a solo on "This Little Light Of Mine" is a killer. Kenny Garrett hits his stride on "Blue Bossa" and "The Heretic," and Russell Malone is appropriately George Benson-ish. But Scott is aiming lower than he needs to, overall. —Paul de Barros

The Beautiful Thing—Forevermore; Blue Bossa; The Beautiful Thing; The Heretic; Oriental Folk Song; I Love Lucy; This Little Light Of Mine; After Thoughts And Reflections; Statement To Tariff; Lonely Woman; La Mesha; What Words Will Never Say. (67:52)

Personnel—Scott, piano; Dwayne Burno, bass; Victor Lewis, Dion Parson (5, 12), drums; Steve Kroon, percussion (1, 3, 4, 8, 9); Kenny Garrett (2, 4, 10); Jesse Davis (7, 11), alto saxophone; Branford Marsalis, tenor saxophone (2), soprano saxophone (9); Ron Blake (5, 11), tenor saxophone; Russell Malone, guitar (3, 4, 7, 8, 9).

Musical—Black, As In Bhaina; Longhair's Rumba; Cosa

Nostra (Our Thing); Frog's Legs; Scandal I; Pete And Repeat; A Love Divine; Baby Sis; Scandal II; Shug; Upper West Side; Scandal III; No Sadness, No Pain; Blues To Come; Well, You Needn't; K.C. Blues; A Night In Tunisia; Blue Monk; Half Nelson; Lower Man; 52nd Street Theme. (64:34)

Personnel—Reed, piano; cuts 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14; Nicholas Payton, trumpet (except 11); Wessell Anderson, alto saxophone; Ron Carter, bass; Karriem Riggins, drums; cuts 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13; Ben Wolfe, bass; Gregory Hutchinson, drums; Wycliffe Gordon, trombone (8); Morgan, alto saxophone; Rodney Kendrick, piano; Curtis Lundy (1-7), Ray Drummond (8), bass; Leroy Williams, drums.



Michiel Borstlap The Sextet Live! Challenge 70030

★★★½

With emerging artists, more is sometimes less. Dutch pianist Michiel Borstlap won the 1996 Thelonious Monk Institute/BMI Composers Competition, and this promising but inconsistent double-CD package captures two live sets from his sextet.

Complex but tuneful Borstlap originals like "Gijs" and "Day Off" start from the mainstream traditions of Miles, Monk and Wayne Shorter, and add some surprising twists and turns. "B.A.M." shifts from an aggressive uptempo theme to a quiet, dirge-like interlude, with the pianist/composer demonstrating a facility for fleet, hurtling solos as well as gently chiming accompaniment.

"Just In Town" and "December Dance" are standout tracks, each suggesting Shorter's influence. The former has a quirky, understated swing reminiscent of Shorter's "Footprints," as Borstlap displays a light touch and saxophonist Yuri Honing offers a fluid, plaintive tenor solo. "December Dance" is slow to develop, but lovely and wistful with Honing returning for a warm, lyrical turn on soprano sax.

There are few familiar (or easily pronounceable) names in the sextet, but the three-horn front line of Honing, trumpeter Eric Vloeimans and alto saxophonist Benjamin Herman impresses with tight ensemble playing and some fine solos. Instead of documenting the entire concert over two discs, Borstlap would have been better served by a single, economical CD introducing his strongest work. —Jon Andrews

The Sextet Live!—B.A.M.; Monk's Mood; Curve; Just In Town; Pooh; December Dance; Day Off; Basin Street Blues. (37:10/48:04)

Personnel—Borstlap, piano; Eric Vloeimans, trumpet; Benjamin Herman, alto saxophone, C-melody saxophone (6); Yuri Honing, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone (7); Anton Drukker, bass; Joost Libbart, drums.

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Chucho Valdés & Irakere

¡Afrocubanismo!
Bembé 2012

★★★½

Paquito D'Rivera

Portraits Of Cuba
Chesky 145

★★★★

The Caribbean Jazz Project

Island Stories
Heads Up 3039

★★

Nearly 20 years after leaving Cuba, where he was the star saxophonist of the band Irakere, Paquito D'Rivera looks back at his homeland with mellow nostalgia. In a big-band project with Argentine arranger Carlos Franzetti, he bathes classic Cuban compositions in vibrant jazz colors; with the Caribbean Jazz Project, a band he co-leads with vibist Dave Samuels and steel drummer Andy Narell, he cranks out bland crossover sounds. Meanwhile, Irakere's pianist/leader Chucho Valdés, who stayed behind in Havana, is enjoying a belated international emergence, blazing with the same sort of intensity that D'Rivera showed when he first arrived on these shores.

Modeled after Miles Davis' *Sketches Of Spain*, *Portraits Of Cuba* is, as D'Rivera puts it, "a jazz tribute to Cuban music." Franzetti's arrangements owe more to Gil Evans than Mario Bauza, with less hand drumming than you'd find on many Stan Kenton albums. The material—including venerable works by classicists like Ernesto Lecuona and Jose White, pop anthems like "The Peanut Vendor" and the "Theme From 'I Love Lucy,'" and originals by D'Rivera and Franzetti—emphasizes the European over the African side of Cuban music. The beautifully crafted charts, with their lush voicings and lustrous textures, fit D'Rivera's full-toned, lyrical, often classically inflected clarinet and soprano and alto saxophones like a pair of satin gloves. When the energy flags, the effect is of overrefined makeout

music. But on uptempo numbers like D'Rivera's title track and Ignacio Pieiro's "Echale Salsita," featuring some striking quotes from Gershwin's "Rhapsody In Blue," the elegance becomes positively electric.

On *Island Stories*, its second album, the CJP stirs smooth acoustic jazz together with mild Cuban, Trinidadian and other Afro-Caribbean flavors to produce a gringo-friendly blend, like taco sauce that's been watered down for north-of-the-border palates. The material is generally lackluster, with formulaic post-fusion exercises by Samuels, dreamy pastels by Narell and a bop-pish Dizzy Gillespie tribute by D'Rivera. Pianist Dario Eskenazi and bassist Mark Walker lay down lively but familiar-sounding vamps, while the leaders' solos drift in an out of soothing tropical platitudes. In a genre defined by rhythm, drummer Mark Walker and percussionist Pernell Saturnino do little more than keep time. But on a meaty composition like Astor Piazzolla's "Libertango," the players rise above cliché to muster up some genuine drama.

¡Afrocubanismo! captures live performances from the 1994 Canadian ¡Afrocubanismo! Festival in Banff, Alberta, featuring Irakere along with guest soloists and a couple of folkloric rumba troupes. Despite mediocre sound quality, the band triumphs through sheer manic energy, although the tempos are often rushed and the jazzy arrangements too breathlessly frantic. Except for Valdés, whose keyboard touch remains exquisitely sensitive at lightning speeds, Irakere's regular soloists, while sleek and fluent, can't match the flair of departed members like D'Rivera and Arturo Sandoval. Neither can Canadians like flutist Bill McBirnie and drummer



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Memo Acevedo, who sit in on "Building Bridges," nor even septuagenarian Cuban flute legend Richard Egües, who sounds a bit creaky on "Cha Cha Cha." By itself, Grupo Ilú Aña performs the austere Afro-Cuban "Rumba Tonada"; with Irakere and guest vocalist Edgardo Cambón, Los Muñequitos de Matanzas turn rumba into festive modern salsa. But the real highlights of the album are the spectacular percussion breaks, where rhythm wizards Changuito and Angá strut their mind-boggling chops.

—Larry Birnbaum

¡Afrocubanismo!—Anabis; Cha Cha Cha; Neurosis; Rumba Tonada; Estella A Las Estrellas; Building Bridges; Xiomara. (62:14)

Personnel—Irakere (1–3, 5–7): Valdés, piano; Carlos de Puerto, bass; Enrique Plá, drums; Miguel "Angá" Díaz, congas; Carlos Averhoff, tenor saxophone; César Lopez, alto saxophone; Juan Munguía, trumpet; Richard Egües, flute (2); José Luis "Changuito" Quintana (2, 5, 6); Don Thompson, vibes (6); Memo Acevedo, drums (6); Bill McBirnie, flute (6); Hugh Fraser, trombone (6); Edgardo Cambón, vocals (7); Grupo Ilú Aña (4, 7); José Pilar, Regino Jiménez, Fermín Nani, percussion, vocals; Amelia Pedrosa, Librada Quesada, vocals; Los Muñequitos De Matanzas (7); Gregorio "Goyo" Díaz, Jesús Alfonso, Augustin Díaz, congas; Rafael "Niño" Navarro, Richard Cané, Alberto Romero, Israel Berriel G., Israel Berriel J., Ana Pérez, vocals.

Portraits Of Cuba—La Bella Cubana; The Peanut Vendor; Tu; Tu Mi Delirio; No Te Importe Saber; Drume Negrita; Portraits Of Cuba; Excerpt From "Aires Tropicales"; Mariana; Como Arrullo De Pamas; Echale Salsita; Song To My Son; Theme From "I Love Lucy." (60:34)

Personnel—D'Rivera, clarinet, soprano and alto saxophones; Larence Feldman, alto saxophone, flute; Dick Oatts (1–6, 9, 12); Thomas Christensen (7, 8, 10, 11, 13), tenor saxophone, flute; Andrés Boiarsky, tenor saxophone, clarinet, flute; Roger Rosenberg, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet, bassoon; Lew Soloff (1–6, 9, 12); Bob Millikan (7, 8,

10, 11, 13); Diego Ucola, Gustavo Bergalli, trumpet, flugelhorn; John Clark, french horn; James Pugh, trombone; David Taylor, bass trombone; Allison Brewster Franzetti (1, 2, 5, 6, 8–10); Dario Eskenazi (3, 4, 7, 11, 12); Carlos Franzetti (13), piano; David Finck, bass; Mark Waller, drums; Pernell Saturnino, percussion.

Island Stories—Bluellespie; Sadie's Dance; Calabash; Tjaded Motion; Zigzag; Andalucia; Shadow Play; Libertango; The Lost Voice; Grass Roots. (65:12)

Personnel—Paquito D'Rivera, soprano and alto saxophones; Dave Samuels, marimba, vibes; Andy Narell, steel pans; Dario Eskenazi, piano; Oscar Stagnaro, bass; Mark Walker, drums; Pernell Saturnino, congas, percussion.



The Jazz Mentality

Show Business Is My Life

Koch Jazz 7835

★★★★

From the name they've chosen for their band, it's clear these five musicians have only one thing in mind: jazz. More specifically, post-bop. Formed seven years ago, the Jazz Mentality carved out a niche in the New York jazz scene, with a few minutes of national attention coming their way in 1993 for the release of their debut album, *Maxwell's Torment*. But the band has been dormant the entire past year due to group saxophonist Chris Potter's successful solo career; and only now, with this new live recording out, does drummer Myles Weinstein tell *Down Beat* that the band is gearing up to reassemble.

Three autumns ago in a lower Manhattan club called the Greenwich House, the quartet played this satisfying set of original compositions and standards. The first claim on the audience's attention was how well the group members listen to each other. On the Latinized "Yellow Petals," Potter's soprano and Steve Elmer's piano make commentaries on the basic melody as Weinstein builds tension with considerable poise before exploding. The quiet, urgent mystery that soloist Potter conveys on "Potter's Planet," a slow-tempo piece, is shared by bassist Ralph Hamperian and the others. Their thought processes are telepathic, here and all through the album.

The Jazz Mentality makes prudent use of dynamics, as Benny Golson points out in a quote used in the CD package, and the band members keep their instruments in balance, evincing an egoless sense of order derived from familiarity and friendship. When Potter storms through the brisk closer "State Of Mind," say, or Elmer takes the lead on a trenchant investigation of Miles Davis' "Solar," there is less a sense of a soloist-plus-accompanists than a true band expressing feelings of mutual delight and seriousness of intent.

—Frank-John Hadley

Show Business Is My Life—*Show Business Is My Life*; *Yellow Petals*; *Quiet Moments*; *Dis' Here*; *Solar*; Art Blakey, Art Blakey; Potter's Planet; Hamperian Moons; *State Of Mind*. (71:23)

Personnel—Chris Potter, tenor, alto and soprano saxophones; Steve Elmer, piano; Ralph Hamperian, bass; Myles Weinstein, drums.



Benny Green


Kaleidoscope

Blue Note 52037


★★★★½

One track can turn an entire project around. In Benny Green's case, it's the title track of *Kaleidoscope*. The CD is otherwise a col-


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lection of inviting, mellow Green originals with the pianist expanding his customary trio to include horns and guitar. The core rhythm section is solid with Ron Carter on bass, Lewis Nash on drums and Russell Malone on guitar.

Green's playing continues to develop as a distillation of such mainstream influences as Bill Evans and Herbie Hancock, and his writing has evolved considerably from early projects like his *Lineage* CD. "The Sexy Mexy" benefits from a colorful, retro groove and some stinging guitar work from Malone. "Thursday's Lullaby" sways gently behind sparkling piano from Green and sighing alto sax work from Antonio Hart—it's elegant and pretty in ways that suggest Herbie Hancock's *Speak Like A Child* album.

Two versions of "Kaleidoscope" open and close the CD, and they command attention. Hectic and fiery with an urgent alto solo from Hart, "Kaleidoscope" begs for replay. As Green's liner notes imply, its spontaneity suggests that Green is about to take another step forward. "Kaleidoscope" offers flashes of excitement and yet unfulfilled promise that make other performances on the CD sound a little complacent by comparison. —Jon Andrews

Kaleidoscope—*Kaleidoscope; Thursday's Lullaby; The Sexy Mexy; Patience; Central Park South; My Girl Bill; Apricot; You're My Melody; Kaleidoscope.* (57:16)
Personnel—Green, piano; Ron Carter, bass (1-7, 9); Lewis Nash, drums (1-3, 5, 7, 9); Stanley Turrentine, tenor saxophone (5, 8); Antonio Hart, alto saxophone (1, 2, 7, 9); Russell Malone, guitar (1-3, 5-7, 9).



Louis Hayes Quintet

Louis At Large
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★★★★½

Louis Hayes/ Woody Shaw Quintet

Lausanne 1977
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★★½

We live in an age of interesting drummers. We have our subtle colorists and our deadpan dadaists and even our elliptical melodists. It is therefore a revelation to hear *Louis At Large* and revisit how a hard-core hard-bop percussionist can excite a whole room to cosmic vibration with four even beats to the bar. *Louis At Large* is Louis Hayes' first domestic

recording as a leader in nearly 20 years, and it is strong stuff. It has the naked aggression of the classic drummer-led ensembles of Hayes' generation. Blakey created the paradigm but Hayes has his own signature. It has to do with his hissing, shimmering top cymbal and how he relentlessly pushes the beat and the way he incites soloists with whiplash breaks and fills. And because his two horns are among the brightest lights of the new generation, Hayes' album covers 50 years of the art form, from rich roots to edgy striving.

Among recently arrived tenor saxophonists, Javon Jackson is not as spectacular as James Carter nor as charismatic as Joshua Redman, but his voice grows more confident and compelling with every recording. He has a clean,

classic tenor sound, and his improvisations (e.g., the one on "Dear Lou") are like action paintings with a plan. On his broad canvases, bold strokes at the center flow to corners completed with detailed repetitions and ironic quotations and mnemonic symbols. He understands less-is-more (his solo on Wayne Shorter's "Rio" evolves a finished narrative from two notes), but he can also scorch the landscape, like on "Check In."

If Jackson weren't fast he'd get trampled by Riley Mullins, the hottest new trumpet since Nicholas Payton. Mullins was first noticed outside of Chicago in the Illinois Jacquet Big Band, but he loudly announces himself on *Louis At Large*. Few moments in jazz can exhilarate like a quick-on-quick trumpeter burning rubber out of an ensemble, like on "Hen And Hub" (for Joe

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and Freddie). Mullins also writes cool tunes.

The new Sharp Nine label (motto: "straight ahead *and* in the pocket") is off to a promising start. The recorded sound is suitably in-your-face and the liner notes by Andrew Lamas and Peter Margulies are intelligent. One small gripe: Why identify the recording studio (Van Gelder) but not the engineer? Was it Rudy or not?

The release of Hayes' first new album in 20 years coincides with the arrival of *Lausanne 1977*, which contains previously unissued 20-year-old music from a quintet co-led by Hayes and Woody Shaw. It might be interesting to compare Hayes' work in two ensemble contexts so widely separated in time, place and style—if only

we could hear him better on *Lausanne 1977*. (It's the fifth volume of the TCB label's "Swiss Radio Days Jazz Series," which rescues live recordings from the vaults of the Swiss Radio Corp.) It sounds like it might have been a powerful, rough-and-tumble night for both Shaw and saxophonist René McLean, but with sonic quality this wretched it's hard to be sure.

Lausanne 1977 will be of interest primarily to Shaw collectors—a small but passionate cult which holds that Shaw, quiet as it's kept, belongs in the great trumpet pantheon (this reviewer included).

Louis At Large, on the other hand, is my current favorite Saturday morning CD. It gets my attitude on straight and my blood pumping. If I were a younger jazz critic, it would get my ass shaking. —Thomas Conrad

Louis At Large—Check In; Rio; Hen And Hub; My Ship; Teef; Dear Lou; Dream Surreal; My Old Flame; Perambulation. (61:37)

Personnel—Hayes, drums; Javon Jackson, tenor saxophone; Riley Mullins, trumpet; David Hazeltine, piano; Santi Debriano, bass.

Lausanne 1977—In Case You Haven't Heard; Moontrane; Contemplation; Jean-Marie; Bilad As Sudan. (73:53)

Personnel—Hayes, drums; Shaw, trumpet, flugelhorn; René McLean, tenor and soprano saxophones, flute; Ronnie Mathews, piano; Stafford James, bass.

Chatterly chords, lines with a whip-like crack, murmured phrases—each has a sense of song. But Rosewoman relishes surprise, and she's never more than a few beats away from splashed ideas that scatter the harmony, random right-hand statements that clatter pleasingly.

The tunes show a good feel for composition, particularly the alluring "Where" and the cagey "Passion Dance Blues," which evolves from a 12/8 gospel-ish blues to a 6/8 Afro-Cuban-esque vamp. The Rosewoman's two vocals add a bit of color, especially on the rhythmically vital "Agayu."

Davis and Jackson work tightly with the leader, following her like benevolent shadows, soloing with requisite poise and fire. —Zan Stewart

Spirit—Dolphin Dance; In A Mood; Independence Day; When Sunny Gets Blue; For Agayu; Where It Comes From; Passion Dance Blues; For Monk; Spirit. (69:52)

Personnel—Rosewoman, piano; Kenny Davis, bass; Gene Jackson, drums.

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Michele Rosewoman

Spirit

Blue Note 36777

★★★★½

The second trio release by Rosewoman (following 1993's *Occasion To Rise*), *Spirit* has plenty of personality. Recorded live at the 1994 Festival International de Jazz de Montreal, the pianist (and sometimes singer) performs with her working threesome of bassist Kenny Davis and drummer Gene Jackson. Sparks fly.

The 41-year-old Rosewoman, who fronts several now-and-then ensembles in New York and has played and recorded with the likes of drummer Ralph Peterson, is nothing if not a percussive pianist. She often hits the keys hard, evincing an alternately bold and bright tone that recalls early '60s Cecil Taylor. But while she likes to play expressively, Rosewoman enjoys swinging here and there and has a profound affection for the melodies of her pieces.

On "Dolphin Dance," "Where It Comes From," "For Agayu" and the rest, a sense of the importance of theme and its underlying harmony is manifested in the pianist's improvised lines.



Matthew Shipp

Prism

Brinkman 58

★★★★

Matthew Shipp/ Roscoe Mitchell

2-2

2.13.61/Thirsty Ear 21312.2

★★½

Ivo Perelman

Cama de Terra

Homestead 237

★★★★½

What distinguishes Matthew Shipp from the ranks of young, Cecil Taylor-inspired pianists is the urgency of his touch. He creates and sustains tension and immediacy through cascades of notes. Shipp also takes care to hold the listener's attention by varying his attack, utilizing the full dynamic range of his instrument and constantly changing directions. He's been heard most often with saxophonists Roscoe Mitchell and David S. Ware.

Prism captures Shipp's volatility and inven-

tiveness in performance with his familiar rhythm section of William Parker on bass and Whit Dickey on drums. On "Prism I," Shipp favors the lower register of the piano, using dark, ominous rumblings suggesting a gathering storm. He uses short repeated figures to drive the piece forward, building elemental force and momentum. The trio dynamic frees Parker and Dickey to interact with Shipp as equals without limiting them to traditional roles. Parker is particularly impressive as a soloist. With Dickey and Shipp sharing rhythmic responsibilities, the bassist has ample room to improvise, using the bow extensively. Ideas constantly flow from Shipp, whose playing rewards close attention. If certain mannerisms recall Taylor, Shipp's approach to the piano seems tighter, more precise and less percussive. At times, he suggests the speed and unpredictability of an agitated Bud Powell.

In duo performance with Roscoe Mitchell, Shipp frequently plays a supporting role. 2-Z is a perplexing, inconsistent CD, with Mitchell leading Shipp down thorny, winding paths. Mitchell's playing is often harsh and cryptic to the point of inaccessibility. "2-Z-4" is lovely and spacious with Mitchell's delicate soprano sax lines enhanced by Shipp's exotic melody on piano, and the intriguing "2-Z-3" evolves from rollicking bop to free interplay. Too many other tracks frustrate the listener with Mitchell playing dizzying repetitive figures on alto sax or emitting hushed peeps on soprano in a field of silence. With Mitchell's group, the Note Factory, Shipp embellishes and softens Mitchell's melodies. In this setting, he responds to Mitchell with fast and furious volleys, or spare fill-ins; but the direction of the pieces is unclear. 2-Z isn't a good introduction to Shipp, and even enthusiastic supporters of Mitchell may find this disc problematic.

Tenor saxophonist Ivo Perelman most often works in a Brazil-influenced setting, where his forceful improvisations erupt from folk melodies. His drumless trio with Shipp and Parker can be viewed as a departure, in that the open-textured, mostly improvised pieces don't show the saxophonist's Brazilian side. Perelman initially determines the shape and direction of each piece, with his partners joining in to add color and details.

Pleading and searching with his customary passion, Perelman is clearly the focal point of this trio. Shipp and Parker feed him spare melodic and rhythmic information throughout these relatively short pieces, but the improvisations rarely establish a groove. Perelman's robust, grainy tone and emotional playing threaten to overwhelm Shipp and Parker.

These are powerful performances, but I prefer to hear Perelman backed by drums in a more structured setting (e.g., his recent, excellent *Tapeba Songs* on Ibeji). —Jon Andrews

Prism—Prism I; Prism II. (57:57)

Personnel—Shipp, piano; William Parker, bass; Whit Dickey, drums.

2-Z—2-Z; 2-Z-2; 2-Z-3; 2-Z-4; 2-Z-5; 2-Z-6; 2-Z-7; 2-Z-8; 2-Z-9; 2-Z-10; 2-Z-11 (*The Physics Of Angels*). (44:02)

Personnel—Shipp, piano; Mitchell, alto and soprano saxophones.

Cama de Terra—Soundcheck; One Converse; To Another; Nho Quim; Spiral; Adriana; Groundswell Descent; Dedos; Elephants Have Brains; Cama de Terra; The Dark Of Day. (53:58)

Personnel—Perelman, tenor saxophone; Shipp, piano; William Parker, bass.

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Jeri Brown

April In Paris
Justin Time 92

★★★

A *April In Paris* is vaguely a concept album. The title tells where and when it was recorded last year, but the thread that runs through it is nothing so obvious as songs set beneath the Eiffel Tower. Jeri Brown seeks an elusive romantic resonance, a "bouquet of passion." Only a few of these songs are about Paris or April, but all evoke for her a flutter of life like springtime on the Seine, the pale light and limpid air.

April In Paris is an honest, competent, amiable recording, but it never makes magic. Brown's touch with a lyric is too hard-sell to crystallize mystery and nuance. She comes closest on "Once Upon A Summertime," where she lets Michel Legrand's ephemeral sentiment coalesce without forcing it. But on "Who Can I Turn To" and "The Twelfth Of Never," her stilted, dramatized phrasing breaks the reverie. And Brown is not distinctive enough as a stylist to take songs from the public domain like "Summertime" and "Greensleeves" and invest them with personal symbolism.

April In Paris will do you no harm. The recorded sound of engineer Alain Cluzeau puts Brown's sensuous, strong vocal instrument close enough to lick your ear. Cluzeau also gets all the deep mystique of Pierre Michelot's bass. Michelot, one of the first and still finest of European jazz bassists, twists and dances beneath all of Brown's words, spreading joie de vivre.

—Thomas Conrad

April In Paris—Gentle Piece; Once Upon A Summertime; The Twelfth Of Never; When April Comes Again; Who Can I Turn To (When Nobody Needs Me); Morning Lovely; I Could Have Loved You; Summertime; Poem—As The Mist Leaves No Scar; Greensleeves; The Windmills Of Your Mind. (57:21)
Personnel—Brown, vocals; Alain Jean-Marie, piano; Pierre Michelot, bass; John Betsch, drums; Roberto De Brashov, accordion (2, 11).

cago. Violinist Mark Feldman was a protégé, and vocalist Terry Callier says that he did not feel he was a "jazz" singer until he performed in a Corpolongo quartet. Corpolongo's debut as a leader, *Just Found Joy*, shows that his technique is as commanding as his teachings.

As an alumnus of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the considerably looser Spontaneous Composition band, Corpolongo has worked within a considerable range of musical realms. He skillfully applies these experiences throughout the disc, which contains eight of his original works. "La Blues" is based around an endearing melodic motif that pianist Larry Luchowski repeats while Corpolongo soars above the changes on clarinet, at times sounding as if he's directly challenging Artie Shaw. Another impressive tune, "Hey, What's Happening," is a warm ballad that displays Corpolongo's facility for manipulating the alto's registers. The charming "Valse" gives Corpolongo a chance to demonstrate his uncanny soprano approach. "Try To, If You Can" features a duet between Corpolongo and bassist Eric Hochberg, and they take their instrumental combination to continually unexpected directions. When Corpolongo brings in guest violinist Jeff Czech and percussionist Paul Wertico to supplement the quartet on the extended "The Way It Is," he successfully navigates the territory between pure notation and improvisation. After the dissonance of Czech and Hochberg contrasts with the incisive polyrhythms of Wertico and drummer Mike Raynor, Corpolongo's dramatic entrance is absorbing.

In performance, and in somewhat surreptitious tapes, Corpolongo often creates engrossing jazz that's particularly informed by his interest in 20th-century classical composition. Now that this disc's release has given his career a new beginning, he should be provided with more chances to display all he has to offer.

—Aaron Cohen

Just Found Joy—Valse; Time Impulse; La Blues; Hey, What's Happening; Just Found Joy; Try To, If You Can; Time Sense; The Way It Is. (65:21)

Personnel—Rich Corpolongo, alto saxophone, clarinet, soprano saxophone; Larry Luchowski, piano; Eric Hochberg, bass, electric bass; Mike Raynor, drums, percussion; Jeff Czech, violin (8); Paul Wertico, percussion (8).

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Rich Corpolongo

Just Found Joy
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★★★★

Multireedist Rich Corpolongo has always kept a low profile, but he has quietly inspired scores of musicians from Chi-



Barry Harris

Live At "DUG"
enja 9097

★★★½

A stroke four years ago appears to have left no audible scars on the virtuosity of veteran pianist Barry Harris, whose playing on this 1995 trio set remains as suave, graceful and well-bred as ever. The breeding is out of Bud Powell, of course. It's often been written that Powell and Monk make up Harris' roots. But aside from a couple of whimsical chords dropped into "I Got Rhythm" and a segue into "Rhythm A Ning," one would be hard-pressed to locate much evidence of Monk in the straight-ahead and tastefully swinging lines Harris pours out here.

The general familiarity of the material is refreshing and clarifying. Good tunes with astutely crafted harmonic currents make for good improvisation. After being played-out 40 years ago and effectively retired, "Cherokee" and "How High The Moon" are good to hear once again. Moreover, when player and listener are reading from the same map, the detours and twists are more easily recognized and better appreciated.

The snappy and straightforward "How High The Moon" is unaccountably named "Luminescence" on the cover (and liner notes) and even bares a Harris composer credit; this despite the fact that he makes no attempt to mount a fresh melodic line on such a familiar harmonic chassis. (I'll leave it to the attorneys to sort out that one.)

Recorded in a Tokyo club, the program is bright and buoyant and the ambience intimate. The house bassist Kunimitsu Inaba and drummer Fumio Watanabe are properly supportive and sensitive. But Harris is, of course, the focus of this pleasant CD.

—John McDonough

Live At "DUG"—*Luminescence* [How High The Moon]; *Somebody Loves Me*; *No Name Blues*; *Oblivion*; *It Could Happen To You*; *Cherokee*; *On Green Dolphin Street*; *I Got Rhythm/Rhythm A Ning*; *East Of The Sun*; *Nascimento*. (63:25)

Personnel—Harris, piano; Kunimitsu Inaba, bass; Fumio Watanabe.

Broadway composer Harold Arlen. An academic based in Wisconsin who formerly led a large jazz ensemble in Boston, he understands how his fresh musical notions—shifting tricky 6/8 passages across the compositions, going for bold textures, using a panoply of surprising chords and harmonies—are nothing without the *right* musicians. No problem: He's sought out a number of Bostonians and New Yorkers who've been kin of his in the none-too-ordinary Accurate Records jazz clan headed by Either/Orchestra saxophonist Russ Gershon.

Interestingly, the often madcap E/O turns in one of the album's more conventional performances, handling "Stormy Weather" with a resolved that appears rooted in serenity. The Perfumed Scorpion group, on the other hand, rips the husk right off the chestnut "Get Happy," with the jarringly frantic playing of acoustic guitarist John Dirac and his three cohorts suggesting a Marx Brothers absurdism, and they employ a tongue-in-cheek panache when zipping through "Ding! Dong! The Witch Is Dead." The Charlie Kohlhas Quintet shows why it's often designated Boston's best working band with their mostly serious and altogether marvelous examination of "If I Only Had A Brain"—the song's wild closing section has the Scarecrow dancing at the corner of Bourbon Street and the Yellow Brick Road. NYC's nine-piece Dadadah, featuring Kitty Brazelton's enthralled singing, puts an imaginative spin on "That Old Black Magic." And singer Janet Planet and pianist John Harmon, two Midwesterners, make a sensitive appraisal of "Come Rain Or Come Shine." Trumpet soloist Schaphorst, allegedly performing in his birthday suit (which, ah, probably explains the lack of accompanists), takes a poised, dignified approach playing the haunting melody of the title track.

Phenoms Medeski Martin & Wood receive top billing on the CD's cover and, sure enough, they make a lasting impression. The intensity with which the trio furnishes grooves for "Out Of This World" and "Life's Full Of Consequence" signals the depth of their emotional involvement with the material. "Lullaby" is a quiet purr of sensuality. More so than any of the other groups present, MM & W reflect Arlen's love of the blues.

In sum, *Over The Rainbow* is almost all you could ask for in a progressive tribute to a Tin Pan Alley titan, the only debit being Schaphorst's decision to favor standards over the rare gems in the Arlen songbook. —Frank-John Hadley

Over The Rainbow—*Out Of This World*; *The Man That Got Away*; *If I Only Had A Brain*; *Lullaby*; *Ding! Dong! The Witch Is Dead*; *Come Rain Or Come Shine*; *Ac-cent-tchu-ate The Positive*; *Stormy Weather*; *Get Happy*; *Life's Full Of Consequences*; *That Old Black Magic*; *I've Got The World On A String*; *Over The Rainbow*. (67:37)

Personnel—Schaphorst, arranging, keyboards (11); trumpet (13); Medeski Martin & Wood (1, 4, 7, 10); John Medeski, organ; Chris Wood, bass; Billy Martin, drums; Perfumed Scorpion (2, 5, 9); John Carlson, trumpet; Doug Yates, bass clarinet; John Dirac, guitar; Dane Richeson, drums, hi-hat (5, 9); Charlie Kohlhas Quintet (3); Kohlhas, alto saxophone; Matt Langley, tenor saxophone; Carlson, trumpet; John Turner, bass; Matt Wilson, drums; Janet Planet, voice (6) and John Harmon, piano (6); Either/Orchestra (8); Oscar Noriga, alto saxophone; Russ Gershon, tenor saxophone; Kohlhas, baritone saxophone; Carlson, Tom Halter,flugelhorn, trumpets; Curtis Hasselbring, Dan Fox, trombones; Chris Taylor, piano; John Turner, bass; Eric Rosenthal, drums; Dadadah (11); Kitty Brazelton, voice; Matt Turner, cello; Danny Weiss, alto saxophone; Tom Varner, french horn; Sarah Smith, trombone; Elizabeth Panzer, harp; Jeff Eckels, bass; Richeson, drums, percussion; untitled trio (12); Hasselbring, trombone; Turner, cello; Richeson, drums.



Ken Schaphorst

Over The Rainbow
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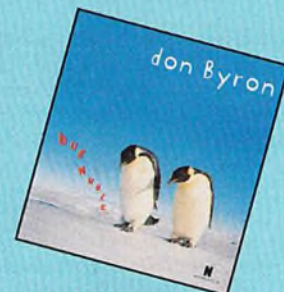
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JAZZ

Drilling For Precision

by John McDonough

Reviewing the latest stack of university band CDs brings mixed emotions. Pleasure at the thought of finding an interesting or neglected chart among the mix. But ennui at the sameness that is often the overriding impression of the lot.

It needn't be that way. These bands might relax a little, not worry so much about sounding old-fashioned, and simply swing more. But the charts often have their own academic and political strings attached with special learning problems to solve in the lab setting. In drilling for precision, often at fast tempos, for instance, the result is often a high-tension rigidity in the performance that precludes swing.

And the charts themselves are so narrowly contemporary and centered on the Jones/Nestico/Brecker/etc. era, they easily become one long, incestuous cliché. How many more rhythm-section dropouts do we have to endure, for example? Educators would do well, it seems, to break out of the '70s and '80s into a wider range of sensibilities.

Towson State University Jazz Ensemble: *The Tiger Speaks* (Towson State University 0096; 44:55: ★★★★★) Fine section discipline that can put some smooth English on the lines, especially the saxes, make this a well-polished pleasure. "Love For Sale" is a paraphrase of Pete Meyers' famous chart for Buddy Rich, but offers some well-handled variations while keeping the feel. Bob Brookmeyer's impressionistic "Skylark" nearly turns into a still life, though Frank Thibeault's alto handles it well. The band nails two crisp Sam Nestico pieces, though one would have done fine. Director Glenn Cashman might consider replacing Nestico's "Fascinating Rhythm" with Fletcher Henderson's and exposing his players to an alternate style.

University of Northern Iowa Jazz Band One: *Skittish* (62:25: ★★★★★) Bob Washut leads his Band One through as confident a reading of Frank Foster's Basie-ish "In A Mellow Tone" as any you're likely to hear. Sid Bos gives an amusing impersonation of Ellington's idiosyncratic piano on "Feetbone." And Jason Henriksen's tenor has power to spare on "Jump Monk." But much of the band's talent seems wasted on trashy fusion vamps like "Call In '95" and "Blue In C."

DePaul University Jazz Ensemble: *Something To Live For* (DPUJE 003; 58:57: ★★★★★) The first four cuts here are by the Bob Lark's 1996 band, the last five by the 1995. By and large the orchestra is well showcased in performances of student and faculty charts. The soloists are uniformly proficient, though a few exhibit the worst excesses of bad Coltrane. Former guest Clark Terry may be glad



Count Basie: A favorite of students, both in and outside of the classroom.

not to be part of a silly and sophomoric "Old MacDonald." The first jazz record ever made imitated animals. It was hokum in 1917. It still is. As a gag encore to empty a house, OK. But with one crack a year at a CD, what possessed Lark to offer this as the impression he wants to leave us with of his band?

University of Las Vegas Ensemble: *That's A Wrap* (Sea Breeze 4520; 53:36: ★★★★★) There's plenty of galloping good drive in this package of UNLV showcases, none better than the closer, "Five Alarm Fire," which features all the saxes to exceptional effect. "S.S.T." is a line based on "Sweet Georgia Brown," whose 80-year-old changes are still so inspiringly correct they practically play themselves. And we get an alternate take on "Catch The Rebop Train," heard on the NAU set in the same arrangement. The slightly slower tempo here is the principal difference. Director Frank Gagliardi, for whom this CD marks his farewell to UNLA, has fashioned a first-rate orchestra, showcasing it with taste and flair.

Nebraska Jazz Orchestra: *Volume V* (American Music Corp. 1006; 57:33: ★★★★★) Four years' worth of NJO sessions from 1992 to '96 are collected here. It's unusual in that it's the only CD of the present lot in which the music never falls below a medium-fast tempo. Although the bands are well rehearsed and in generally crack form, there is a curious lack of overall excitement. The album starts off nicely with quite a good "Better Git It In Your Soul." But much of the material that follows ("Oops," "Street Smarts") rolls on square rhythmic wheels that make for bumpy jazz. The arrangements are mostly from within the band, principally by David Sharp and Peter Bouffard. Solos are pro-sounding but bland.

Western Michigan University: *Higher Ground* (SMR 9601; 54:59: ★★★★★) Director Stephen Zegree transplants Miles, Basie, Ellington and others from their instrumental format to the Gold Company, a vocal ensemble whose 16 singers function within the school's jazz major. They are supported here by a rhythm section, and occasionally a small horn contingent. In wishing to showcase versatility, however, Zegree squanders a bit too much of the group's self-evident excellence on either outright junk (Stevie Wonder's "Higher Ground," "Lua Soberana") or misbegotten good intentions (Clare Fischer's swingless reworking of "Rockin' In Rhythm").

When an ensemble is as rich as this one (e.g., on pieces like "Giant Steps" and "Corner Pocket"), its ability to play second-rate material can be assumed without treating us to a demonstration.

Western Michigan University: *Disposable Income* (Sea Breeze 4522; 69:25: ★★★★★) WMU's big band contingent is the work of Trent Kynaston, who helms the 1995 and '96 WMU Jazz orchestras here. Both are excellent units and get a chance to show it in a strong program of challenging charts. The saxes are especially favored, starting with "Battle Of The Bop Brothers," in which you'll also hear some tart piano comping behind the horns from Dave Powers. My main reservation is slight: The length of some of the pieces ("Compensation," "Off The Cuff" and "Quartet No. 2" all are over 11 minutes) puts a stiff burden on soloists to sustain interest. Some tightening might sharpen the focus on the band's greater strength and its ensemble power.

Northern Arizona University Jazz Ensemble: *Vintage Year* (Sea Breeze 4519; 66:05: ★★★★★) Music director Peter Vinova has struck a superior balance of ensemble strength and repertoire in the NAU's third entry for Sea Breeze. The charts are generally the work of the usual suspects, but well chosen to frame the band's considerable chops. Nowhere does all this come together with more zing than on Thad Jones' "Fingers," which is a compendium of the NAU solo proficiency at battle speed. Strong riffing kicks things along in solid Kansas City style.

University of Texas Jazz Orchestra: *Loose Ends* (UT/Austin; 68:17: ★★★★★) This potpourri of live performances by the UT (Austin) band were recorded over the last five years. Rick Lawn leads a fine band through a mix of nine tunes, nearly half of which are student charts. Where better but in school does one learn *not* to open an otherwise worthy piece with nearly two minutes of sleep-inducing solo bass (David Morgan's "Those Days"). John Mills' "Under Construction" demonstrates lengthy ambitions and a large shelf of writing resources that perhaps need a bit more economy and focus. Even more lengthy in ambition is Lawn's own 32-minute "Dance Suite," which the band performs with confidence and punch. Part 3, "Traditions," is the juiciest (and the briefest) of the sections.

DB

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BEYOND

Classic Continuity

by Jon Andrews

The flipside to the ECM label's "chamber jazz" aesthetic, the ECM New Series is home to classical crossovers by jazz artists like Keith Jarrett and Jan Garbarek, contemporary composers, and uncategorizable vocal music as well as more traditional classical works. This cross-section of recent releases illustrates the breadth of the New Series' appeal to listeners who appreciate innovation and pure virtuosity.

Arvo Pärt: *Litany* (21592; 41:50; ★★★★★½) The New Series champions under-recognized European composers, with Estonian Arvo Pärt its greatest success. Pärt's sublime, deeply spiritual works appeal to both traditional and contemporary camps using liturgical themes with distinctly modernist elements. At times, he seems caught between the 20th century and the 16th. *Litany* strikes a good balance between Pärt's exquisite vocal harmonies (sung by the Hilliard Ensemble) and celestial strings. Pärt's majestic music will be heard in the cathedrals of the next century.

Meredith Monk: *Volcano Songs* (21589; 68:55; ★★★★★) Monk tops a short list of genuine innovators in vocal music. With whoops, clicks, whispers and gasps, she's personalized extended vocal technique to invent a virtual (wordless) language of her own. The solo and duet "Volcano Songs" challenge, mesmerize and sometimes exasperate, but they're full of drama and strange beauty. A casual listener might wonder if Monk's singing is Native American, Tibetan or glossolalia. Amid such bare settings, the piano accompaniment of the haunting, melodic "New York Requiem" sounds lush.

W.A. Mozart/Keith Jarrett: *Piano Concertos* (21565; 59:01/71:51; ★★★½) Moonlighting from jazz, Jarrett has recorded an impressive catalog of classical works from J.S. Bach to the present. His venture into Mozart's music alongside the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, including three piano concertos and a symphony, is as lively, silky and graceful as one might expect. In Mozart's scheme, the pianist is one voice among many, and the listener shouldn't expect Jarrett to dominate the performance. Jarrett's playing is convincing, as he generates rippling, sometimes ornate lines without apparent effort, but this setting doesn't fully test his interpretive skills. To better appreciate those skills, start with his strikingly personal recordings of Handel's and Shostakovich's solo keyboard music.

Giya Kancheli: *Caris Mere* (21568; 54:13; ★★★★★) Georgian composer Kancheli's powerful music was profoundly affected by warfare and religious persecution in his homeland. "Night Prayers" and "Midday Prayers" convey desolation and trauma, using soprano voice and solo reeds to suggest



Eleni Karaindrou: satisfying and memorable

wounded survivors on a smoking battlefield. On "Night Prayers," an uneasy stillness is interrupted by night terrors, signified by the anguished cry of Jan Garbarek on soprano sax. Kancheli is adept at using quiet, barren landscapes to convey emptiness and despair.

The Hilliard Ensemble: *A Hilliard Songbook* (21614; 64:04/55:50; ★★★½) After the surprising success of the vocal quartet's medieval music collaboration with Garbarek, this double-CD is a departure, exploring contemporary vocal music through a diverse, uneven mix of works from 12 composers including Pärt, James MacMillan and Morton Feldman. While Latin texts and medieval influences are plentiful, bassist Barry Guy joins in his wildly subversive, shape-shifting "Un Coup de Dés," Veljo Tormis plumbs Finnish folklore for "Kullervo's Message" and Joanne Metcalf achieves intriguing textures by manipulating a four-word text.

Thomas Demenga: *J.S. Bach/B.A. Zimmermann* (21571; 52:12; ★★★½) Cellist Demenga also hears continuity between traditional repertoire and modern sounds. This CD continues his pattern of matching a Bach cello suite with contemporary works. Demenga's pensive, darkly beautiful performance of "Cello Suite No. 4" is followed by prickly, difficult solo sonatas for cello, viola and violin by German composer Bernd Zimmermann. What's the connection? Demenga recognizes Bach's structure and emotional qualities as inspirations for Zimmermann's technically demanding works.

Eleni Karaindrou: *Ulysses' Gaze* (21570; 59:43; ★★★★★) This Greek composer is known in the United States primarily through ECM recordings of her moody, orchestral film scores. *Ulysses' Gaze* is her most satisfying and insinuatingly memorable work, with instrumental soloists playing variations on her plaintive, folk-influenced themes over the distant drone of a string orchestra. Kim Kashkashian's viola evokes the penetrating, bittersweet sound of a gypsy fiddle, and, with accordion added, *Ulysses' Gaze* creates rainy, distinctly Mediterranean atmospheres. **DB**

REISSUES

Some Children Of Satchmo

by Zan Stewart

Louis Armstrong's clarion cry tone, his muscular rhythm, his bravura melodies, all these gave rise to modern jazz. Satchmo influenced more than trumpeters, though he's heard in almost anyone who picked up the horn. Here are seven greats who are, in one way or another, the maestro's offspring.

Chet Baker: *The Prestige Sessions: Lonely Star* (Prestige 24172; 67:04; ★★★★★^{1/2}); *Stairway To The Stars* (Prestige 24173; 66:59; ★★★★★^{1/2}); *On A Misty Night* (Prestige 24174; 70:05; ★★★★★^{1/2}) Collectively, these three titles were originally on LP as *Cool Burnin'*, *Boppin'*, *Groovin'*, *Comin' On* and *Smokin'*, and all with the Chet Baker Quintet.

Forget cool! In these sessions, made over three days in August 1965, Baker works with the fire that Miles showed in his Coltrane quintet. Playing flugelhorn throughout, he enlists a fine crew—tenorman George Coleman, pianist Kirk Lightsey, bassist Herman Wright and drummer Roy Brooks. The material, like the performances, is first-rate. On *Lonely Star*, Baker is compellingly quiet on "Serenity," then injects fierce double-times into "Have You Met Miss Jones?" "Madison Avenue" is Baker in an easy groove. The brassman is haunting on the title track of *Stairway To The Stars* and "I Waited For You," then he races through "Cherokee," almost a match for the jackrabbit Coleman. On *A Misty Night* includes that Tadd Dameron delight (and two others of his), plus the Middle-Eastern, one-chord allure of "Boudoir" and Sonny Stitt's speedy "Bud's Blues."

Chet Baker: *In New York* (DCC Compact Classics 1101; 57:51; ★★★★★^{1/2}) In *New York* finds an equally roaring Baker on trumpet in 1958 with an all-star ensemble: tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffin, pianist Al Haig, bassist Paul Chambers and drummer Philly Joe Jones. "Fair Weather" and "Hotel 49" are quintet tunes where Chet really cooks, his long statements full of brazen twists, alluring leaps, rhythmic smoke. Jones boots the trumpeter with verve, and Griffin's lush sound and quick mind are a joy to hear.

There's a more rhapsodic Baker here, too, lending imploring sentiment to "Polka Dots And Moonbeams," long, relaxing lines to "Solar," issuing well-spaced, poignant tones to "Blue Thoughts," a lovely Benny Golson jazz ballad. The sound on this audiophile gold disc is superb.

Freddie Hubbard: *The Body & The Soul* (Impulse! 183; 36:38; ★★★★★^{1/2}) Long before near-tragedy struck Hubbard in the form of his mangled, all-but-unusable lip, he



Chet Baker: working with fire

was indeed one of the trumpet kings, a modern mainstreamer who blew with the ferocity of Trane, the lithe melodicism of Bird. That's the Hubbard you hear on *The Body & The Soul*, a prime 1963 recording that places him both in a sextet with Eric Dolphy and Wayne Shorter, and in a big band/string setting with Shorter arranging and conducting. Hubbard is warmly expressive on "Body & Soul" and "Skylark"; he belts the pants off "Aries," the statements rhythmically charged, emotionally heavy.

Dizzy Gillespie: *The Cool World/Goes Hollywood* (Verve 531 230; 75:08; ★★★★★) This release combines *The Cool World Of Dizzy Gillespie* (Phillips, 1964) with *Dizzy Goes Hollywood* (Phillips, 1963). Both collections feature saxophonist/flutist James Moody, pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Chris White and drummer Rudy Collins. The initial LP is Gillespie's version of appealing, often deep Mal Waldron music he recorded on the soundtrack to Shirley Clarke's film *The Cool World Of* (1963), about a black street gang in Harlem. The "Theme" is a fast blues in 6/8; "Duke's Awakening" is edgy, dramatic; "Bonnie's Blues," a lament. Gillespie is himself, swallowing notes then offering sudden high, bent tones on "Awakening," spitting out complex phrases, slowing, then speeding again on "Duke On The Run." Barron and Moody shine.

Dizzy Goes Hollywood, a collection of film themes, is worthwhile lighter fare. The best of these brief numbers, orchestrated by Billy Byers, are those where the rhythms are unique: numbers penned by Mancini, "Days Of Wine And Roses" as a bossa, a pleasingly jerked-here-and-there "Moon River." The level of these performances remains high.

Various Artists: *Swing Trumpet Kings* (Verve 533 263; 76:12/79:09; ★★★★★) This two-CD package comprises three LPs: *Harry Edison Swings Buck Clayton And Vice*

Versa (1958), *Red Allen Plays King Oliver* (1960) and *Roy Eldridge: Swing Goes Dixie* (1956). Each is chock full of trumpet artistry, assisted by an ace contingent that includes Hawk-like tenor saxophonist Jimmy Forrest, pianist Jimmy Jones and modern drummer Charli Persip. Edison and Clayton investigate such ditties as "Memories For The Count" and "Oh, How I Hate To Get Up In The Afternoon." Anywhere you listen. Clayton is direct, achieving a gravelly sound, delivering figures with robust rhythm. Edison, meanwhile, displays his personality—slides, whines, one note attacked singly 11 times in a row. Allen's brash sound and volatile solos—unpredictable leaps, hearty drive—spark many non-Oliver numbers, among them "Bourbon Street Parade" and "Dixie." Clarinetist Buster Bailey and pianist Sammy Price are added plusses. Eldridge, an ardent swinger, played dixieland a great deal toward the end of his life. Here, he shows his affection, and affinity, for the older style, performing with drum master Jo Jones, clarinetist Eddie Barefield, et al. Eldridge's patented buzzing tone and improvisatory zeal light up "Royal Garden Blues" and "Ja-Da," among others. **DB**

Initial Down Beat ratings:

- *Cool Burnin' With The Chet Baker Quintet*: ★★ (1/11/68 issue)
- *Boppin'*: ★★★★★ (6/27/68)
- *Groovin'*: ★★^{1/2} (12/29/66)
- *Comin' On*: ★★★ (8/10/67)
- *Smokin'*: ★★★★★ (6/16/66)
- *Chet Baker In New York*: ★★ (2/19/59)
- *Harry Edison Swings Buck Clayton And Vice Versa*: ★★★ (11/26/59)
- *Red Allen Plays King Oliver*: ★★★★★ (8/31/61)
- *Swing Goes Dixie*: ★★★★★ (3/21/57)
- *The Body & The Soul*: ★★★★★ (11/5/64)
- *The Cool World*: ★★★★★^{1/2} (7/30/64)
- *Dizzy Goes Hollywood*: ★★★★★ (11/19/64)

BLINDFOLD TEST

MAY 1997

Antonio Hart

by Larry Birnbaum

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.

A lot of people still know me as the guy who played with Roy Hargrove," says Antonio Hart, "but I've had a great six or seven years in New York." Saxophonist Hart and trumpeter Hargrove hooked up when both were students at Boston's Berklee College of Music. But soon after moving to the Big Apple in 1991, Hart went solo, recording four albums as a leader for Novus and working with Art Blakey, Jimmy Heath, Gary Bartz and Benny Green, among others. "If I stop playing today," he says, "I've had a storybook career."

Hart, 28, studied classical music in his home town of Baltimore before taking up jazz. His rich alto and soprano tone and well-rounded straightahead approach made him a perfect foil for Hargrove. But on his own he's broadened his horizons to include salsa, reggae and hip-hop, all of which can be heard on his latest album, *Here I Stand* (Impulse!). "There's a stereotype that jazz musicians are just supposed to listen to bebop from a certain period," Hart says, "but I listen to everything from Stravinsky and Bartok to Bob Marley and African music. And I'm trying to incorporate as much feeling into my music as possible. I'm not trying to impress people with my velocity; I want people to think I have a beautiful sound."

This was his first Blindfold Test.

Phil Woods Quintet

"Laura" (from *An Affair To Remember, Evidence, 1995*) Woods, alto saxophone; Brian Lynch, trumpet; Jim McNeely, piano; Steve Gilmore, bass; Bill Goodwin, drums.

The song is "Laura," but I really don't know who this is. Very lyrical playing on the alto saxophone—the vibrato is very even, with full control of the horn, and very expressive. The maturity makes it sound like an older player, someone from the bebop school. It has some of the edge of Bird's [Charlie Parker's] sound and a little bit of the edge of Jackie McLean, but it's definitely not Jackie. But it's somebody who's really studied the bebop sound, phrasing and approach of the instrument. For that style of playing, I'd give it 4½ stars. I think it's beautiful. The only person I can think of that it reminds me of is Phil Woods.

Eric Dolphy

"Alto-itis" (from *The Complete Prestige Recordings, Prestige, rec. 1960/1995*) Dolphy, Oliver Nelson, alto saxophones; Richard Williams, trumpet; Richard Wyands, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

Oh, yeah—that's Eric Dolphy and Oliver Nelson. What can I say about Eric Dolphy? He's out of the Charlie Parker school, but he added something different to it, added his own personality. His harmonic approach, his intervallic approach and just the way his mind worked is totally astounding. He's one of my main heroes for what it takes to be an artist, to have the confidence in yourself to say, "This is what I feel. No matter what critics write about me, this is the way I'm supposed to play." It takes guts to do that. So my hat is off to Eric Dolphy. He embodies for me the whole lineage of the alto saxophone. And Oliver Nelson was such a great saxophone player. I'm not as familiar with his playing as I am with Eric Dolphy's, but I'm a strong admirer of his compositions. I think he was a brilliant writer and a great orchestrator. But the playing that I've heard from him, like this particular recording, is great. It definitely goes beyond 5 stars.



BILL DOUGHERTY

Steve Coleman & The Mystic Rhythm Society

"Oyá Natureza" (from *The Sign And The Seal, RCA/BMG, 1996*) Coleman, alto saxophone; Rosangela Silvestre, lead vocal; Kokyi, rap; Ramon "Sandy" Garcia Perez, congas; Marivaldo Dos Santos, djembe; Luis Cancino Morales, claves; Anthony Todd, bass; Oliver Gene Lake, drums.

That's my man, Steve Coleman. I really admire Steve because he's a student of the music. I know that Charlie Parker is his hero, but he's able to dig inside himself and be true to himself. He's working with a lot of rhythms from the street that are current now, and mathematical formulas that make the music kind of intellectual, but it still grooves. Sometimes I don't hear the lyricism I like to hear in the alto saxophone—the vibrato and some of the tone remind me of classical saxophones—but I respect him a lot. He's given me a lot of information over the years, and I try to study his music because it's fresh and current. I don't know who's in the band, but it's probably Gene Lake on drums. Steve has so much integrity, I have to give him 5 stars.

Frank Morgan

"Skylark" (from *Love, Lost & Found, Telarc, 1995*) Morgan, alto saxophone; Cedar Walton, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Billy Higgins, drums.

The song is "Skylark." I couldn't tell you who it is, but I would bet it's an older musician, just because of the maturity in some of the phrasing. I would like to hear a little more vibrato, but that's just a sound I like to hear, like when Johnny Hodges sings his melodies, or Cannonball Adderley. That's not this person, but I think he stated the melody well; he was convincing with it. It was beautiful. The intonation was nice; it sounds like the reed was a little soft. I'll take a guess—Lee Konitz? It doesn't really move me that much, but it's nicely done. It's pretty. If I have to give it a rating, I would give it 3½ stars.

Gary Bartz

"Makes Me Wanna Moan" (from *The Blues Chronicles: Tales Of Life, Atlantic, 1996*) Bartz, alto saxophone; Tom Williams, trumpet; George Colligan, piano; James King, bass; Greg Bandy, drums.

This is Gary Bartz, the blues record. I don't know the personnel on this record, but for me, Gary Bartz is the ultimate alto saxophone player on this earth right now. He embodies everything that a musician should have. He has total personality. He has total connection with the creator in himself, and when he plays, it's not like somebody playing an instrument—it's total music. He can do the total straightahead, he can do the avant garde, he can do it all. He does it with authority and character, and he does it because he enjoys it. He's one of my first influences—the first person I heard play live saxophone—he's so very, very important to me. He's a master, and he definitely gets 5 stars—500 stars. **DB**