

FANFARE FOR THE WORKING BAND, PART III

DOWNBEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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Jam Session

**Bobby Watson, Clark Terry,
Louie Bellson & Cyrus Chestnut**

Abbey Lincoln

Charles Lloyd

**CLASSIC INTERVIEW:
Thad Jones & Mel Lewis**

**BLINDFOLD TEST:
Kurt Elling**



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JULY 1997



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*Clark Terry, Louie Bellson
Bobby Watson & Cyrus Chestnut*

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By Ed Enright

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On Golden

**Clark Terry,
Louie Bellson,
Bobby Watson &
Cyrus Chestnut
Discuss The
Changing Face
Of Mentorships,
Jazz Education
And Experience
On The Road**

By Ed Enright

Trumpeter Clark Terry and drummer Louie Bellson have made road trips since big band was still pop and bebop was but a baby. As it was in the early days for these traveling jazzmen, the road today remains a place where musicians establish camaraderies and learn many of life's valuable lessons. But these two Duke Ellington alumni realize that things ain't what they used to be when it comes to one important byproduct of the road: musical mentorships, that endangered spirit of old-timers taking younguns under their wings and nurturing their talents with an encouraging word and a well-timed, swift kick.

Saxophonist Bobby Watson and pianist Cyrus Chestnut aren't old enough to remember that era, but they share a common experience with their elders, nonetheless. They emerged from extremely fertile jazz breeding grounds. Both learned at the feet of the top talent scouts of their day, Watson with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and Chestnut with Betty Carter. And, like Terry and Bellson, both have demonstrated a dedication to giving back by leading interactive clinics and student jam sessions—today's equivalent of yesterday's life-on-the-bus mentorships.

Terry (76), Bellson (who turns 73 this month), Watson (43) and Chestnut (34) landed in Orlando, Fla., this spring to share their wisdom, both musical and

otherwise, with students at JazzFest USA, an educational festival presented by Down Beat, the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and Universal Studios, Florida ("Riffs" June '97). Somewhere between their inspiring clinics, these four jazzmen found the time to join us for a photo shoot on *The Cosby Show's* front porch (recreated in Universal Studios' movie/TV-land theme park) and a roundtable discussion on jazz education, life on the road and what the future holds.

ED ENRIGHT: *How has institutionalized jazz education affected life on the road for the jazz musician?*

CLARK TERRY: Institutionalized jazz is the route we have to take in order to reach the masses. How else can we get hundreds of thousands of people to understand what it is that we've mastered or garnered from the masters who were on the scene long before anybody knew anything about theory, harmony, counterpoint, etc.? The old-timers did things that got them involved—we talked about this in the clinic—through the medium of what they call



Clockwise from top: Bobby Watson, Clark Terry, Cyrus Chestnut and Louie Bellson at Universal Studios, Florida

en Bonds



the “blue notes.” They knew how to play the tonic, the minor third and the flatted fifth, but didn’t realize at that point that they constitute the half-diminished. And they couldn’t care less! They knew that if you played them blue notes anywhere in any key with any rhythm section at any tempo at anyplace in the world, it’s going to swing. And nobody could contest it. I think institutionalized education is marvelous, and it’s very necessary because it’s difficult for each of us to constantly run into a group of kids that we could turn around.

BOBBY WATSON: I just know that when I was younger, the times I did come into contact with Clark, and others—Frank Wess, Jimmy Heath, I met Louie at a clinic—it was always an eye-opener. You always come away with something, a revelation somewhere. I almost can’t wait to get back and be in front of some kids, and hopefully I can make an impact on them.

EE: *How much time do you spend doing educational events like this as opposed to performance gigs?*

CT: I do quite a bit myself. I like it. I do it mostly because I enjoy it and it’s fun to be associated with youth. I’m just fortunate enough to have been around when Cyrus was in school and also when Watson was in school. I even remember as far back as when Louie was working in his dad’s music store, when you won the Gene Krupa contest. I could tell when I heard him play that I knew there was another giant on the scene.

CYRUS CHESTNUT: Institutions are important because it allows the ones who are studying, like myself, to have hands-on with the pioneers, with the masters who shaped the music. And it’s important because by talking to great people such as these two gentlemen here [*gestures toward Clark and Louie*], not only do you learn how to play, but you also learn about life. You’re getting turned on to the experiences that each person has gone through. It gives a great insight to help you go forward.

BW: And watching how they carry themselves as men and as masters. You look at that: the sense of humor, the camaraderie, like Louie was talking about earlier, the bonding between musicians.

CT: When you stop to think back, in any institution of learning, the most important thing has always been the jock program, you know? Not until recent years have music people, jazz people, been able to get into these things. Heretofore, when you went to play a concert, where did you play? On a basketball court. [*in a foreboding voice*] “And don’t mess up my court!” [*laughs*] You had to practice? There were no practice rooms anywhere. But every school had an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a gridiron, a basketball court. But no place for the performing arts, no place to practice. Until we got some people in our corner in academia—now we’ve got practice rooms, we’ve got pianos, we’ve got performance halls, and we don’t have to worry about messing up the basketball court. We can tell them we don’t want to see any football cleats in the bandstand!

LOUIE BELLSON: Clark started off by saying something important: that there’s no getting away from knowing where you came from and knowing where you’re going. If it wasn’t for Chick Webb, Big Sid Catlett and Jo Jones, I wouldn’t be playing. They took me aside personally, especially Big Sid and Jo Jones, and said, “This is how you play the brushes. This is how you play behind the soloist.” Once you get that kind of training, you pass it on. That’s why a lot of peo-

ple say, "How come you and Clark, Bobby and Cyrus—why do you guys do clinics?" Because those masters gave it to us, and we're trying to pass it on to the young people. Where else can they get it but from Clark, Bobby, Cyrus? Dizzy did a lot of them. I know Clark. We were in Duke's band together, and it was an honor for me to be in that band. That's probably the all-time best experience I've ever had in my life musically, to be a part of that band. I've done a lot of clinics with Clark. And when he comes in, it's not like Clark Terry's up here and the kids are down there. He comes in, meets them on an eye level and says, "Let's go to work." They love him. You can imagine the amount of knowledge they're going to catch from Clark Terry in just one hour. That's like going to school for 10 years. This is experience on the road, years of experience of playing and know-how.

CC: It's important for the future. There's not many apprenticeships these days, whereas before you could go hang out with the cats and it was basically all one-on-one: Wherever they'd go, you'd be there; you'd watch them play. There's not much of that this day. So with educational institutions, it once again brings the master to the apprentice.

CT: There's so much of the stuff that can't be documented that's very necessary for the youths to understand. How do you write in the manuscript [*mumbles a greasy, bluesy phrase*], "hmm-dngg-rngg"? How do you write that? [*laughs*] You have to be there through the process of osmosis and allow it to happen to you!

LB: Play it on your horn and they'll get it!

EE: *What's the future of jazz going to hold for them?*

CT: I'm an optimist. I think that if they are fortunate enough to not accept mediocrity and rise above the heap, you better believe they're going to be heard from. They may not make another Yardbird [Charlie Parker] or Dizzy Gillespie, but they'll be heard from. There are more and more places that make it possible for people to be heard. When I first heard Cyrus and Watson here, I didn't have a doubt that eventually they'd be beautiful people on the scene, highly respected, making money, raising a family, raising their kids and also passing along knowledge to younger people who are getting involved in the craft. I think it's very, very important that we tinker with this with an open mind. As soon as we get the attitude—I've heard guys tell musicians, "Maasaan, forget it!"—that's the worst thing in the world they can do. Suppose somebody had told us that!

LB: I remember Norman Granz, he was such a great man and he demanded the best. Right, Clark? I remember he came to me once and said, "What is it with you and Basie, wanting to record with a big band? What is that?" You know, why not just get three or four guys? He just wanted to get my opinion. I said, "Well, first of all, we're solvent. We have money in the bank—not a lot of money, but we make an album once a year, we've got people that want to hear the band." He said, "OK, when do you want to record?" What he was saying was, "I believe in you and in what



"A lot of people say, 'How come you and Clark, Bobby and Cyrus—why do you guys do clinics?' Because those masters gave it to us, and we're trying to pass it on to the young people."

—Louie Bellson

"By talking to great people such as [Clark and Louie], not only do you learn how to play, but you also learn about life. You're getting turned on to the experiences that each person has gone through. It gives a great insight to help you go forward."

—Cyrus Chestnut



you're saying." What we're talking about here is jazz, or roots. Whatever you want to call it, it's here to stay. It's like Bach and Beethoven. The basic roots are going to be there because of those great players that started that basic foundation. Everybody knows that the foundation has to be there before you start a house.

I used to go to [drum industry veteran] Remo [Belli] and a few other people and say, "You know what bothers me is that now that they have all this wonderful music in schools and so many kids graduating, where do they go? They sit in the bus station

and say, "Shall I go to New York, shall I go to California?" Just do what I did: I believe in good music, I don't care if I make a million dollars or if I make two cents, at least I'm doing something I love to do. Then you go straight ahead that way.

EE: *Louie, you mentioned earlier how an experienced jazz musician can impart not only musical knowledge to a kid, but life experience obtained on the road.*

Each of you, tell about your most memorable road experiences.

LB: I played with a lot of big bands, and people ask me which one I liked the

best. It's hard to say Benny Goodman was better than Tommy Dorsey, or

Tommy Dorsey was better than Basie. But my experience with Duke was the highlight because of Clark, because of Johnny Hodges, Willie Smith, Harry Carney, Juan Tizol, Tricky Sam Nanton, Duke himself, Billy Strayhorn.

CT: We considered ourselves very fortunate to be able to be on the scene with him, on the same level with him.

EE: *Was there any particular experience with Duke?*

LB: To me, it was an element of surprise. He didn't do what the other bands did. We played ballrooms and theaters, but he went beyond that. He went with the New York Philharmonic, the first church concert, sacred music, things way ahead of his time. It was always a great surprise for Clark and I to look at the itinerary, if there was one. Sometimes we'd just get on a bus and go.

CC: For me, there's one experience that sticks out: at Town Hall in a tribute to Doc Cheatham, in 1991, I believe. I was backstage in the company of Doc Cheatham, Sweets Edison, Arvell Shaw, Al Grey and others, and there was a bucket of chicken. And first off, what I saw was camaraderie. Everyone's all happy to see each other, sitting there talking. The bird's being passed around all the way. I'm just looking at that bucket go all the way down. ...

[*laughs*] But just the spirit of being around these great men and listening to what they're talking about, what they've gone through and hearing their life stories, seriously influenced me. They were very elegant. There was pride. I was taken by it. I'll never forget it. I was just so happy to be in such company. And also to go onto the stage of Town Hall and do "Jumpin' At The Woodside" with Buddy Tate, Eddie Jones and the rest of the gang. I was the green boy; I was scared. I was so taken by so much swingin' going on on that bandstand. I just had to stop playing, like, "Wow!" So Eddie looks over, and he's like, "Hey! You better come on and get some!"

BW: The person that comes to mind is Art Blakey, because that was a peak experience: playing "Moanin'" with him. "The Blues March," his trademark songs, being up there and creating that with him, "Night In Tunisia" and tunes like that. I mean, to get a chance to play it with the authentic feeling. Also, playing honky tonk with Bill Doggett, things like that are peak experiences, sitting at this table with you [Clark] and Louie, playing "Jingle Bells" with you at Birdland. You played "Jingle Bells" behind me real soft because I was lost! [Clark laughs] I play all this music, man, then get lost on "Jingle Bells"! I never got to thank you, Clark!

I have a funny story about Art I would like to tell. We were playing somewhere, and this little guy came up after the concert. He came up to about Art's knees. During that time, Art would wear hearing aids off the bandstand. He was putting his hearing aids back in, and sometimes it would go, "weer-wee-er," feed back, because he couldn't get it right. He still hadn't got it, and this little guy comes up to him saying, "Mr. Blakey, Mr. Blakey, you're the greatest one in the world. I have all your records! I just love you! I love you!" Blakey's looking down and saying, "Yes, thank you, thank you." Then he looks over at me and [pianist] James Williams and says, "I can't hear a word he said!" [all laugh] He didn't hear nothing! But when we'd come back to Detroit or something and a fan would say, "Hey man, Bobby! Don't you remember me?" I'd be honest, so I'd say, "I remember your face, but I don't remember your name." Art would be nudging me saying, "No, Bobby! Just say, 'Yeah!'" That's show business. Like the NBA guys and Major League Baseball guys. Before they go to the majors, that's part of their training. They go to etiquette camp, learn how to deal with the public, sign autographs. That's part of their training.

EE: Clark, what's your favorite story from the road?

CT: They didn't used to allow fraternizing in the South. "Scunj" [Bellson] and I were in the Ellington band, so they told you [in Birmingham, Ala.], "You can't do that. You can't play here." So Scunj said, "Well, I'm OK." "What do you mean?" "I'm Haitian." "So you're not a caucasian?" "No, I'm Haitian." They'd look at each other, scratch their heads, then walk away and step back. But they'd watch him. They'd keep an eye on him all the time. So Scunj could see them watching him, so he said, "I gotta get these cats off my back." So he screamed out to the bell boy in 125th Street grammar, and they said, "Yeah, he's OK!" [laughs]

LB: That was The Big Show of 1951 with Nat Cole, Sarah Vaughan and Duke's band. And when I joined the band, there were no drum parts at all. Clark was the only one who said, "Look, here's what's going to happen." On dance gigs, it's no problem because you're just playing straightahead. But I knew Duke had these three-movement suites where they changed the tempo. But before going to Clark, I encountered a few other guys in the band who said, "Oh, don't worry about that, Louie—you'll dig it." I said, "Yeah, I know I'm going to dig it, but I ain't never heard it." Even Duke said, "Don't worry, just watch me." Then Clark came in and



RICHARD HEARD

"As soon as we get the attitude—I've heard guys tell musicians, 'Maaaaan, forget it!'—that's the worst thing in the world they can do. Suppose somebody had told us that!"

—Clark Terry

"I was taught there's room for everybody. I still believe that. The ones that can, rise to the level. The more, the better. The strong make music strong."

—Bobby Watson



ALAN HANIGAN

said, "We go into 2 here, then into 4, then watch, we go into swing here, then into double-time. I'm right next to you. I'll cue you in, too." Clark was beautiful. Because with no drum parts, playing those heavy things, you have to have some kind of semblance of something, y'know?

Duke made you use all your senses. If somebody says something like that, immediately the eyes and ears and the whole body starts to come full up, 100 percent. You're right up there. You're like a bird. Every look is important, every motion is important.

I remember we played the Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, and Duke came to me and said, "I want you to play a drum solo in church." In those days, I thought a drum solo in church sounded kind of weird. So he let me digest that for about two or three days, then he came back to me and said, "My music is based on the first three words of the Bible: 'In the beginning.' In the beginning we had lightning and thunder. That's you, Lou." It wasn't a drum solo anymore. It was lightning and thunder. He could do that.

CT: He could get out of you exactly what he wanted. Like he came to me and was telling me about Buddy Bolden in New Orleans and said, "So, when are you going to portray the role of Buddy Bolden?" I said, "I don't know anything about Buddy Bolden. You don't even know that much about him." He said, "Oh sure: He was suave, he was debonair, he was dapper and he always loved to have a couple of charming ladies on his side. He could tune up in New Orleans and break glasses across the river in Algiers. He had the biggest, fatter sound, and he could bend the note and play diminishes." He said, "Play me some diminishes." And I did, and he said, "That's him! You are Buddy Bolden!" And I believed it.

EE: Whenever I think of Ellington, I think of great arrangements. These days, who's writing the best arrangements?

BW: I arrange and write my own stuff.

CT: He writes good, too.

BW: Bob Mintzer writes good. There are a lot of them. I like Maria Schneider, Bob Belden, Frank Foster, Frank Wess, Jim McNeely, Gerald Wilson ...

CT: There's a young man who writes for us occasionally, David Slonaker. He's marvelous. He did "CT Express." Phil Woods is a great writer, Benny Golson.

LB: Ernie Wilkins, Tom Macintosh, Horace Silver.

BW: Music will never die. It's like a river. It'll always keep going. Art used to tell me, "If you don't do it, somebody else will."

EE: Who are some notable young artists on your respective instruments, people you have your eyes on?

CC: There's a gentleman, I think he just graduated out of the Betty Carter school. His name is Xavier Davis. He's a beautiful young man, can play some piano. He's definitely one to watch as time goes on.

BW: There's a guy going to Berklee now, Jaleel Shaw. He's from Philadelphia.

CT: Jaleel? I know Jaleel! He was at my band camp! There's a young man who's one of my favorites out there: I always say if

there was a Louis Armstrong movie, he would have to play the part of young Louis—Nicholas Payton. He plays great piano, great bass and drums. He's one of the most beautiful young players out there. There are several who have been on the scene for a little while, like Ryan Kisor and Rod McGaha. Beautiful little players. One of them is out at my institute in Iowa, Steven Fulton. He's a bone player. Two more kids from there, one of them is about to be accepted into the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz at New England Conservatory. His name is Mike

EQUIPMENT

Clark Terry plays an Olds CT flugelhorn and a 75th-anniversary CT Martin Committee trumpet. For mouthpieces, he uses a Giardinelli flat-rimmed V-shaped 7FL for flugelhorn and a Giardinelli flat-rimmed V-shaped CT for trumpet.

Louie Bellson plays a Remo drum kit that includes two 24" bass drums, two 16"x16" floor toms, 8" and 10" concert toms, 14" and 16" roto-toms, a 9"x13" tom and a 5 1/2"x14" snare drum. His Zildjian cymbals include a 20" or 21" ride, an 18" with three rivets, an 18" crash, a 17" crash, 14" Quick Beat hi-hats, a 22" China Boy and an optional 19" China Boy. He uses Remo Fiberskin #3 drum heads (which resemble calfskin) and Zildjian Saturn-tip hickory drum sticks.

Bobby Watson plays a Yamaha alto saxophone and a Selmer soprano saxophone. He uses Vandoren mouthpieces and reeds.

Cyrus Chestnut prefers Steinway pianos. At home, he uses a Knabe grand piano, a Roland D-70 electric piano and Encore Music software for Windows.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Cyrus Chestnut

BLESSED QUIETNESS—Atlantic Jazz 82948
EARTH STORIES—Atlantic Jazz 82876
THE DARK BEFORE THE DAWN—Atlantic Jazz 82719
REVELATION—Atlantic Jazz 82518
ANOTHER DIRECTION—Evidence 22135
NUT—Evidence 22152

Louie Bellson

AIR BELLSON—Concord Jazz 4742
THEIR TIME WAS THE GREATEST—Concord Jazz 4683
THE LOUIE BELLSON QUINTET: RAINCHECK—Concord Jazz 4073
LIVE AT THE CONCORD SUMMER FESTIVAL—Concord Jazz 4025
LOUIE BELLSON & HIS BIG BAND: LIVE FROM NEW YORK CITY—Telarc 83334 (with Clark Terry)
BLACK, BROWN & BEIGE—MusicMasters 65096 (with Clark Terry)
PEACEFUL THUNDER—MusicMasters 65074
AIRMAIL SPECIAL: A SALUTE TO THE BIG BAND MASTERS—MusicMasters 5038
PRIME TIME—Concord Jazz 4064

Clark Terry

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

Bobby Watson

URBAN RENEWAL—Kokopelli 1309
MIDWEST SHUFFLE—Columbia 57697
THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE—Red 123250
TAILOR MADE—Columbia 53416
PRESENT TENSE—Columbia 52400
POST-MOTOWN BOP—Blue Note 95148
THE INVENTOR—Blue Note 91915

McKinnon. There's another one of them: Chris Hewitt. If you were to hear them without seeing who they are, you would swear that they were old-timers.

BW: I like Myron Walden, the alto player. He's coming out there now. He's emerging.

EE: Do you think there will be enough work out there for all these up-and-coming jazz musicians?

CT: We'll make enough work. All you have to do is be qualified to go out there and do it, and educate some listeners and some supporters to learn to appreciate and support it and come out to the concerts and help promote it. There's always going to

be some place. Maybe they won't get as rich as Monk did, Basie, Duke. But they're going to be able to play some place.

CC: I think that I can say with confidence that jazz has great staying power. History has shown that. As far as places to play, yeah, there will be places to play.

CT: A good example: Look at these two gentlemen here [Cyrus and Bobby]. Fifteen years ago they were scholars, wondering, should I, can I? They did, and they are.

BW: I was taught there's room for everybody. I still believe that. The ones that can, rise to the level. The more, the better. The strong make music strong. **DB**

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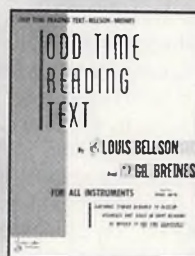
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‘Love, whatchadoin’ down there?’

The third shot is a plea, suggesting that she’ll forget about the anger and disappointment, and put everything back to normal if the whole mess is settled right now.

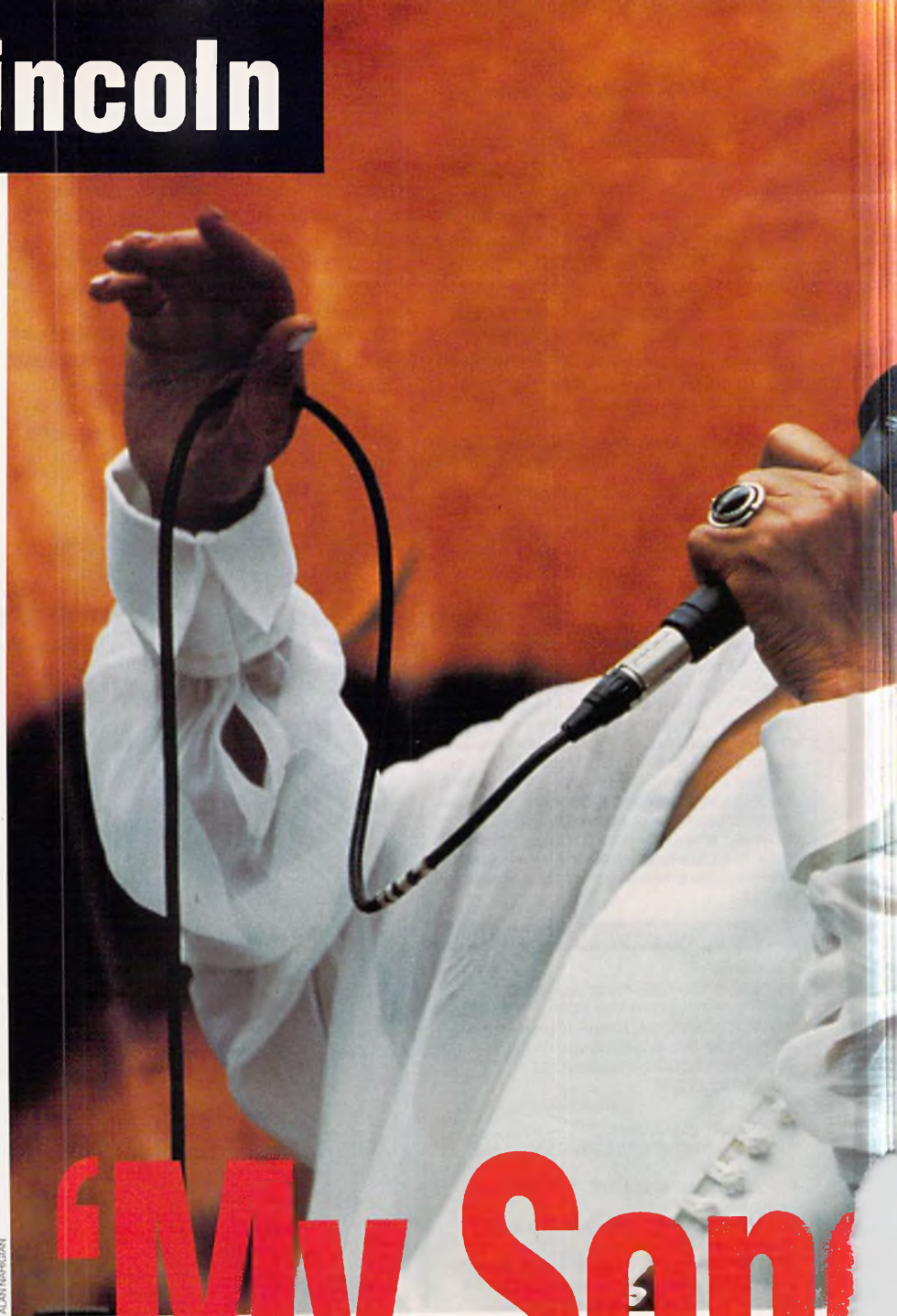
‘Love, whatchadoin’ down there?’

Last reiteration wafts with devastated resolve: a gulp and a tear, like when a child has been missing for months and the cops finally bring around an artifact to prove he or she has perished. Mom weeps—no hope left.

The abundance of vocal inflections that Abbey Lincoln offers her listeners is sometimes bewildering. Just when you think she’s about to drift into a zone of melancholy, she erupts with a crazed growl of pride, making a simple depiction of her attitude a near impossibility. At age 66, an extensive array of tones, accents, inflections and pitches imbue her singing with a depth equalled by few contemporary vocalists. I say singing, but more to the point, I mean acting.

The string of spins on that repeated ‘whatchadoin’ down there’ is one of the more theatrical passages on her latest release, *Who Used To Dance* (see Page 46). Emotional vehemence has been one of Lincoln’s hallmarks for decades now, but with each new disc—she’s now done six for Verve since 1990, making this the most steadily productive period of her life, recording-wise—the authority of the art is enhanced. Sometimes her demeanor is whimsical and gregarious. Just as often it’s morose. Occasionally, it’s overwhelming. The amount of personae at play in Lincoln’s music reminds that her past accomplishments are many and varied. She’s been a lounge chanteuse, a show girl, a budding starlet, a serious actress, a seductive cooer of ballads and, in collaboration with one-time husband Max Roach, an exhortive interpreter of social inequity.

Some 25 years ago she wrote a lyric that displayed a deep regard for a broad ancestry while rejecting the noose of stylistic pigeonholing: ‘I’ve got some people in me.’ Her latest work, rich enough in attitude and craft to be considered her finest, proves she wasn’t kidding.



‘My Song

A simple lunch chat with the bandleader elicits an array of moods. There’s a dollop of fight-the-good-fight, a chunk of sittin’ pretty, a tinge of woe-is-me and plenty of told-you-so. Each seems part and parcel of the next. All are cushioned by the warmth of a woman who is enthralled with the flow of life around her. Stage performers are supposed to offer an oversized magnetism. But Lincoln’s stare is a tractor beam, her laugh an invitation for candor and her poise—even when waxing quite blunt and

somewhat incensed—an unwavering measure of her own self-esteem. It’s easy to see what a movie camera found when it focused in on her: a complex artist. Lincoln has made a handful of films over the years, the latest being a mid-’80s role as a tough-love matriarch in Spike Lee’s *Mo’ Better Blues*. She’s fully aware that her abilities as a thespian have resonant links with the presentation of her music.

‘I can get it off as an actress when I stand on stage and sing,’ she confirms with a smile. ‘These days it’s even better,



...s Are Scripts'

By Jim Macnie

because I write my own stuff; all my songs are little scripts. But the acting was always part of what I did as a singer. When I did *Nothing But A Man* in 1964, my director, Michael Roemer, pulled my coat to what acting was all about. I remember one scene where [my character's] husband and father were in the living room having an argument—she knew there was rough energy between them. And her cousin said something really ugly to her father, who she loved. She was supposed to drop a glass and cry. Well, the first time we did it,

the director said to me, 'That's not the quality of the tears I'm looking for.' Then I remembered when Booker Little died. I was in bed sick and Roach came in to tell me that Little had passed. And for the next take I went back there to that image, remembered my sadness. That was the quality of tears that Michael Roemer needed.

"Every good actor has a drawer where they keep things, and I went into my drawer and used what I found there. Tears are not just tears. Both of the great

directors I had—the other is Danny Mann, who did *For Love Of Ivy*—encouraged that stuff. They made me think I was a great actress. And I believe that I am, potentially. But you know what? I don't need a movie."

Those who have caught some of Lincoln's most potent shows likely subscribe to that notion as well. The expression found in her stage work and records is immense. Lincoln's voice resounds with subtleties that underscore the soulful potency that is a cornerstone of her art. Like every vocalist who came up in the '50s, she has sung her share of standards—everything from "Love Walked In" under the baton of Benny Carter in '56 to "The Jitterbug Waltz" in tandem with Hank Jones five years ago.

But common jazz tunes don't always display her depth, and in some cases they inhibit her eloquence. The particulars of Lincoln's rangy style carry the most weight when she sings her own material. Her Verve canon abounds with self-penned gems: "The World Is Falling Down," "Bird Alone," "I've Got Thunder (And It Rings)," "Throw It Away" and "Down Here Below." The title tune to the new record, along with "Love, What You Doin'," are heavy enough to join this elite clique.

Lincoln credits her muse, an assuredly female entity, for the inspiration that brought such pieces to life. "I commune with her spirit," acknowledges the singer. "She paints and writes, and she made me a composer. I sure didn't know that was going to happen. For many years I was just a lyricist—used to write all over everybody else's work."

Lincoln previously put her personal spin on Coltrane's "Afro Blue," Monk's "Blue Monk" and even a Villa-Lobos prelude. She had a strong beginning. Her first original tune to be recorded, "Let Up" from 1960's

Abbey Is Blue, is nothing short of killer. She credits Roach for demonstrating the fortitude it takes to compose. During their heyday together, she'd often listen from another part of the house while he developed ideas at the piano.

The famed drummer recalls that Lincoln's muse has been with her for decades. "Our work involved characters, no doubt," says Roach. "I'd finish a song, and she'd say, 'What'd you call that?' I'd say, 'Lonesome Lover.' Abbey would go, 'Hmmm, "Lonesome Lover," huh?' Then



“Sing a song correctly, and you live forever.

Ella didn't go anywhere.

She's right here with us.

Same with Louis Armstrong

It's the greatest thing

I've ever found to do in my li

Abbey Lincoln with pianist Rodney Kendrick

she'd come up with a story and a lyric, often overnight. She did it to create a sense of place for the tune. 'What's she lonesome for?' And it wouldn't have to be romance to speak of, but maybe lack of freedom or some other quality that made her lonesome. Abbey always made sure a song was more than just mere words—there had to be a narrative, a tale to tell."

Vocalist Cassandra Wilson sizes it up another way. "She sings life," assesses Wilson. "You have to call on many emotions during the course of a night, and Abbey's a master at making each one stick."

While living in Los Angeles during the '70s, Lincoln taught theater merely "to survive." Her goals were lofty, however. "I wanted them to not only know the amount of control that the protagonist and antagonist have in a play," she says, "but understand the depth of the drama. To tell a powerful story, you've got to know who you are in a play. If acting doesn't teach you something about your life, it's a waste of time. I wanted the students to really think hard about the world they lived in."

Lincoln's current music italicizes that viewpoint. As a composer she scrutinizes the culture surrounding her, poetically analyzing the flow of action. The outlook from Lincoln's center is intermittently bleak, and unflinchingly sober. The woman whose voice once

sharpened the lyrical barb of a song called "Mendacity" has fierce opinions about the world today. Another facet of that "Love, whatchadoin' down there?" query is that of a deity pissed at her creation.

"In that song I'm playing a god, or a spirit," she says, "looking down on a dismal situation. Just like the tune 'Love Lament,' it ties in with the rest of the album, which is about disillusionment. Love doesn't hang around in the darkness in misery. It will leave you. And to a large extent, I think love has left this country. I sometimes pray for a spirit that will come and save us. We need it."

In that context, the song "Who Used To Dance" is a chiding just as much as a recollection. The track features young dance phenom Savion Glover tapping out glorious cadences behind the singer like some unholy alliance of Bird and Baby Dodds. Each of his beats conveys a sense of American self-esteem that Lincoln feels has withered over the years. The chirpy songbird routine is left for others; the singer trains her eye on the parts of civilization that consistently throb. African American youth shooting each other up? The world is falling down. Rappers who rake the female population over the coals? Devil's got your tongue. Deny your heritage and you're in hot water with Abbey Lincoln.

Her 1992 cackle of womanly pride, "Jungle Queen," is 100 percent theater, and

200 percent poetry. Backed by Olatunji's percussion ensemble, Lincoln squawks and pants and roars, forwarding a message of autonomy while genuflecting to the African legacy.

"All my life, I've been in denial," she declares while deliberating on the piece. "Started with my hair—it's not supposed to be beautiful. It's a spiral, and it doesn't hang down unless you dread it. It can really be a hassle when you're living around a bunch of other people whose hair is not like this. When I was in high school, I learned that a woman's crowning glory was her hair, and that mine was bad. I was supposed to be a big demonstrator in the '60s, but I didn't really protest that many times. I just wore my hair natural. Because I was supposed to be a beauty queen, it was deemed radical.

"Black women are still going through it. They come to the stage with red hair and blonde straightened hair. Michael Jackson is a good example: He's brilliant; he can sing and dance in the tradition of his African ancestors; but he curses them by erasing them from his face and hair. We don't know how evil this is. And it is evil."

Whether whispered or bellowed (she does both with a visceral tone), Lincoln's words are projectiles of a sort. They find their victims and infect. She pauses a second when asked if she articulates melancholy better than she does joy. "No, but I have to find something to be

exuberant about. It's not always there. I don't feel overwhelmed by grief, but I feel responsible for the world that I live in. And there's a feeling of hysterical aloneness in the air today. Italics: All by myself! Nobody loves me!"

One piece on *Who Used To Dance* finds a way to escape the squeeze of solitude. Lincoln's take on Bob Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" is a masterpiece of transcendence. Drummer Aaron Walker's splashy attack hurls Lincoln's vocals toward the heavens; saxophonist Julien Lourau glides through the stratosphere finding a place where it's OK to be both blithe and thoughtful. Lincoln told the guys to think of Trane while playing.

"Yeah, because John knew how to play one or two changes and take you out," she grins. "This song has just two changes, but you wind up all over the universe."

Lincoln's unaware of Dylan's version. She came across the tune's sheet music on a particularly blue evening 25 years ago. "I'm not sleepy and there is no place I'm going to"—sounds just like me," she whispers out of nowhere. "In the jingle jangle morning I'll come following you." Brilliant, brilliant song."

A tear comes to her eye. "These ancient, empty streets too dead for dreaming," she says, wiping it away. "I don't see how he heard something this deep when he was such a kid." Lincoln has cried in the studio while recording. "Not a lot—usually I'm too busy getting ready. But it's easy for me to cry thinking about my life, the lives of the children coming up. When you get to be 65, it's another world, another view. People should have something to say when they get to be my age. The idea is to offer some insight into how you perceive yourself: what you think we are, who you think you are."

These kinds of questions, and the deep rumble of their responses, are part of what attracts Wilson to Lincoln's work. "She doesn't pull any punches; there's no sugar-coating with Abbey," assures the younger

singer. "Her melancholy is cool, and very powerful. Maybe it's just my predisposition, but I love that. Her melancholy is also bittersweet. When you see her live, you get a sense of her triumph as well."

Whether the forum is a stage or a bandstand, Lincoln's metier is casting spells. That's what she explains to her younger band members, who are "usually people Betty Carter has worked with," laughs Lincoln. "Betty teaches them discipline. No matter what she does, they're supposed to know where she is in the song. I think of Betty as a great artist at executing a tune, usually by turning it

around and around. I bring the guys to an absolute moment-by-moment reality. They don't even have to improvise with me. The interpretation of the lyric and the melody is what's important. ... I think of what I do as storytelling."

And the tales, whether hopeful or distressing, have some of the most forceful temperaments in jazz. It's a power born of commitment.

"Sing a song correctly, and you live forever," Lincoln assures. "Ella didn't go anywhere. She's right here with us. Same with Louis Armstrong. It's the greatest thing I've ever found to do in my life." **DB**

Coltrane.



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EQUIPMENT

Abbey Lincoln prefers Sennheiser microphones for live performances.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- WHO USED TO DANCE—Verve 533 559
- WHEN THERE IS LOVE—Verve 519 697 (with Hank Jones)
- A TURTLE'S DREAM—Verve 527 382
- DEVIL'S GOT YOUR TONGUE—Verve 513 574
- YOU GOTTA PAY THE BAND—Verve 511 110 (with Stan Getz)
- THE WORLD IS FALLING DOWN—Polydor 843 476
- ABBEY SINGS BILLIE VOLUMES 1 & 2—enja 79633 & 037
- PEOPLE IN ME—Verve 514 626
- STRAIGHT AHEAD—Candid 79015
- IT'S MAGIC—Fantasy/OJC 205
- THAT'S HIM!—Fantasy/OJC 085
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'Tonight I Feel Your

FREEDOM

Charles Lloyd Returns To Estonia

By Thomas Conrad

Tallinn, Estonia. Minarets and towers of the fortress hill loom over this walled town beside the Gulf of Finland, a dramatic backdrop for a jazz festival. In April of this year, a moment in history brought a musical event full circle: the return of Charles Lloyd to the site of his legendary "unauthorized" appearance at the Tallinn Festival in 1967.

As Lloyd says, "In the last 30 years, I've met people all over the world who claim to have been there that night." Perhaps, like the game where Wilt Chamberlain scored 100 points in a Hershey, Pa., gym that held 4,000—an event tens of thousands claim to have attended—certain historical warposts appear uninvited in otherwise rational memories.

In 1967, Estonia was very much a part—if an unwilling part—of the Soviet Union. Private citizens associated with the festival, not some Soviet agency, had invited Lloyd to play. "Even before we left, we heard that the authorities might not let us play because America had escalated the war in Viet Nam," Lloyd recalls. "We came in the spirit of music, which transcends politics."

He arrived with a not-yet-famous rhythm section: Keith Jarrett (just turned 22) on piano, bassist Ron McClure and drummer Jack DeJohnette (also 22). "For three days, they wouldn't let us play the festival. They wanted us to do a clinic. They even offered to put us on television. I said, 'I'm here to play for human beings.' Finally, I asked them an

interesting question. I asked them if they were practicing racism. The Soviet guys couldn't deal with that question. They said, 'You'll play tomorrow.'"

On Sunday, May 14, the fourth and last night of the festival, the Spordihall was jammed to capacity. Estonian vocalist Marju Kuut was there. She remembers rumors flying through the crowd as they waited for Lloyd's group to appear. "When the audience heard that the KGB might not let them play, they started screaming 'Lloyd-jazz! Lloyd-jazz!' I never heard such screaming before in Estonia."

They told Lloyd he could play for 20 minutes. He played for 50. It was the first time modern jazz was played by Americans in the Soviet Union. Needless to say, the crowd went wild. Festival officials, after futile attempts to restore order, called an unscheduled intermission and hid DeJohnette's drums to prevent an encore. A front page story in the *New York Times*, coverage in *Look* magazine and a cover story by Ira Gitler in the July 13, 1967, issue of *Down Beat* followed. For 23 years, Tallinn hosted no jazz festivals.

Nineteen-ninety saw the return of the Tallinn Festival, one year before Estonia achieved independence. But, it took seven years for the new festival committee, headed by Ann Erm, to arrange for the return of Charles Lloyd. And so, history was brought full circle when Lloyd arrived this spring with his working quartet of pianist Bobo Stenson, drummer Billy Hart and Jeffrey Littleton substituting for Anders Jormin on bass.

Lloyd was scheduled to play on Saturday, the second night of the three-

day festival. On Friday, the band played a warm-up concert in Tartu, 200 kilometers away in southeastern Estonia. The road there from Tallinn passes through stands of thin white birches and gray-brown fields and stark gray-brown farms where life looks unremitting. On the drive there, Lloyd reminisces: "When I first came over here in '67, we played Leningrad and Moscow after Tallinn. I remember that the Russian people were very tender and special and sweet to us in Leningrad. They made a feast for us after the concert, and it took like a whole month's salary for these people to make the food. And I just cried. It was pure: music lovers and music makers. I like playing when you can go direct."

But two hours later, solemn undergraduates and gray-haired men in 20-year-old suits and families with teenage children stream into Little Vanemuine, an 18th-century German Theater on the campus of the Tartu University. The four musicians take their places under a sweeping proscenium arch. Lloyd, in a twin-peaked cap, comes to the microphone. "For some reason it feels like I'm coming home," he says—he who has never before been to Tartu.

They play "Lady Day," the gentlest, most adoring of the tributes, with a long a capella opening by Stenson. The natural acoustics in the hall create exquisite decays. Lloyd's tenor sax, dark and strong at the core, carries a sheen on the surface like a halo of light.

After intermission, they open with a 17-minute-plus version of "Tales Of Rumi." Both "Rumi" and the last piece, "Forest Flower," build to apocalyptic



climaxes of sublime ravings from Lloyd, Stenson spilling songs within songs and Hart clattering. The audience stands and claps in rhythm.

Tartu was not a warm-up for anything. Tartu was itself.

The next day, back in Tallinn, the Deputy Mayor For Cultural Affairs, Tõnu Karu, hosts a reception for Lloyd in Raekoda, the beautiful stone town hall built in 1404, where he reads a proclamation welcoming Lloyd back. At a press conference afterward, Lloyd says, "The way we play, it's like we're walking on a tightrope with no net underneath. My motivation is spiritual illumination. The universal thing is very important. We shouldn't hold lines of demarcation. But be very careful about moving forward with progress here in your country, 'cause I'm worried. I was part of the past. Now I'm part of the future, and I'm here to extend a message. Don't get caught up in progress. Progress is fine and technology is fine, but unless someone's at home inside, in an awakened state, not much of this stuff is going to take you to the other shore."

It now requires an act of the imagination to understand what Lloyd's concert in 1967 meant to members of a closed society. Thirty years later, Marju Kuut's eyes shine with the memory: "Europeans played in jazz, but something was missing. Lloyd was real, real American jazz. They didn't play for ... show. They played for themselves."

Vadim Yurchenkov, the Russian correspondent for *Billboard*, helped organize the 1967 festival. In 1997, owlish in his gray brushcut and round Coke bottle glasses, he remembers: "The oppression of that time even affected the behavior of the musicians on stage. Charles was like no one we had seen. He jumped when he played."

Yurchenkov never heard Lloyd say at his press conference, "We live for those moments when time disappears. We get high in the music. We're like ecstasies. ..." He didn't have to.

Sakala, a large auditorium built as a Communist Party Congress Hall, plays host on this Saturday night in April of 1997. Electric with anticipation, the audience applauds Lloyd's introduction passionately. But unlike 1967, there is no need to shriek to get their way. They hush when Lloyd, wraith-like, capped, in an ankle-length coat, approaches the microphone. "I feel to be a part of your past. Thirty years ago the people had a very difficult time, and I could feel it so much. Tonight, I feel your freedom. ..."

The crowd erupts, but quickly quiets to hear the soft opening to "The Blessing," followed by "Lady Day" and a blood-and-guts blues, "C.L. Blue." After a flute interlude called "Little Peace,"

Tallinn's Festival 'Arc'

This year's Tallinn Festival (called "Jazzkaar," which means "jazz arc") lasted only three days and offered only two big names—Lloyd and saxophonist Jan Garbarek. Meticulously organized, virtually every act played to a full house in seven different venues around town. Most of all, Jazzkaar was deep in quality music. Singer Mari Boine (from the arctic region of Lapland) and Brazilian Jobim-Morelenbaum's quintet told divergent musical truths, both persuasive. The arts center Soolaladu, formerly a salt warehouse, offered the E-Moll Trio from Estonia featuring Jaak Sooäär on guitar playing a subtle, shuffling "Yesterdays." Danish pianist Jonas Müller hushed the audience with a pristine children's song by Carl Nielsen, "Jeg Ved En Lærkerede." In the Café Amigo at Hotell Viru, the Nils Landgren Funk Unit did the slowest, nastiest "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" ever.

The festival ended with a night that could only happen in free Estonia. In Sunday's cold, pale twilight, 2,500 people in their April coats and scarves filed into Kaarli Kirik (St. Charles Church) to hear the Jan Garbarek Group with Eberhard Weber, Rainier Brüninghaus and Marilyn Mazur. Someone said there were "as many people as Christmas time." Down upon the crowd rained Garbarek's soprano saxophone like cries in the wilderness, rising to shattering crescendos that repeated themselves against the towering caverns of the cathedral ceiling. Strong, austere music about spiritual freedom, the knowing crowd listened, rapt.

—T.C.



DOROTHY DAFF

Lloyd with Jeffrey Littleton (l) and Billy Hart

Jeffrey Littleton sends them down the long, winding road of "Tales Of Rumi," Lloyd leaning and bobbing with his tenor, possessed.

The band plays straight through with no intermission. When they get to "Forest Flower," the ascent and affirmation in the final notes bring the crowd to its feet as if they have been lifted on an updraft of air. A circle closes. The band's encores serve as epilogues to a completed story.

"It was the best thing I have done in my life, helping to organize that festival in 1967," says Vadim Yurchenkov afterward, on the sidewalk outside Sakala. "It clarified everything for me tonight, to hear Charles again." Behind him, the bare trees of the city park create a black swath in the moonlight against the silver grass. "That was my time," he says.

"When we played over here in '67, it was like ... shackles were removed," Lloyd says. "Something happened between that music and this audience. It was a moment, and these folks could not go back. I knew it then." **DB**

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EQUIPMENT

Charles Lloyd plays two vintage gold-plated C.G. Conn tenor saxophones, with an Otto Link 7 star mouthpiece and Hemke #3 reeds. His C flute is a Powell, his alto flute a Haynes and his bass flute is an Artley. There is a seven-foot Steinway B in his living room. He also plays a Tibetan oboe, maker unknown.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

CANTO—ECM 21635
ALL MY RELATIONS—ECM 21557
FOREST FLOWER/SOUNDTRACK—Rhino R2 71746
THE CALL—ECM 21522
NOTES FROM BIG SUR—ECM 21465
FISH OUT OF WATER—ECM 21398
A NIGHT IN COPENHAGEN—Blue Note 85104
MONTREUX '82—Elektra/Musician 60220
DISCOVERY—Columbia 9067 (Japan only)

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“Will it again be possible to conceive of the jazz band as a single unit? I hope so, for a good band presided over by a single mind is worth more than the most brilliant jam session which can be spoiled by a single ill-assorted element.”

—André Hodeir, 1955

“You know, earlier we were talking about engineers recording jazz groups. I think more attention should be paid to the sidemen there, because, after all, it should be realized that it is the group that is playing and it is the group that the people who are going to buy the record are interested in, and not just the leader. This is one of the problems in the recording industry that I think is very easy to correct, what with all the very expensive and very elaborate equipment.”

—Elvin Jones, 1968

By John Corbett

Editor's note: The following article is the third in an ongoing series on the “working band” in jazz. We pick up where we ended our last installment (May '97), which gave a historical account of working bands up to the Great Depression.

The stock-market crash of 1929 had a definite impact on the working band, but not in the sense of cutting it off or diminishing it. Rather, the overall depression made a meager jazz salary seem more appealing. As Leroy Ostransky put it in his book *Jazz City*: “Big-band jazz ... could not have reached its peak during the early 1930s if employers had been required to pay musicians enough to live on. Crucial events in the development and proliferation of big-band jazz occurred during the Depression, when labor—*anxious musicians included*—was willing to work for almost any wages.”

A working band meant the one thing everyone sought: work. Through the '30s and up to the end of World War II, the possibilities for a steady band were excellent; jazz was a real presence on radio, and the establishments presenting the music



Wayne Shorter (left) and Miles Davis, one of the best-loved musical partnerships in working-band history.

LATHEBIE TROMBERT



A gathering of top-notch musicians on tour with Jazz At The Philharmonic. Back row: Ray Brown (left), presenter Norman Granz, Buddy Rich, Oscar Peterson, Hank Jones, Barney Kessel, Lester Young; front row: Gene Krupa (left), Charlie Shavers, Willie Smith, Roy Eldridge, Flip Phillips.

DOWN BEAT ARCHIVES



Although Ornette Coleman (left) was well-known for his classic quartets of the late '50s and early '60s, this trio with David Izenzon (bass) and the late Charles Moffett (drums) recorded, toured Europe and functioned as a close-knit working band in the mid- to late '60s.

JAN PERSSON

had grown in both number and variety. Where nightclubs and dancehalls had been the norm earlier, jazz performances with no room for dancing and no spout for drinking became an option as well. Without booze to produce revenue, the bands themselves had to be smaller, hence the working bands of small-group swing led by Benny Goodman, Woody Herman, Louis Jordan, Teddy Wilson, Fats Waller, and various subgroups drawn from the Ellington and Count Basie big bands.

In 1944, Norman Granz organized a historic event at Philharmonic Auditorium in Los Angeles under the name Jazz at the Philharmonic. If the concept was spawned in informal pedagogical situations like Kansas City bar-band jam sessioning of the mid-'30s (younger musicians being able to sit in and learn from elder statesmen), it was given a decidedly postwar entrepreneurial spin by Granz, who turned the notion into a high-class traveling show. Ensuing decades of JATP events—loosely coordinated supergroups that toured extensively under the banner—which continued until 1967, helped institutionalize the jam session, arguably at the expense of the working band. That the ensembles concocted as JATP events were often made up of incongruous, sometimes stylistically incompatible, elements (trad, swing, bebop) was of little consequence, since the clear priority was marquee dazzle. Hodeir's comments in the epigraph refer specifically to the gush of JATP-formula events that ensued, a jazz-industry fashion that placed the star appeal of a group above its musical vision; the French critic and composer bemoaned the loss of coherence in the jazz-band concept, a trend that we're still feeling the consequences of today.

Though there were a few successful bebop big bands—Billy Eckstine's and Dizzy Gillespie's, for instance—bebop would emerge as a small-group music, just at the time that the big-band era was drawing to a close. In spite of the rise of concert-hall jam sessioning, in New York City during the mid-'40s and early '50s there was plenty of room for the cultivation of working bands. Fifty-Second Street, between Fifth and Sixth avenues, was of course the crux of a great number of nightclubs, many offering ongoing employment (some venues would go so far as to post a group's name in neon, a far more committed gesture than the erasable magic-marker announcements clubs now make!). Some clubs had regular rhythm sections—the now common “house” band, a sort of partial working group—that backed headliners and held together jam sessions like the ones held every Monday night at Minton's Playhouse in Harlem.

This was the era of the long residency.

the ideal working condition to sustain a working band. In the mid-'50s, after New York's midtown jazz boom had widened, the Five Spot Cafe in Greenwich Village was known as a presenter of ad-in-finitum residencies, including ones by the budding avant-garde jazz musicians, notably Cecil Taylor (as early as 1956) and Ornette Coleman, who held various long-term engagements there when he first relocated to New York. But in other cities, as hard-bop settled in, jazz-friendly lounges, bars and nightclubs flowered, too. The emergence of soul-jazz, in particular, made jazz feasible in bars in urban black communities. Take Chicago's McKee's Disc Jockey Lounge and Crown Propellor Lounge, for instance, both located on a hot strip along 63rd Street at Cottage Grove; at these places, soulsters like Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt held lengthy residencies, sometimes backed by house bands, sometimes ad hoc, sometimes with a working band.

The '50s and early '60s saw the coming of important working bands now considered "classic" ensembles; thus, while there was a premium put on star power, it was leavened by respect for the group. A short list of the era's key working bands: Charles Mingus' quintets with either Clifford Jordan or Booker Ervin; The Clifford Brown/Max Roach Quintets; John Coltrane's quartet with McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones; Ornette Coleman's quartet with Don Cherry, Charlie Haden and Ed Blackwell and his trio with David Izenzon and Charles Moffett. The idea with these ensembles and others was obviously not short-term. They existed, in part, to grow together, to achieve a degree of interactivity unavailable without constant interplay.

Perhaps the pinnacle of working bands from this period was the decisively influential Miles Davis Quintet with Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams. "I loved that band, man, because if we played a song for a whole year and you heard it at the beginning of the year, you wouldn't recognize it at the end of the year," reported Davis in his autobiography. "So the way we all played together changed what we were playing each and every night during that time."

But it wasn't only big-name acts that could afford to hold together working groups at the time; in many circumstances, local outfits from peripheral places worked continuously. Consider Pittsburgh's Walt Harper Quintet, which—if you can believe Pittsburgh Courier editor Harold L. Keith's liner notes to the barely known LP *Harper's Ferry*—worked 360 days out of the year 1960, sometimes more than one date per night. "All of this means great listening," suggested Keith, "for it exemplifies the tremendous empathy extant within the

Harper crew and proves the point that when skilled musicians stay together as a unit over a long period of time, the resultant product is like old wine, it keeps getting better and better."

But a new institution—the jazz festival—would quickly shift the scene in such a way that listeners were soon treating jazz more like Nouveau Beaujolais than as a wine of vintage. A rather recent development, foreshadowed in the '30s by formal concerts pitched by John Hammond and Granz's JATP events, the evolution of the

jazz festival and its increasing centrality in the economics of the music should be the focus of a full-length study. By the early '50s there were successful, running festivals such as Newport and Monterey; since then, the festival has arguably displaced the nightclub as the main outlet for jazz, with many hundreds of annual festivals now presented worldwide.

What does the presence of the festival have to do with the working band? In the same way that JATP had to keep a fresh combination happening to make the next year's version noteworthy, so, too, do festivals have to be special events. As

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Benny Carter (left), Clark Terry and Zoot Sims during a JATP show in April 1967.



The Charles Mingus band with Clifford Jordan (tenor sax), Eric Dolphy (alto sax) and Dannie Richmond (drums), circa 1964: Little more need be said in favor of the working band.

such, they rarely book working bands more than once, and in general prefer to feature unusual or eye-catching ensembles and one-time projects. The Art Ensemble of Chicago plays the Lennon/McCartney songbook. Toots Thielemans plus the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Wynton Marsalis and Charles Gayle in George Gruntz's laserlight-show "The Extremes Meet." Whatever the artistic results of such confabulations, it's clear that the spectacle rules the roost at most festivals. Furthermore, festivals generally feature single performances, rather than runs of performances or extended engagements.

Thus, even when working groups get work at festivals, the group plays once, for a huge (sometimes, to be truthful, too huge) audience, and is paid more than they would be for a nightclub gig. So if a band can string together a tour of summer festivals, they'll probably only end up performing a dozen or so times (at most). Compare that number with the Harper Quintet. About five years ago, drummer Don Moye explained that the Art Ensemble had "become" a festival band and that they weren't interested in club dates anymore. It stands as a question how a band can continue to grow with that kind of working concept, and likewise how an audience can really get to know a group.

It's impossible to prove, but festivals themselves have likely influenced jazz listenership, encouraging a less consistent engagement with the music and allowing fans to approach it more like a sporting event than as a regular part of their cultural calendar. If the conservative movement of the last decade has made way for more formal concert presentation in halls like Lincoln Center, this has not been accompanied by a boom in more regular outlets like clubs and bars. Where there were dozens of active jazz spots featuring working bands in Chicago in the '60s, for instance, now there's only the Jazz Showcase, which brings out-of-town bands in for a run, and scattered places making space for weekly appearances by locals, like the Elbo Room (Barrett Deems big-band on Tuesdays) or jam sessions at the New Apartment Lounge (Tuesdays, also) and Velvet Lounge (Sundays). Other Windy City jazz venues tend to feature one-nighters with a group, which is much more typical of today's presenting climate.

All of the so-called jazz cities experienced the disintegration of the club scene. Even Los Angeles—home to the bustling Central Avenue bebop havens of the '40s and habitats for the denizens of West Coast (Shelly's Manne-Hole, the Haig, the Lighthouse Cafe) in the '50s—was in serious decline by the '70s. Fewer outlets meant fewer working bands.

Over the course of its history, the working band has continued to have relevance in jazz, though its current status is up for grabs. And the one-time meeting concept has its convincing advocates; guitarist Derek Bailey, for example, has made an art of first encounters and prefers them to long-term groups. But elsewhere, the decision is unfortunately often less one of music than of finance. At a time when the industry is desperately trying to figure out how to market jazz effectively, to make it more like other pop products, it runs the risk of losing track of that special understanding only nurtured in regular ensembles. Thus, as records seem more and more like festival specialities with high concepts and supergroup amalgamations, the underlying chemistry of the music is at stake.

Ask a jazz fan whether jazz should be overdubbed and multitracked, and the answer will usually be "no." Jazz is about communication, which is impossible without being together. But how far from overdubbing is it to throw together a bunch of all-stars and ask them to blow? Until they've worked as a unit awhile, more often than not they might as well be playing on different tracks, in different rooms, at different times.

As we have seen, many of the precepts of regular working outfits were inherent in jazz from the outset. Touring groups, local bands, house rhythm sections—jazz is awash in families that play together and stay together. But the counter-motion has been there as well, encouraging ephemeral encounters for various ends.

The flow of jazz listenership has been in the direction of these quick-fix scenarios. Rather than following the transformation of a group's interactive dynamic over time, the jazz fan expects finished product—the quality goods! What this produces is an acceptable level of professionalism, and often little more.

The consequences of this superficial esthetic criterion is that it misses the point of improvised music, which is elegant at expressing subtleties and nuances, the very stuff of mature relationships. Players who have run the gamut together know each other better, can push each other places they've never been; if you don't know someone well, very well, how can you challenge them? Infatuation has its attributes—danger, adventure, fear—but what would it be without other levels of emotional engagement, or, dare I say, love?

It's terrible that the current state of jazz affairs makes the prospects for the regular working ensemble so difficult. But the fruits of such labor, when plucked, are that much more sweet when grown in barren land.

DB

In the next installment of "Fanfare For The Working Band," we'll hear members of the jazz industry offer their perspectives. —ed.



Cecil Taylor

Nefertiti, The Beautiful One Has Come Revenant 202

★★★★

The cover art to the long-gone Fontana release of this landmark 1962 live date was both distinctive and presumptive: a rendering of what was likely on Taylor's mind during the music's creation. A colorful portrait of the pianist's head divided his cranium into quadrants. Under consideration were the two other musicians (Jimmy Lyons and Sunny Murray), the Egyptian queen herself and a diffuse array of technically tinged squiggles, dots and angles, strewn randomly, as if the Univac had blown up. In a way it had, because Taylor's approach to orthodox jazz elements had a computer's absolute sense of determination, yet nevertheless conjured a gloriously invigorating scattershot vibe. (Footnote: Debut originally released half of this music in the '60s as *Live At The Cafe Monmartre*, while Arista/Freedom gave us a double-album equivalent to the European Fontana release with its current title in '75.)

Almost 34 years after *Nefertiti* was recorded at the Cafe Monmartre in Copenhagen, it retains its dazzle. Displaying an intrepid expansion of the approach Taylor had been developing since his 1956 recording debut, it's a music of transition. Studio sessions from a year and a half prior find the maestro laying his idiosyncratic harmonic and melodic notions over groovy cadences (e.g., "O.P."). But here, working in Europe for the first time, the floodgates open. Drummer Murray, who had a rep as a reliable bebopper beforehand, had recently developed a deep rapport with the pianist playing duets at the Five Spot. His cogency with open time signatures and random splashes of color was unique for the era. Saxophonist Jimmy Lyons, a newcomer to Taylor's world, also had an observant way of accommodating his boss's unusual structures. The alto player's extended Bird and Benny phrases are calibrated to provide a sympathetic yet autonomous voice. This extended run (six months in various countries) allowed the trio opportunity to enhance each other's expressions, challenge each other's assumptions and

forge a singular, vital and audacious dialect of improvisation.

For a nascent language, there's certainly an authoritative eloquence at work. "Call" is a masterpiece of mood, a reflective ballad whose quixotic nature belies the fierceness of its poise. Its delicacy refutes standard chides that Taylor was uniformly eruptive during his outset. The keen sense of balance at work in the piece also keeps the ensemble on track during the bandleader's first extended classic "D Trad That's What." A 21-minute revision of jazz's aural geography, it's a labyrinth of steely logic, convulsive emotion and exacting execution—a crucial document of the protean sweep for which the bandleader would become known. The Cafe's audience must have been both enthralled and bewildered.

Speaking of the venue, its piano leaves much to be desired. Taylor, of course, is notorious for punishing his instruments. His punctuations marred uprights around the East Village for years before this date, and even in the studio he was saddled with out-of-tune pianos. They weren't quite as disagreeable as this one, though; heard in the tech-happy '90s, it's annoying.

On the other hand, the sound of Lyons' horn is superb, and the overall tone of Revenant's update is just fine. The formal plus of this set is extra material—another version of "Call" and 20 minutes of an untitled piece—mysteriously recorded and tacked to the end of each CD. These tracks arrived after the label's gorgeous artwork was complete, so no mention of their source—let alone their being listed with the other tracks—is made.

The vinyl version of *Nefertiti* has been out of print for nearly two decades, making this CD debut heroic. Think about the implications of an MIA *Kind Of Blue*. How would we understand Miles' leap between bop and modal without that linchpin? That's how crucial *Nefertiti* is to Taylor's canon. Here he proves several things, the most important being that if finesse

is involved, contrast can be just as compelling as accord. Cecil zealots just hit paydirt. (Revenant Records: 615-251-1068)

—Jim Macnie

Nefertiti, The Beautiful One Has Come—Trance: Call; Lena; D Trad That's What; What's New; Nefertiti, The Beautiful One Has Come; Lena (second version); Nefertiti, The Beautiful One Has Come. (54:18/65:03)
Personnel—Taylor, piano; Sunny Murray, drums; Jimmy Lyons, alto saxophone.



McCoy Tyner

What The World Needs Now Impulse! 197

★★★★

Life can be awful strange. That is, if you're around long enough to realize it. There was a time when he was Coltrane's harmonic backbone for such outer-jazz firestorms as *Meditations* (both versions) and *Sun Ship*. Call it mellowing with age, but firebrand pianist McCoy Tyner's embrace (and it is an embrace) of pop songwriter Burt Bacharach's music is a significant milestone.

Bacharach's music was originally given to us through high-profile '60s singles, courtesy

THE HOT BOX					
CDs	CRITICS	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	John Ephland
CECIL TAYLOR <i>Nefertiti, The Beautiful One Has Come</i>		★★★★ 1/2	★★★★ 1/2	★★★★	★★★★ 1/2
MCCOY TYNER <i>What The World Needs Now</i>		★★★ 1/2	★	★★	★★★★
SHERMAN IRBY <i>Full Circle</i>		★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★ 1/2
ABBEY LINCOLN <i>Who Used To Dance</i>		★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★ 1/2

of pop singers like Dusty Springfield, Aretha Franklin, the Carpenters and, especially, Dionne Warwick. Nowadays, Tyner is not alone in celebrating Bacharach. Pop singer/songwriter Elvis Costello has collaborated with him, a double-CD collection from John Zorn's Tzadik label including various jazz, rock and experimental artists from the label's first installment in its Great Jewish Music series is due out this summer, and Rhino has plans to release a multi-CD set of his material sometime next year.

A cursory listen to Tyner's collection makes one wonder why, with all the talk about a new repertoire for jazz, there hasn't been a mention of Bacharach. Indeed, his music can be a satisfying emotional experience, what with its soulful appeal to sentiments, longings and passions of the heart. It has the harmonic sophistication jazz musicians love. And finally, as Tyner proves, it can make for great vehicles of improvisation. The typical threats to staking a real claim on one's heart and mind with this music are twofold: the potential for sap and, especially for jazz musicians, the serpentine nature of a music that can box an improviser in if interesting strategies aren't developed.

The generally lush, tasteful arrangements come via West Coast bassist John Clayton, who also serves as the album's conductor. In his hands was the potential to wreck everything. Instead, what we get is a series of four-to-eight-minute treatments that allow Tyner—ably assisted by special guests bassist Christian McBride and drummer Lewis Nash—to exercise his brawny, bluesy sensibilities to good advantage. Tyner, who is no stranger to large ensembles, makes the most of his big sound without going ballistic.

Sometimes, the melody appears buried or drawn out. In the linkage heard between "Close To You" and "What The World Needs Now," for example, the same three opening notes of both songs are drawn out by Tyner's soft touch, creating a sense of mystery out of what initially plays like a medley or extension of "Close To You." (Tommy LiPuma's bright production brings Tyner's grunting front and center on the swinging second tune.) The well-known melody of "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head" (from the movie *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid*) is dropped into Tyner's solo at the end of what amounts to a sunny, big-band rendition of "You'll Never Get To Heaven," followed in turn by a reflective "The Windows Of The World," repeating a pattern of assured pacing to a set that could easily come off as a sing-songy greatest-hits bore.

In jazz, the kind of sentimentality offered here is rare. In fact, *What The World Needs Now* comes awfully close to schmaltz, or a glitzy Hollywood soundtrack (low points: the over-the-top, bombastic arrangement to the already thin "Always Something There To Remind Me" and the uneven, if imaginative, arrangement to "The Look Of Love"). Likewise, Tyner could have been a tad less reverent, picked fewer songs, developing them further, perhaps taking more chances (e.g., "Alfie," full of horns and strings, is bereft of solos).

Still, Tyner's longstanding affection for Bacharach's music (he recorded the title track with Stanley Turrentine for Blue Note back in

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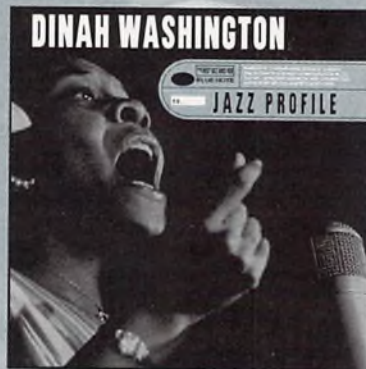


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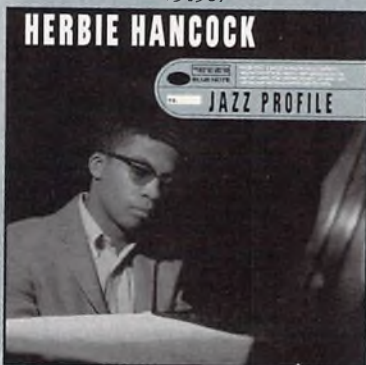


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1966) makes for a kind of dignified swinging on the one hand, some poignant lyricism with the ballads on the other. Referring to Bacharach's material, Tyner himself says in the liner notes, "Those melodies are unbelievable ... they bring out my romantic side!" Consider this an understatement.

—John Ephland

What The World Needs Now—(They Long To Be) Close To You; What The World Needs Now Is Love; You'll Never Get To Heaven (If You Break My Heart); The Windows Of The World; One Less Bell To Answer; A House Is Not A Home; (There's) Always Something There To Remind Me; *Alfie*; The Look Of Love. (52:14)

Personnel—Tyner, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Lewis Nash, drums; orchestra arranged and conducted by John Clayton.

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Sherman Irby

Full Circle
Blue Note 52251

★★★

The debut CD of 28-year-old alto saxist Sherman Irby presents us with a fine and talented player, articulate in a range of sensibilities running from Johnny Hodges (on the blues) to Anthony Braxton ("The Choice") and showcased in a program of highly playable originals and two standards.

The album notes position him as a saxophonist who, unlike his peers, presumably, doesn't "overpack" his music; who "doesn't disrespect his notes by cramming them together." And sure enough, you hear it in the light frugality of "Betty The Baptist." But you wouldn't necessarily know that the swirling "Wee" or an irritable late-'60s-ish "The Choice" are played by the same person. The former is a well-packed flight of classic bebop, while the latter seems to show considerable disrespect for his notes, given his proven grasp of a warm, lyrical sound. So Irby is obviously capable of many modes, given the requirements of the material. But doesn't the exceptional player wield the power to impose himself on the material rather than the other way around?

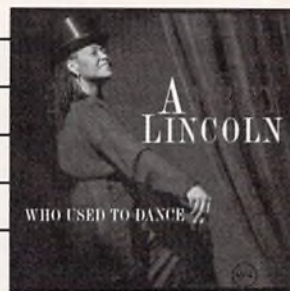
The CD begins and ends with Eric Revis' bass, perhaps prompting the title, *Full Circle*. In between, it's apparent that attention has been paid to structuring and pacing the ensembles. The music bares the assured mark of a working group, and Irby generally phrases with a confident grace. He may be at his best on the blues ("Mamma Faye"), where he oozes out his choruses with emotional forthrightness. His authority here is especially commanding when measured against the affectations that follow from pianist James Hurt. Though clearly an excellent musician (plenty of evidence of that here), he tends to get trapped in repetitious dead ends. On "It's A New Day," for instance, he dwells on a progression of half notes, as if browsing the keyboard for a mislaid chord.

So album-note talk about Irby's "balance" and "composure" is all well and good. But not quite enough. For all the journeyman skills he displays here, there is not among them a strong signature giving either style or content significant singularity. Maybe all the singular signatures are used up in jazz nowadays (actually, I doubt it). Anyway, it leaves him stranded, along with many other fine musicians today, in a risk-averse middle ground, somewhere between imitation and originality.

—John McDonough

Full Circle—Betty The Baptist; Rachaphobia; How Strong Is Our Love; Wee; Mamma Faye; Crown Royal; Giant Steps; The Choice; It's A New Day; Homesick. (61:36)

Personnel—Sherman Irby, alto saxophone; James Hurt, piano; Eric Revis, bass; Dana Murray, Charli Persip (4), drums.



Abbey Lincoln

Who Used To Dance
Verve 533 559

★★★★

Abbey Lincoln continues to build a distinctive, wonderful oeuvre for Verve. *Who Used To Dance*, her sixth record for the label, contains her patented mix of melancholy and self-affirmation—a twinge of sorrow and a flash of courage. It expands her work as a writer, as well, introducing five new original compositions. And in line with Lincoln's prior releases, this disc is peppered with unexpected touches, a little conceptualism in the instrumentation and a whole lot of her devastating vox.

That voice sounds great when set against alto saxophone, a combination played out on *Who Used To Dance* using five different altoists on seven (of the nine) tracks. Elder statesman Frank Morgan's feathery touch graces "Love Lament" and "When Autumn Sings," while Steve Coleman's tougher tone is tastefully applied on a lovely version of "Street Of Dreams" and Lincoln's bittersweet "Love Has Gone Away." Particularly on the latter, Coleman digs in and dovetails with Lincoln's rich, deep balladeering. "Love What You Doin'" loads up with three altos—Coleman, Riley T. Bandy III and the crispy sounds of Oliver Lake—squaring off in sequential solos. Bandy accompanies with unornamented long tones on Lincoln's "I Sing A Song," and takes a simple, soulful solo.

Lake and Justin Robinson appear on "The River," which is formally and lyrically the record's least conventional song. Lincoln speaks and sings the poetic, extraterrestrial tale with darting, collaged-together inserts by the altos, pianist Rodney Kendrick, Graham Haynes' cornet and other spoken fragments. The disc's other unorthodox moment comes courtesy of tap dancer Savion Glover, who hoofs a memorable accompaniment to the title track, dancing rapidly against the song's slow tempo; he shares a solo with pianist Marc Cary, then on the way out takes an even more dizzying trip of light fandango.

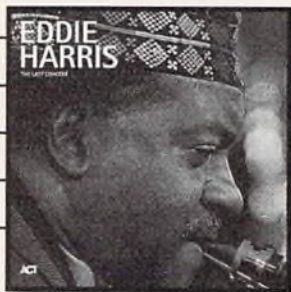
At the core of this record's success is Lincoln's working trio of Cary, Michael Bowie and Aaron Walker. They're as integral, unpre-

supposing a support team as a singer could want, giving her a basic feel but never obscuring any of the details of her phrasing. The only misstep comes in the form of Bob Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man." The otherwise intelligent trio tries too hard (and much too directly), with help from tenor saxist Julien Lourau, to conjure the classic Coltrane quartet; and, meanwhile, Lincoln seems uncomfortable with the lyrics, forcing them out, plodding from stanza to stanza, not relaxing with them as she normally does. But it's only a momentary lapse on a highly engrossing record.

—John Corbett

Who Used To Dance—*Love Has Gone Away; Who Used To Dance; Love Lament; Mr. Tambourine Man; When Autumn Sings; Love What You Doin'; Street Of Dreams; I Sing A Song; The River.* (61:31)

Personnel—Lincoln, vocals; Marc Cary, Rodney Kendrick (9), piano; Michael Bowie, John Ormond (9), bass; Aaron Walker, Alvester Garnett (2, 5, 6), Turu Alexander (9), drums; Steve Coleman (1, 6, 7), Oliver Lake (6, 9), Frank Morgan (3, 5), Riley T. Bandy, III (6, 8), Justin Robinson (9), alto saxophone; Julien Lourau, tenor saxophone (4); Graham Haynes, cornet (9); Savion Glover, tap dance (2); Bazzi Bartholomew Gray, Arthur Green, vocal comments (9).



Eddie Harris

The Last Concert

ACT 9249

★★★½

Freedom Jazz Dance

MusicMasters 65164

★★★★

Ronnie Laws

Tribute To The Legendary

Eddie Harris

Blue Note 55330

★★★

There may not be the customary 10 or more tunes on this tribute to the late Eddie Harris, who died last November, nor do the tunes average more than four and a half minutes in playing time. But everything else is nearly up to speed, particularly when Ronnie Laws chooses to bite down on the soprano saxophone.

On the slow and bluesy "I Don't Want No One But You," and on the much more vibrant

"Hip Hoppin'," with its "Salt Peanuts" opening riffs, Laws' very expressive phrasing and tonality are both cogent and commanding. In each instance he cleverly abandons the pop tendencies that were often Harris' forte, settling instead for pop-like messages that you wish could be further extended. More extensive, too, could have been Vernell Brown's wonderful piano solos on the above tunes, and his invention is especially sweet on "Hip Hoppin'." And since we're making entries on the wish list—how about giving the rest of Gene McDaniel's memorable lyrics to "Compared To What"? Just one more thing that came up short on a nod to Harris that does not embarrass his genius or legacy, even though it fails to evoke his unforgettable performance completely.

Except for Harris' assertive treatment of his famed "Freedom Jazz Dance"—using one of his innovative electronic devices to make his tenor sound like a trombone on his solo on "Work Song," where his horn approximates an organ—his last concert is less than remarkable, and practically devoid of the incandescence that figured so prominently in his live performances. There are far too few moments when he is able to leap beyond the band's sheltering harmonies with one of his patented squeak stops and subsequent bravura solos.

Harris will be forever remembered for his electrifying rendition of "Exodus" in 1961 and his precious dates with Les McCann, and he can be forgiven if on this last concert he did not sizzle like his former self; the band, most of



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whom are Europeans, was cooking, however. They found just the right harmonic path to merge "Wade In The Water," a traditional spiritual, with "Dat Dere." Other delightful moments included Nils Landgren's mean trombone on Nat Adderley's "Work Song," and pianist Gil Goldstein's silky permutations on "You Stole My Heart."

Now for the genuine article.

Listen to *Freedom Jazz Dance's* title cut and hear the power exhibited by drummer Billy Hart in his polyrhythmic introduction to the title tune composed by Harris, which is as complex as any Monk composition. Timing is essential here, and the foursome, following Hart's intrepid lead, moves as one. Freddie Hubbard's beguiling "Little Sunflower" belongs to the quartet, though the most exciting moments are shared by Harris and pianist Jacky Terrasson, whose potency and creativity seem absolutely boundless.

Harris makes some surprising options on his interpretation of "Stars Fell On Alabama," settling on the darker, deeper bass notes after setting you up for something perhaps an octave higher. His decisions, nonetheless, are faultless, as are bassist George Mraz's, during his even lower excursions into the tune's harmonic depths. "Lisa Marie" has a merry, waltz-like feel, and its composer, Mraz, applies additional mirth when he elegantly picks the melody apart and then tenderly reconstructs it. A modal mood envelopes "Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho," and Harris' Traneish tone delivers density and spiritual weight, too. Hart and Terrasson take turns rearranging the song, and

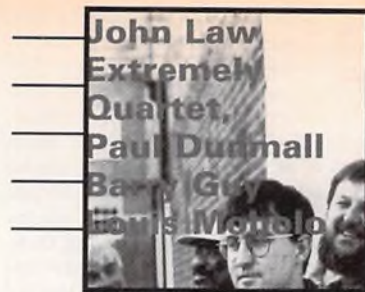
then playfully merge to provide a firm cushion for an assortment of trills, squeaks and healthy honks from Harris.

The melancholic, forlorn "For All We Know" has all the earmarks of Harris' farewell, as if he had a premonition this would be his final studio date. "Tomorrow may never come/for all we know," he virtually sings on his horn, a lament that lingers and he reminds us of his great musicianship. —Herb Boyd

The Last Concert—*Sidewinder; Moanin'; Wade In The Water; Freedom Jazz Dance; Work Song; When A Man Loves A Woman; Gimme Some Lovin'; You Stole My Heart.* (62:24)
Personnel—Harris, tenor saxophone; Andy Haderer, Rob Bruynen, Klaus Osterloh, Rudiger Baldauf, John Marshall, trumpet; Nils Landgren, Dave Horler, Henning Berg, Bernt Laukamp, Roy Deuwall, trombones; Heiner Wiberny, Harald Rosenstein, Olivier Stevans, Rolf Romer, Jens Neufang, saxophones; Frank Chastenier, piano, organ; John Goldsby, bass; Bernard Purdie, drums; Gil Goldstein, piano; Haywood Gregory, vocals (6, 7).

Freedom Jazz Dance—*Freedom Jazz Dance; Georgia On My Mind; Little Sunflower; Stars Fell On Alabama; Lisa Marie; Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho; For All We Know.* (53:49)
Personnel—Harris, tenor saxophone; Jacky Terrasson, piano; George Mraz, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

Tribute To The Legendary Eddie Harris—*Listen Here; Freedom Jazz Dance; Boogie Woogie Bossa Nova; Cold Duck; Sham Time; I Don't Want No One But You; Hip Hoppin'; Compared To What.* (37:21)
Personnel—Laws, tenor and soprano saxophones; Gary Bias, baritone saxophone (5); Oscar Brashear, Michael Stewart, trumpet; Craig Cooper, guitar (1, 5, 7); Vernell Brown, Jr., Patrice Rushen, piano; Mike Elizando, Larry Antonio (6, 8), bass; Jeffrey Suttles, William Bryant (6, 8), drums; Darryl Munyunco Jackson, percussion; Andrea Coleman, vocals (8).



John Law Extremely Quartet

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★★★½

Jon Lloyd Quartet By Confusion

hat ART 6198

★★★

Cecil Taylor exerts so powerful an influence on improvising pianists that it's refreshing to encounter a younger player who follows another path. British pianist John Law seems to be influenced more often by Lennie Tristano than by Taylor. He's also informed by his classi-



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cal training, and he favors long, searching melodic lines and a light touch. Flow and a sense of forward motion seem to be priorities, with harmonic interest less of a factor. *Extremely Quartet* records Law in concert with his quartet, including Barry Guy on bass and Louis Moholo on drums, both top-shelf rhythm players on the European jazz/improv scene.

Along with Law, the strongest presence in the quartet is Paul Dunmall, a provocative saxophonist whose use of cyclical figures recalls Evan Parker. Law and Dunmall struggle to reconcile the pianist's moderate, thoughtful approach with the saxophonist's pyrotechnics and emotional outbursts. They find common ground, but each man sounds more comfortable working with the rhythm section, or in a duet. Dunmall's duet with Moholo on "Extremely Quartet Two" is a highlight, with the drummer supplying a strong African foundation for Dunmall's whirls and flurries on tenor. Law follows with a dramatic solo displaying a strong command on counterpoint.

In saxophonist Jon Lloyd's quartet, Law acts as a foil for the leader. Alternating alto and soprano saxophones, Lloyd favors a linear approach. Quickly launching from a theme, he negotiates convoluted vectors of sound and emphasizes the upper register of his horns with a pure tone. Where Lloyd is precisely focused and somewhat remote, Law's playing is broad and colorful. He joins a hard-swinging rhythm section, including drummer Mike Sanders, in tethering Lloyd's darting, often-abstract flights. Eric Dolphy's "Straight Up And Down" is a highlight, featuring a warmer, blues-inflected sound from Lloyd's alto, and "Resilience" echoes Dolphy and Monk in a less-structured context.

—Jon Andrews

Extremely Quartet—*Extremely Quartet One (Part 1); Extremely Quartet One (Part 2); Extremely Quartet Two (Part 1); Extremely Quartet Two (Part 2); Extremely Quartet Two (Part 3)*. (72:21)

Personnel—Law, piano; Paul Dunmall, tenor and soprano saxophones; Barry Guy, bass; Louis Moholo, drums.

By Confusion—3:2; *Tactility; Overlay; Nystagmus; Resilience; Interface; Straight Up And Down*. (65:13)

Personnel—Lloyd, alto and soprano saxophones; John Law, piano; Tim Wells, bass; Mike Sanders, drums.



Steve Turre

Steve Turre

Verve 537 133

★★★★½

Over the last decade Steve Turre has performed as a bold-voiced trombone sideman in a variety of settings, ranging from his *Saturday Night Live* pop-oriented gig

to his recent slot in McCoy Tyner's sizzling Afro-Cuban All-Stars ensemble. In the meantime, Turre's also been making his mark as a leader, beginning in the late '80s with two fine discs for Slash and then continuing in the '90s with a tripleheader of remarkable Antilles CDs, *Right There*, *Sanctified Shells* and *Rhythm Within*. On his self-titled sixth album and first for Verve, Turre takes his recording career to the next level with a sumptuous collection of eight tunes that reflect his multifaceted jazz passions.

Turre recorded the album in three sessions: an Afro-Cuban workout featuring conga master Mongo Santamaria and bassist Andy Gonzalez; a Brazilian bossa nova/samba cruise starring trumpeter Randy Brecker, guitarist Romero Lumbambo and violinist Regina Carter; and a swing & blues straightahead jazz social showcasing trombone elder J.J. Johnson, trumpeter Jon Faddis, pianist Stephen Scott and vibes/marimba/balifon player Stefon Harris. Even though the album comprises a who's who of the jazz world, thanks to Turre's brilliance as both an imaginative composer and arranger, the CD never digresses into a slam-dunk superstar jam session with an endless supply of solos.

Instead, Turre weaves the plentitude of solos into the fabric of his compositions and steers his supporting cast into enticing rhythmic arrangements. Plus, the shifting instrumental hues are a sonic treat as Turre takes full advantage of the tonal diversity at hand—his fascinating conch shell choir, the exquisite string foursome Quartette Indigo, the deep-souled trombone section, a cooking

team of percussionists.

The CD opens with the only cover in the batch, Duke Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood," rendered as a divine bossa nova. Cassandra Wilson delivers smoky-cool vocals as Turre and company take a slow, sultry swing through the classic. It's hard to imagine the rest of the album being as splendid, but the Ellington number hints at the beauty to come: the shimmering fluidity of the epic piece "The Emperor," the zest for instrumental frenzy on "Let It Go," Graciela Perez's passionate vocals on "Ayer Lo Vi Llorar," the graceful charm of "Coasting With Bobby" and the swinging good time on "Steve's Blues." Fittingly, the finale, "Mongo And McCoy," is a fiesta, teeming with percolating Latin rhythms and intertwining trombone and shell lines.

This album not only represents Turre's finest hour to date, but also reaffirms the trombone/shell maestro's promising future.

—Dan Ouellette

Steve Turre—*In A Sentimental Mood; The Emperor; Let It Go; Ayer Lo Vi Llorar; Coasting With Bobby; Steve's Blues; Inocencia (Basta De Clamarea Inocencia); Mongo And McCoy*. (66:32)

Personnel—Turre, Doug Proviaance, Robin Eubanks, Jimmy Bosch, trombones, shells; J.J. Johnson, Britt Woodman, Frank Lacy, trombones; Willie Rodriguez, Stephen Scott, piano; Alfredo "Chocolate" Armenteros, Jon Faddis, trumpets; Randy Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn; Stefon Harris, vibes, marimba, balifon; Romero Lumbambo, guitar; Akua Dixon, cello; Regina Carter, Carlos Baptiste, violin; Ron Lawrence, viola; Andy Gonzales, bass; Manny O'Quendo, Milton Cardona, Kimali Dinzulu, Herculano Federici, hand drums, percussion; Portinho, Victor Lewis, Horacio "Negro" Hernandez, drums; Graciela Perez, Cassandra Wilson, vocals.

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Marian McPartland With Strings

Silent Pool
Concord Jazz 4745

★★★½

On *Silent Pool*, McPartland achieves a unity with the orchestrations that some jazz musicians seem to find difficult. Typically, in these setups, soloist and orchestra confront each other, identities intact: first, the string, then the jazz ensemble and vice versa. What's the point?

When you perform with strings, it seems, you have to be prepared to surrender to the inevitable. You're outnumbered. So don't fight it.

McPartland doesn't. Alan Broadbent's wall-to-wall scores offer a luxurious context as well as some dramatic intros ("Twilight World" and Fred Seykoura's lush cello overture to "Stranger In A Dream"). Yes, this is mood music, if you will.

But it's the pianist's *own* mood music. She asserts herself through the design of her compositions in this case, not the give-and-take of her trio.

In the process, she turns each piece into a little faux-concerto in which piano and orchestra accommodate each other like a couple of strangers on a train enjoying a romantic one-time encounter. The tempos are nearly all slow, never rising about the medium swing of "A Delicate Balance."

But the music never asks anything out of character for a string choir, and McPartland's stately chords make her something of an orchestra herself. You sense a good interactive fit from the first bars of "For Dizzy," and Broadbent steers the music on a consistent course.

As a melodist, McPartland can be straightforward ("Castles In The Sand"), but is more likely to be politely elusive, almost intangible, not unlike Stephen Sondheim. Pieces such as "There'll Be Other Times" and "With You In Mind" leave you not so much with a tune in your head, but a state of mind not easily recaptured.

—John McDonough

Silent Pool—*For Dizzy; Twilight World; Stranger In A Dream; A Delicate Balance; Ambiance; Silent Pool; Castles In The Sand; Melancholy Mood; Threnody; Time And Time Again; There'll Be Other Times; With You In Mind. (59:32)*

Personnel—McPartland, piano; Murray Adler, Israel Baker, Marcy Dicterow, Maurice Dicterow, Bonnie Douglas, Gine Kronstadt, Don Palmer, Stanley Plummer, Paul Shure, Charles Veal, Tibor Zelig, James Getzoff, Assa Drori, violin; Harry Shirinian, Mimi Granat, Jorge Moraga, Cynthia Morrow, viola; Fred Seykoura, Jodi Burnett, Jerry Kessler, Suzie Katayama, Ray Kelley, cello; Andy Simpkins, bass, Harold Jones, drums; Alan Broadbent, arranger/conductor.



Clayton Brothers

Expressions
Qwest 46351

★★★½

Monty Alexander/ John Clayton/ Jeff Hamilton

Reunion In Europe
Concord Jazz 4231

★★★½

The thread connecting these two recordings is John Clayton, who, quiet as it's kept, is one of the most accomplished bassists in

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mainstream jazz. He is a composer, arranger and producer, with project involvements as disparate as Whitney Houston and the Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra. But John Clayton's single most distinguishing virtue is his arco playing. For most jazz bassists, arco is a sideline, a crudely executed change of pace. Most jazz bassists would do well to avoid Charlie Chaplin's "Smile," because of the risk of bathos. But Clayton's version on *Reunion In Europe* is both elegant and moving. "Ben" (a rarely heard theme from the movie of the same name) is dignified and poignant as only arco bass in the right hands can be.

The Clayton Brothers album contains the first of a planned series, "unaccompanied bass, playing two combined songs from two different cultures." "Londonderry Aire/Lift Every Voice And Sing" is revelatory. It starts with as deep and yearning a reading of the Irish melody as you can ever remember, and while you're immersed in it, its conversion into the American hymn is seamless. "Danny Boy, I love you so ..." becomes "Life every voice ..." so naturally that the melodic and spiritual unities of two timeless songs make a new whole.

Oh, yeah—there's some other stuff going on here besides John Clayton. *Reunion In Europe* may be the best album that Monty Alexander has ever made. It was recorded in Stuttgart, West Germany, in 1983 during a reunion tour of a group that in the mid-'70s had called itself the Monty Alexander Trio. Alexander is not an innovator or deep thinker, but when he's on he's the ultimate party piano player. He really pops on *Reunion In Europe*. Lifted up on the dancing brushes of Jeff Hamilton, he flies over

songs like "Yesterdays" and "Two Bass Hit" and makes everything he goes for. It is impossible not to be carried off on his ebullient headlong momentum.

The liner notes state that the album was recorded "live at Club Manufaktur," but the crowd noise has been edited out. The disconcerting fades at the ends of songs notwithstanding, the recorded sound of engineer Gibbs Platen has vividness and visceral presence. It is an important reason why *Reunion In Europe* communicates so much irresistible life-force.

When it comes to recording music, the concept of technological progress is challenged by the fact that *Expressions*, recorded 12 years later in a studio by a label with major affiliations (Warner Bros. and executive producer Quincy Jones), is sonically less interesting. But to those familiar with their earlier infrequent recordings, *Expressions* will sound very much like a Clayton Brothers album. There is a lot of quality here: glossy musicianship, highly crafted arrangements and well-planned variety. Jeff Clayton possesses imposing technical facility on four reed instruments.

But for all its polish, or perhaps because of it, there is something missing from the music of the Clayton Brothers—that last degree of existential exposure and risk that gives the strongest jazz its edge. Like the studio musicians they are, the Clayton Brothers calculate every gesture in advance. Even anger sounds slightly self-conscious, like Jeff Clayton's alto saxophone shrieks on "Saturday Night Special," a social protest song. They are best not on their own thoroughly worked-out originals, but when they go to archetypal sources in the public

domain—like John's solo medley on "Londonderry Aire"/"Lift Every Voice," and like "Motherless Child." It is a short, simple duo by the two brothers on which the other-worldly colors of Jeff's english horn touch new feelings.
—Thomas Conrad

Expressions—*Tonight I Won't Be Singing No Blues; Jazzy Bluesy Bossa Nova; Song For My Father; Here Today, Here Tomorrow; Londonderry Aire/Lift Every Voice And Sing; Saturday Night Special; Summertime; Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child; I Love You; The Star-Crossed Lovers; There Is Music Where You're Going My Friends.* (66:27)

Personnel—Jeff Clayton, alto and tenor saxophones, alto flute, english horn; John Clayton, bass; Bill Cunliffe, piano; Herlin Riley, drums.

Reunion In Europe—*Two Bass Hit; Got My Mojo Workin'; Smile; Yesterdays; Blues For Stephanie; Love You Madly; Ben; Eleuthra; That's Why.* (49:11)

Personnel—Alexander, piano; Clayton, bass; Hamilton, drums.



Ron Miles

Woman's Day
Gramavision 79516

★★★★

Trumpeter Ron Miles makes an art out of avoiding the pitfalls of modern jazz on his triumphant sophomore outing. As a band-leader and arranger, he steers clear of stressing instrumental posturing in favor of developing ensemble interplay that relies on simpatico teamwork. What a breath of fresh air not to have yet another session with a soloing order that's as predictable as a baseball lineup card. Instead, Miles interweaves all front-line instrumental performances of his band into the fabric of his compositions.

As a composer, Miles also scores top grades with his 12 originals, most of which clock in between three and five minutes long. In lieu of simply sketching out a head that everyone plays off, he develops a tune melodically, allowing enough room for improvisational embellishments without sacrificing compositional intention and integrity. As a trumpeter, Miles lays no claim to being a virtuoso, opting instead to focus on playing with soft-toned lyrical grace, quietly urgent passion and gently startling dynamics.

The 33-year-old, Denver-based Miles has been a member of Bill Frisell's quartet the past two years. He's obviously been picking up pointers on how to stretch the jazz boundaries from the inventive guitarist, who, incidentally, contributes his distinctive voicings throughout the disc. Like Frisell, Miles has been influ-

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enced by a diverse cast of musicians, including free-flying fellow trumpeters Lester Bowie and Olu Dara, compositional geniuses Thelonious Monk and Sonny Rollins, and pop songsmiths Lennon-McCartney and Nirvana's Kurt Cobain.

Consequently, Miles covers a lot of stylistic territory on *Woman's Day*. The jaunty "Belly" coolly swings, the catchy melody "Dew" flames with searing rock-guitar angst, the danceable "Mommy On Top" bursts with hefty chunks of funk, the sad beauty of "Jesus, I Want To Go To Sleep" aches with blues and country flavors, and the longest piece of the collection, "Born Liar," is buoyed by the haunting, atmospheric realm Miles and Frisell create through their calmly spirited, improvisational trumpet/guitar conversations.

There are several highly recommended tracks. Miles floats a peaceful melody over a riveting pedal-to-the-metal double-guitar workout by Frisell and Todd Ayers on the rocking "You Taste . . ." The reflective title track is the most colorful tune on the CD as Ayers, bass clarinetist Mark Harris and pianist Eric Gunnison join Miles and Frisell for a harmonically rich reading. Miles and Frisell perform their most evocative instrumental dance on the melancholic "Cobain," dedicated to the late Nirvana lead singer.

—Dan Ouellette

Woman's Day—*Dew; Belly; Born Liar; You Taste...*; *Jesus, I Want To Go To Sleep; Woman's Day; Bath; Longing; Cobain; Linen; Mommy On Top; Goodnight.* (59:36)

Personnel—Miles, trumpet; Bill Frisell, Todd Ayers (1, 4, 6, 11), guitars; Mark Harris, bass clarinet (6, 8); Eric Gunnison, piano (6); Artie Moore, Kent McLagen (3), bass; Rudy Royston, drums.

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Nick Brignola

The Flight Of The Eagle

Reservoir 145

★★★★

At 60, Brignola shows no signs of slowing down. For while the tempos here may be a bit more relaxed than on his past Reservoir efforts—including the amazing 1989 date *On A Different Level*—inside these more moderate-paced numbers, the agile, persuasive baritonist cranks up the speed.

Which is not to say that Brignola is about flurries of notes without substance or contrast. Far from it, for like his remarkable cohort Barron, he's a superlative, at times quite subtle, melodist. Here, tunes such as the medium-tempoed "Rollerblades" (the leader's spunky reworking of the shuffle blues form) and the

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sans-drums "Body And Soul" find the baritonist singing as well as swinging, packing his lines with juicy notes that burst sweetly in your ear. His method, as on Billy Taylor's cracklingly fun, Latin-ish "Diz," is to release long gusts of notes, the swirling ideas stretching for many bars, and then to slow down and pace himself, as if he'd sought shelter from the self-initiated wind. It's a pattern that welcomes numerous listenings. "The Last Of Moe Hegan," a comical title for a revamped "Cherokee," is also a multi-note affair.

There are many simply relaxed moods, from the tender "Pretty Girl" and the ever-evocative "Foolish Heart" to the no-bumps flow of "Gerrylike," which is both Mulligan-ish in its easy flow and Pres-like in the way Brignola

creates rhythm by working off repeated single notes the way Lester did.

Barron, Reid and Lewis are a marvelous unit: they know each other inside-out; among numerous other engagements, they recorded the pianist's *The Moment* for Reservoir in 1991. Here, the threesome gives Brignola such supple yet strong backing, he'd never be able to make a wrong turn. Barron's solos are the continued epitome of song-like playing; he can make something as routine as ascending triads sound unique and inventive. Reid plays resilient lines, and his improvisations reveal keen note selections. Lewis never bashes, yet the time is consistently muscular and present. The last two words also describe the sound.

—Zan Stewart

The Flight Of The Eagle—Gerrylike; *The Flight Of The Eagle*; *Diz*; *A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody*; *Body And Soul*; *Rollerblades*; *My Foolish Heart*; *The Last Of Moe Hegan*. (56:50).

Personnel—Brignola, baritone saxophone; Kenny Barron, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.



Bob Brookmeyer

Electricity
ACT 9219

★★★½

Tony Coe & Bob Brookmeyer

Captain Coe's Famous Racearound
Storyville 4206

★★★★

Much of Bob Brookmeyer's recorded output during the '90s has come from Europe. Here are two releases with Brookmeyer at the helm of European big bands, displaying very different approaches to composition and arrangement. *Electricity*, recorded in 1991, is an ambitious, intriguing departure for Brookmeyer. The title confirms his fascination with synthesizers and electric guitar, and he's augmented the WDR Big Band with keyboards and guitarist John Abercrombie. The results are mixed—frequently puzzling, but just as often wonderful. Brookmeyer relies heavily on electronics for textures and somber atmospheres. *Electricity* sounds chilly and European in a style you might expect from the ECM label. Ominous and charged with angst, this is a real change-up from the warmth and swing that often permeate Brookmeyer's work.

Brookmeyer might have called this CD a concerto for John Abercrombie. The guitarist solos extensively and aggressively. He wails and rocks on "The Crystal Palace" and "White Blues," while the more delicate guitar work over the synth wash of "Farewell, New York" evokes Abercrombie's own "Timeless." Brookmeyer uses tightly meshed horns somewhat sparingly to create a collective voice. He solos only twice, and this project could have used more of the pensive, human quality he brings.

Brookmeyer directs the Danish Radio Jazz Orchestra in the 1995 Jazzpar tribute to British reedman Tony Coe. Coe celebrates the prestigious award with large and small ensembles,

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ECM

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and displays his skills as composer and arranger. He turns romantic with a luxuriant, expressive tenor sax solo over his gorgeous big band arrangement of Gershwin's "How Long Has This Been Going On?" and with a glowing soprano sax turn on Maria Schneider's "My Lament." Brookmeyer paces the DRJO through an exhilarating reading of his "Nasty Dance" with Coe soaring on tenor sax. Coe and Brookmeyer are featured soloists on a buoyant sextet performance of Coe's "Edmundo," as Coe bubbles with enthusiasm on clarinet to complement Brookmeyer's bright, engaging valve trombone solos. Once again, Brookmeyer doesn't solo nearly enough. —Jon Andrews

Electricity—*Farewell, New York; Ugly Music; White Blues; Say Ah; So Song; The Crystal Palace.* (69:44)

Personnel—Brookmeyer, valve trombone; John Abercrombie, guitar; Rainer Bruninghaus, Frank Chastenier, keyboards; Dieter Ilg, bass; Danny Gottlieb, drums; Andy Haderer, Klaus Osterloh, Rick Kieler, trumpet; Dave Horler, Bernt Laukamp, Roy Deuwall, trombones; Heiner Wiberny, Olivier Peters, Rolf Romer, Paul Peucker, saxophones.

Captain Coe's Famous Racearound—*Prelude/How Long Has This Been Going On?/Postlude; Edmundo; Toy Box; Antonia; Fools Rush In; Nasty Dance; My Lament; Captain Coe's Famous Racearound.* (59:24)

Personnel—Coe, tenor and soprano saxophones, clarinet; Brookmeyer, valve trombone, conductor; Henrik Bolberg Pedersen, trumpet, flugelhorn (1-2, 5-8); Jan Kohlin, Benny Rosenfeld, Palle Bolvig, Lars Togeby, trumpet, flugelhorn (1, 5-8); Vincent Nilsson, Steen Hansen, Kjeld Ipsen, trombone (1, 5-8); Giordano Bellincampi, Alex Windfield, bass trombone (1, 5-8); Jan zum Vohrde, Michael Hove, Uffe Markussen, Bob Rockwell, Flemming Madsen, saxophones (1, 5-8); Nikolaj Bentzon (1, 5-8), David Hazeltine (2-4), piano; Thomas Ovesen, bass; Steve Argüelles (2-4), Jonas Johansen (1, 5-8), drums; Ethan Weisgard, percussion (1, 5-8); Anders Lindvall, guitar (5).

the october revolution

RASHIED ALI
BOBBI BERGMAN
JOE MCPHEE
WILBER MORRIS
MYRA MELFORD TRIO

Ali/Bergman/ McPhee/Morris, Myra Melford Trio

The October Revolution
Evidence 22166

★★★½

This strangely paired set of live recordings by a hardcore, '60s-ish, free-blowing quartet and Myra Melford's more centrally managed trio comes from a concert in 1994 that celebrated the 30th anniversary of the October Revolution in Jazz. The original event, held in New York over four nights in '64, was coordinated by trumpet/flugelhornist Bill Dixon; the update was produced by writer/scholar John Szwed.

Taken separately, each group's offerings are very strong. On "For Bill Dixon I," Rashied Ali

starts things out solo, and that makes a certain sense, since he's the only participant who actually played at the first incarnation, back in the heyday of expressionist jazz. I bet he didn't slip bits of funk in back then, though, as he does here. Wilber Morris is best when providing supportive propulsion, and he and Ali fit together with a familial warmth. And Bergman—who was clearly in a sympathetic, interactive mindset that eve—imposes a structured feel after nearly a half hour of whirling free play by laying repeatedly on a note until it's picked up and played by Morris and McPhee. At 40 minutes, it's a long track, but there's variety enough to hold attention.

The Pougkeepsie-based wind man is thankfully a more active presence on the scene these days, and he lends trademark melodic insight and passion to the proceedings. "For Bill Dixon II" (25 minutes of open improvisation) kicks off more sedately, with McPhee alone on flugel; in places, his rasp and breath sounds directly evoke the dedicatee, and he shares a romantic streak with the brass innovator. Together with Bergman, who soon joins, a tender exchange turns excitable, tense. The piece sags a bit as Ali and Morris find their way in, but when McPhee turns to tenor, things erupt into full-scale action jazz.

In the notes, Szwed explains that the Myra Melford track functions as "a kind of *entracte* between two storms of Ali and Co." Composed by cornetist Butch Morris for an opera he co-wrote with journalist Greg Tate, "The Death Of Danny Love" is a serene, seven-minute change-up; perhaps its emotionalism makes sense as a nod to original October

ECM

Charles Lloyd

Canto

Charles Lloyd

tenor saxophone
Tibetan oboe

Bobo Stenson

piano

Anders Jormin

double-bass

Billy Hart

drums

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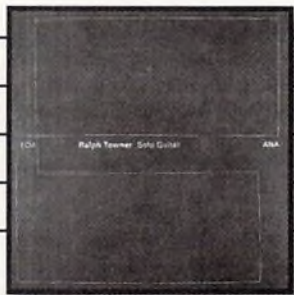
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Revolutionary Paul Bley, rather than the free firepitters of yore. The interplay between Melford, long-term trio partner Horner and Rainey (depping for regular trio drummer Reggie Nicholson) is particularly sensitive.

As much as I like that track, I wonder whether it might not have made for a more logical disc to only include the quartet. (Plenty of music for that.) There's not enough of a statement—the potential “then and now” comparison, for example—or sufficient continuity to make it work. Then again, perhaps it reflects an ESPesque, kitchen-sink attitude toward production that's faded over the last three decades. —*John Corbett*

The October Revolution—For Bill Dixon I; *The Death Of Danny Love*; For Bill Dixon II. (73:50)

Personnel—tracks 1 and 3: Rashied Ali, drums; Borah Bergman, piano; Joe McPhee, tenor saxophone, flugelhorn; Wilber Morris, bass; track 2: Myra Melford, piano; Lindsey Horner, bass; Tom Rainey, drums.



Ralph Towner

Ana
ECM 21611

★★★★½

Ralph Towner gets high marks on all counts for his first solo guitar album since 1979's live *Solo Concert*. Working with classical and 12-string acoustic models, the master gui-

tarist displays impeccable technique, compositional brilliance and evocative improvisation throughout this 14-track gem. At turns, the instrumental music on *Ana* is transfixing in its beauty, mesmerizingly introspective, exquisitely serene and buoyantly fleet. But above all, whether Towner is being thoughtful or passionate, he consistently surprises. There's not a clichéd riff on the disc.

The first six tracks find Towner successfully blurring the distinctions between classical and jazz. He opens the CD with the shimmering, melancholic melody “The Reluctant Bride,” follows with the haunting “Tale Of Saverio” and then spins into the sprightly “Joyful Departure,” sprinkling in resonant harmonics. More classical-oriented tunes follow, including the string-ringing “I Knew It Was You” and the intriguing “Les Douzilles,” which tugs at the emotions thanks to Towner's heated tension-and-release guitar passages.

The album's highlight is “Veldt,” a rollicking tune completely unlike the previous numbers. Towner sounds like he's playing a thumb piano one moment, then fingerpicks with percussive glee and slaps at the slacked bass strings to create a gritty blues effect. “Veldt” also opens the door to Towner's magical suite for 12-string guitar. He begins these seven short sketches with a stark and airy tune (“Between The Clouds”), paints a still life (“Chile On The Porch”) and zips through a couple “La Bamba”-flavored jaunts with rolling waves of guitar gaiety (two brightly chiming takes on “Carib Crib”). He also melds the eerie with the whimsical on “Toru” (his guitar sounds like a harpsichord in stretches) and ends the set with the spirited “Sage Brush Rider,” which swings, rocks a tad and even bounds into exclamatory free space.

Ana is a highly recommended guitar delight.

—*Dan Ouellette*

Ana—*The Reluctant Bride*; *Tale Of Saverio*; *Joyful Departure*; *Green And Golden*; *I Knew It Was You*; *Les Douzilles*; *Veldt*; *Between The Clouds*; *Child On The Porch*; *Carib Crib* (1); *Slavic Mood*; *Carib Crib* (2); *Toru*; *Sage Brush Rider*. (48:15)

Personnel—Towner, classical and 12-string guitars.



Lawrence D. “Butch” Morris

Testament: A Conduction
Collection

New World/Cross Currents 80478

★★★★★

This extraordinary boxed set representing 10 years of work with a vast, international cast by the audacious improvising conductor/composer Butch Morris is a rare project. Those of equal ambition regarding the documentation (including extensive explanatory essays) of modern (or postmodern) music can be counted on the fingers of one hand—really, only FMP's 10-CD set of Cecil Taylor with the cream of European outcats from the mid-'80s is comparable. And that's not even to consider the provocative substance of the investigations and challenges broached by Morris, who came to New York years ago as a lyrical cornetist and songwriter working in the shadow of David Murray, but has long since moved on to inhabit a domain all his own.

Conduction, by Morris' definition, is an act of spontaneous music, but it's a giant step away from “free jazz” or other forms of collective improv stemming from the early days in New Orleans. Employing a vocabulary of hand gestures that he drills into highly responsive musicians wherever he finds them, Morris creates richly detailed and subtly textured sonic narratives with the control of an orchestral composer, sculptor or novelist. Like John Zorn, he does not dictate specific notes or themes, leaving instrumentalists he's cherry-picked from diverse backgrounds free to express themselves in their own languages. But the conductioneer demands absolute regard to the course his hands chart, and through his sensitivity to line, pulse and harmony builds castles in the air that take on a life of their own, lasting well past the three minutes to an hour or so of their temporal duration.

Without space here to describe the multitude of dimensions even one conduction addresses, “No. 25,” from Istanbul, 1992, must stand as an example of Morris' methods and results. The Suleyman Ergner Ensemble joined Americans, including J.A. Deane (trombone-driven electronics), Elizabeth Panzer (harp), Bryan Carrott (vibes), Brandon Ross (guitar), Steve Colson (piano) and French Vietnamese percussionist Le Quan Ninh in a unique cultural transformation, wherein distinctly individualized strands (including Morris' own cornet emanations) weave a shim-

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mering web that suddenly pulls tight, lifts off and spins furiously, as though it's a carpet transporting the entire Grand Bazaar. There are many such wonders in *Testament*, which has to be heard, and heard again, to be believed.

—Howard Mandel

Testament: A Conduction Collection—16 conductions, including *Where Music Goes; Documenta; Gloves & Mitts; Quinzaine de Montreal; Cherry Blossom; In Freud's Garden; New World, New World*. (total time: 9:55:19)

Personnel—Morris, cornet and conductor (all), with hundreds, including Christian Marclay, turntables; Zeena Parkins, Elizabeth Panzer, harps; Myra Melford, piano; Bill Horvitz, Christy Doran, Brandon Ross, Elliott Sharp, guitars; Martin Schutz, Tom Cora, Michelle Kinney, Tristan Honsinger, cellos; Vincent Chancey, french horn; Robert Dick, Marty Ehrlich, Kitty Brazelton, Jemeel Moondoc, Marion Brandis, flutes; Arthur Blythe, Hans Koch, reeds; Reggie Nicholson, Thurman Barker, Han Bennink, drums; William Parker, Mark Helias, Peter Kowald, Wilber Morris, bass; Shelley Hirsch, vocals; J.A. Deane, Wolter Wierbos, trombone; Maarten Altena Ensemble; Suleyman Ergner Ensemble; ROVA PreEchoes Ensemble; Florida State University School of Music Ensemble.



Joe McPhee & David Prentice

Inside Out
CIMP 120

★★★★

Michael Bisio & Joe McPhee

Finger Wigglers
CIMP 127

★★★½

Joe McPhee & Survival Unit II

At WBAI's Free Music Store,
1971
hat ART 6197

★★★★½

The year 1971 must have been vexing for free-jazz saxophonists. Albert Ayler was deceased and Pharoah Sanders and Archie Shepp were in creative transitions.

Roscoe Mitchell and the burgeoning Art Ensemble of Chicago were proposing that sound/silence interaction could be as formidable as volume. When Joe McPhee performed at WBAI's Free Music Store in New York at that time, he delivered a convincing message that there was still a place for unbridled energy in new music. A recently released recording from hat ART (a label formed in the '70s specifically to issue McPhee) documents that concert, and two recent discs show how he's considerably more peaceful now, but has retained his inner urgency.

Back in the day of McPhee's Survival Unit II, the saxophonist ostensibly embraced the noise and sense of anger that many critics and admirers reflected on late-'60s free-jazz.

Leading a bass-less quintet that included three dual-reed saxophonists, the rarely heard pianist Mike Kull and percussionist Harold E. Smith, his "Black Magic Man" is a fervent sonic collage that echoes Ayler's *New York Eye And Ear Control*. "The Looking Glass I" features screeching vibratos that, as McPhee recently wrote, were a reflection on the violence at Attica prison. But the well-recorded disc is certainly not 79 minutes of chaotic rage. The unique, dirge-like ballad "Song For Lauren" possesses an eminent structure while McPhee's phrases build on his stunning tone. "Harriet" closes the disc with terrific circular breathing from McPhee and Byron Morris, strategically placed unattached chords and an orchestral scope.

Basses Loaded.



The past, present, and future of jazz bass comes together, led by legendary bassist Ray Brown. This ground-breaking three-bass summit, recorded live at Sculler's in Boston, features Brown leading two accomplished protégés—phenomenal John Clayton and the giant Christian McBride; together they represent three generations of great jazz. The Ray Brown Trio, featuring the champion bassist with pianist Benny Green and drummer Gregory Hutchinson, joins the festivities on two selections. The ten-tune collection includes "Blue Monk," "Bye, Bye Blackbird," "Lullaby of Birdland," "Mack the Knife," and more, all arranged by Ray, John, and Christian.



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After 25 years that included work with electronics, reinterpreting hard-bop masterpieces and developing a new musical language ("Po Music," a concept that is described and heard clearly on the hat ART *Oleo & A Future Retrospective* disc), McPhee's recent endeavors are principally serene. The instrumentation on *Inside Out* and *Finger Wigglers*, both of which are duets with strings, emphasize textural simplicity.

On *Inside Out*'s "Haiku," McPhee and violinist David Prentice draw on classic Japanese song forms that include silence almost as often as sound. McPhee has an ethereal soprano and alto method and is notably generous in giving so much space to his impressive partner. For "Conference With The Birds, Part I," McPhee's circular breathing supports Prentice's lead. Prentice plays unaccompanied on "It Sings," which McPhee composed and arranged, and reveals the multi-reedist's skills at writing in a modern classicist vein. When McPhee and Prentice introduce "The Garden, Part I" with a clarinet-and-violin duo that also features the sounds of birds (this is a live-to-two-track outdoor recording), the results are sublime.

Most of bassist Michael Bisio and McPhee's *Finger Wigglers* consists of intriguing reinterpretations of standards. Throughout the disc, McPhee's technique and the pair's original ideas for the classics are exemplary. McPhee provides an exciting double-time solo that readjusts the beat to "Blue Monk." "Here's That Rainy Day" becomes foreboding with Bisio's sombre arco introduction opening a path for McPhee's moody tenor with his breathing clearly audible between phrases. The disc's liner notes

include a poem by McPhee that's slightly perverse, but very funny. —Aaron Cohen

Inside Out—Haiku, Part 1, Dawn; Haiku, Part 2, The Centipede; Haiku, Part 3, The Edge Of Wetness; It Sings; The Garden, Part 1; The Garden, Part 2: The Garden, Part 3; Conference With The Birds, Part 1; Conference With The Birds, Part 2; Dusk; Drops. (56:22)

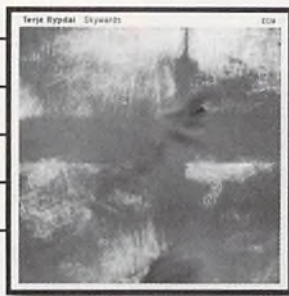
Personnel—McPhee, soprano and alto saxophones, clarinet, gong; David Prentice, violin, jew's-harp.

Finger Wigglers—Lonely Woman; Blue Monk; Here's That Rainy Day; Running Out Of Time; Malachi; Going Home; Walking Out; Lonely Woman (2 takes). (60:11)

Personnel—Michael Bisio, bass; McPhee, tenor saxophone.

At WBAI's Free Music Store—Announcement 1; Black Magic Man; Announcement 2; Nation Time; Song For Lauren; Announcement 3; Message From Denmark; The Looking Glass 1; Harriet. (78:52)

Personnel—McPhee, trumpet, tenor saxophone; Clifford Thorton, baritone horn, cornet; Byron Morris, soprano and alto saxophones; Mike Kull, piano; Harold E. Smith, percussion.



Terje Rypdal

Skywards
ECM 21608

★★★★

Possessing an instantly recognizable, highly personal approach to the electric guitar, Terje Rypdal also suffers from an identity crisis. He readily draws complex, convulsive lines suffused with strong emotions. (No one wrings more anguish from a single string.) On the other hand, he continues to pursue his long-time interest in classical composition with increasing fervor.

Skywards balances Rypdal's history as a per-

former with his aspirations as a composer (e.g., his strong personality with other voices in various combinations). It's his most satisfying project in over a decade. Collaborators drawn from his fertile late '70s and early '80s work include trumpeter Palle Mikkelborg and drummer Jon Christensen (from *Descendre*, 1979, and *Waves*, 1977), and cellist David Darling, whose *Eos* (1983) duets closed a chapter in Rypdal's discography.

"Skywards" recaptures the charm of *Descendre* with ringing guitar solos, subdued trumpet and a gracefully ascending keyboard melody. Mikkelborg, too rarely heard since his mid-'80s *Aura* project with Miles Davis, is a welcome presence. His cool trumpet lines offset Rypdal's propensity for overheated guitar solos. "Into The Wilderness" takes Rypdal in a new direction, using low-register strings and Paolo Vinaccia's primal percussion to suggest a dark primeval forest. "Out Of This World" links sequences including an empathetic, stirring encounter between Mikkelborg and Christensen, a bluesy, heartfelt solo from Rypdal and a crystalline synthesizer solo by Christian Eggen, the last suggesting an extraterrestrial theme. Other combinations highlight strings and piano.

Rypdal and Mikkelborg don't seem to play enough. Like a reunion with old friends, *Skywards* leaves you wanting more.

—Jon Andrews

Skywards—*Skywards: Into The Wilderness; It's Not Over Until The Fat Lady Sings!; The Pleasure Is Mine, I'm Sure; Out Of This World (Sinfonietta); Shining; Remember To Remember.* (49:50)

Personnel—Rypdal, electric guitar (1-5); Palle Mikkelborg, trumpet (1, 5, 6); Terje Tonnesen, violin (1-3, 5, 7); David Darling, cello (1-3, 5, 7); Christian Eggen, piano, keyboards; Paolo Vinaccia, drums, percussion (1-6); Jon Christensen, drums (1-6).

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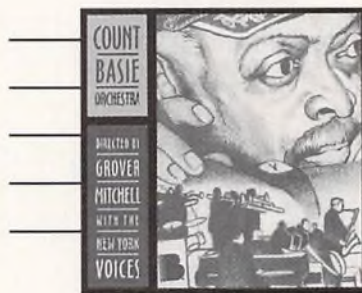
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Count Basie Orchestra With The New York Voices

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What we have here, folks, is some basic Basie. A couple of compositions and arrangements by Ernie Wilkins, single offerings from Frank Foster and Neal Hefti, some brassy and reedy interludes, and a whole

lot of beat. This is the Basie staple we've all come to know, love and expect, and that recipe for pleasure, to some degree, continues under the baton of Grover Mitchell.

However—and this is a small “however”—the pots could have been hotter, the solos longer and the entire stew a bit saucier.

Except for occasional romps from the trumpets of Bob Ojeda and Derrick Gardner, and Manny Boyd's nicely turned solo on “Basie Power,” the band was perfunctory with only a smidgen of funk, seemingly content to take a back seat to the New York Voices, who carried the date, particularly on “Cottontail” and “Farmer's Market.”

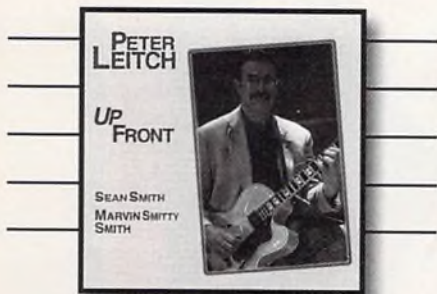
Getting the swing and pulse of Jon Hendricks' lyrics on these two tunes requires a special feel for the vocalese tradition, and the Voices are on it, right down to the last wail. Their harmonic moments are perfectly timed. Notice the way they handle “What a blend, he was the end,” on “Farmer's Market.”

Perhaps it's unfair to demand something of a date that isn't there, but when it's a Basie session and you don't hear the requisite tenor sax explosion from the likes of a Lockjaw Davis or Frank Wess—though Kenny Hing comes close on “Whirly Bird”—a certain amount of disappointment is perhaps only natural.

But expectations aside, the music is serviceable and the Voices make “every little carrot a stolen delight.” —Herb Boyd

Live At Manchester Craftmen's Guild—Down For The Count; Whirly Bird; Cottontail; In A Mellow Tone; Basie; Please Send Me Someone To Love; Bug Out; Love Makes The World Go Round; Farmer's Market; Basie Power. (45:19)

Personnel—Emanuel “Manny” Boyd, Bradford C. Leali, alto saxophone, flute; Kenneth A. Hing, Edward “Doug” Miller, tenor saxophone, flute; John C. Williams, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Melvin F. Wanzo, lead trombone; Clarence Banks, Alvin S. Walker, Michael P. Williams, Robert Ojeda, trumpet, flugelhorn; Derrick Gardner, William T. “Scotty” Barnhart, George Caldwell, piano; James H. Leary III, bass; Willie L. Matthews, guitar; Brian Grice, drums; Byron C. “Chris” Murrell, vocal (6); New York Voices (3, 4, 8, 9); Peter Eidridge, Lauren Kinhan, Darmon Meader and Kim Nazarian; conductor, Grover Mitchell.



Peter Leitch

Up Front
Reservoir 146

★★★★

Guitarist Peter Leitch, in a previous liner note (for Reservoir's *Exhilaration*), notes: “The guitar can function as a horn or piano ... when I'm playing with a piano player,

I try to think more like a horn player.” On *Up Front*, even without the keyboard presence, you'll probably understand what he's talking about. Listen, for instance, to his swiftly moving “Sea Change,” where his long, smoothly flowing lines recall a horn player's circular breathing. Leitch sounds emotional and hauntingly beautiful on another original, “Portmeirion,” where he's offset by a guitar-like bass from Sean Smith. That bass is very noticeable, too, on Thad Jones' “Three In One,” echoing the guitar lines, and using the instrument almost like a human voice to recreate the melody.

Marvin “Smitty” Smith, who's capable of great restraint along with a swinging foundation, puts his brushes to good use on slower

pieces like “Nuages” and a gorgeous arrangement of “I Didn't Know About You.”

There are a couple of tributes to mentors: “Hall Mark” for Jim Hall, and the title tune, dedicated to Kenny Burrell. With much of the program leaning toward melodic, in-time ventures, it was a marvelous surprise to finish up with Leitch's own “Millennium, Part One,” a song full of tempo changes and guitar counterpoints with rolling drums in a totally free interweaving. Here's to more writing from the veteran guitarist. —Francesca Nemko

Up Front—You're My Everything; Portmeirion; Sea Change; I Didn't Know About You; Hall Mark; Up Front; Nuages; Three In One; Millennium, Part One. (62:37)
Personnel—Leitch, guitar; Sean Smith, bass; Marvin “Smitty” Smith, drums.

LEROY JONES PROPS FOR POPS



A Tribute To Satchmo



On his new album, Leroy Jones celebrates the legacy of his musical mentor and fellow New Orleans trumpeter Louis “Pops” Armstrong. Joining in the fun of reinvigorating Armstrong classics like What A Wonderful World, Jeebers Creepers, and Struttin' With Some Barbecue are some very special guests. “Props For Pops” is their joyful salute to an all-time great.

Pay your respects by listening.

“A superb trumpeter...” — *The New York Times*

“Like Louis Armstrong, [Jones] can make entertainment of art and art of entertainment.”

— *The Washington Post*

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JAZZ

Trumpets, Flumpets & Flugels

by Dan Ouellette

It's a banner season for old and new trumpeters, many of whom are blowing on a variety of related horns, including cornet, piccolo trumpet, flugelhorn and flumpet. All are playing jazz of one sort or another, as this cross-section shows.

Roy Hargrove's Crisol: *Habana* (Verve 537 563; 70:44; ★★★★★) Roy Hargrove ups the ante by not only delving into the Afro-Cuban jazz tradition, but also taking an excellent ensemble with him to the "forbidden" island and recording a CD that brims with an energetic, percussive spirit, fiesta-like interplay and sultry romanticism. With such a large gathering of top-notch musical colleagues (saxophonists Gary Bartz and David Sanchez, guitarist Russell Malone, trombonist Frank Lacy and an array of Cuban greats including pianist Chucho Valdez and conga ace Anga Diaz), Hargrove keeps his solos exhilaratingly focused, blowing with passion on the cooking "Mr. Bruce" and soul on the slow beauty "Ballad For The Children."

Bobby Shew Quintet: *Playing With Fire* (MAMA Foundation 1017; 43:19; ★★★★★) Recorded in 1986, bandleader Bobby Shew enlists fellow trumpeter Tom Harrell to join him for a dynamic and energetic jaunt through the mainstream. The pair play mellifluous harmonies, but they're primo when blazing through brisk material, including pianist/band member Kei Akagi's "Broadway Manor Mayhem." Shew and Harrell make a great team, bustling, pushing, chasing, catching and chasing again with glee.

Art Farmer: *Live At The Stanford Jazz Workshop* (Monarch 1013; 63:27; ★★★½) Farmer delivers straight-ahead jazz with this live recording at last summer's Stanford Jazz Workshop. The material is standard fare (nearly half the set is fine Monk covers, including a rousing launch into "I Mean You"), the all-star ensemble shines (tenor saxist Harold Land and drummer Tootie Heath play big roles) and the leader's warm tones and lyrical phrasing on flumpet (Farmer's own trumpet/flugelhorn hybrid) are consistently strong. Farmer's especially evocative on the slower numbers, including tender, forlorn musings on "If You Could See Me Now."

Doc Cheatham & Nicholas Payton: (Verve 537 062; 62:46; ★★★½) In their first meeting, ageless jazz elder Doc Cheatham and lion cub Nicholas Payton deliver the sunniest New Orleans trad-infused jazz album of the year. Supported by a hearty New Orleans cast of players, they play mostly



W PATRICK HENELY/WORKPLAY

Dave Douglas: from blubbers and mumbles to pensive lyricism

tried-and-true numbers with a few Cheatham specials like the lively "Do You Believe In Love At Sight" thrown in. The CD triumphs thanks to the rapport between the two Louis Armstrong disciples as they complement each other like loving grandfather and great-grandson.

Dave Douglas/Tiny Bell Trio: *Live In Europe* (Arabesque 126; 63:33; ★★★★★) Douglas and his trio (guitarist Brad Schoepach and drummer Jim Black) cross lots of musical borders, with stop-and-start angular spins, free-form gusts, melancholic embraces and passionate dances. Douglas plays with a multitude of voicings, from blubbers and mumbles on the whimsical "Song For My Father-In-Law/Uncle Wiggly" to pensive lyricism on the quiet gem "If The Cherry Tree Still Stands." The best is saved for last: the tempo-shifting romp "Czardas," based on a traditional Hungarian tune.

Nat Adderley Quintet: *Mercy, Mercy, Mercy* (Evidence 22176; 53:56; ★★★) Nat Adderley's still got the blues in his soul-jazz veins. With remarkable saxophonist Antonio Hart sharing front-line duties, the cornetist revisits old territory with aplomb, setting swingin' fire to bro Cannonball's "Spontaneous Combustion" and—thanks to pianist Rob Bargad, bassist Walter Booker and drummer Jimmy Cobb—reinjecting a funky rhythm drive into "Hummin'." However, Joe Zawinul's "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" is rendered a tad on the sluggish side and Adderley's vocals, while steeped in the blues, aren't wholly appealing. Best moments burst out of the speakers during the exciting cornet-sax trades. Plus, an effective romp through Cole Porter's "What Is This Thing Called Love?"

Dmitri Matheny: *Penumbra* (Monarch 1014; 59:00; ★★★½) With resonant, soft-toned flugelhorn lines, Matheny casts a silvery blue glow over his radiant sophomore CD conceptually linked by a lunar theme. He and his group (featuring rising-

star tenor saxophonist Dave Ellis) swing into a luminous version of Lee Morgan's "Desert Moonlight" and render Neil Young's "Harvest Moon" with exquisite beauty. The strongest tracks are Matheny originals like the alluring moonscape trilogy, the show-stopping title number and the spry finale, "Moon Rocks (Keepnews Blues)," which briefly alludes to Van Morrison's "Moondance" and pays homage to album producer Orrin Keepnews.

Paul Smoker-Vinny Golia 4tet: *Halloween '96* (CIMP 129; 71:53; ★★★½) Trumpeter Paul Smoker and baritone saxophonist Vinny Golia, along with bassist Ken Filiano and drummer Phil Haynes, launch into the extemporaneous zone on this adventurous, structured-improv live set. The CD succeeds when Smoker (plaintive scrawls, excited squalls, cartoonish gibberish) and Golia (soul-searching wails, bracing gusts, high-pitched yelps) converse with cyclonic exuberance. There's a grip-and-dash, pain-and-rapture intensity in these six extended pieces (none shorter than 10 minutes), especially the compelling "Nailenrac." The CD sputters in stretches where the solos drift too far away from compositional moorings.

Ted Curson: *Traveling On* (Evidence 22182; 56:04; ★★★★★) Former Mingus sideman Ted Curson brings his pungent, muscular-tone trumpet style to the fore on his 20th album—and, amazingly, his first release in 17 years. The CD pumps with vibrancy ("Lin's Garden"), bubbles with hot springs of percussion ("Quicksand"), gets downright funky (a hip reworking of "Watermelon Man") and swings with a jangly dissonance on "Flatted Fifth." Curson offers two sumptuous odes to former bandmates (Eric Dolphy and Booker Ervin) and even scores with quick vocal jaunts through "When The Saints Go Marching In" and the r&b cooker "Flip Flop And Fly." Misako Kano's piano playing is an eye-opener on this quintet date.

DB

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BEYOND

Ghost In The Groove

by Jon Andrews

The combination of ambient music's wisps and echoes with a strong rhythmic foundation may appear incongruous, particularly when ambient shimmers over a dance-floor groove, but the fascination of melding these apparent opposites continues. There's a pleasing paradox to music that's forceful and rhythmically interesting, yet barely there.

Orb: *Orblivion* (Island 524 347; 72:02: ★★★★★) The Orb led the first wave of the electronic music resurgence in the early '90s. *Orblivion* focuses on what they do best: the elaborate construction and deconstruction of grooves. The Orb will decorate springy, often danceable electronic rhythms, introducing incremental layers of melody, synthesized whorls of sound, twinkling effects and sampled "found objects," only to discard and replace them. Assemblages like "Molten Love" and "Delta Mk II" captivate because they constantly evolve. The Orb's quirky sense of humor insures that *Orblivion* will be sophisticated and inventive, but also playful.

Ben Neill: *Triptycal* (Antilles 533 184; 61:20: ★★★★★) Neill's mutant trumpet is equipped with three bells, six valves, a slide and a MIDI controller. He uses it to lead the mesmerized listener through the whirring electronics, ambient dream-states and shifting rhythms that characterize *Triptycal*. By exploring the potentials of trumpet combined with electronics and hip-hop beats, Neill continues the experiments of Miles Davis and Jon Hassell. He achieves a luminous transformation of Neil Young's "After The Gold Rush," with his mutant trumpet playing ghostly vestiges of Young's melody amid drifting clouds of found and electronic sounds.

T.D.F.: *Retail Therapy* (Reprise 9 46489; 53:42: ★★★★★) A curious collaboration between producer Simon Climie and a guitarist identified as "x-sample" (widely suspected to be Eric Clapton), T.D.F. surveys a jumble of trendy styles from rapid-fire electronic dance beats and lush acoustic sounds to radio-friendly smooth jazz, with acoustic and electric guitars always prominent. Clapton or not, x-sample's guitar work is varied and tasteful, as he alternates among lovely, Mediterranean-inspired acoustic musings, spacy electric guitar treatments and rowdy blues wails. "Seven" and "Rip Stop" blend aggressive rhythms with vocal samples and electronic effects.

Michael Brook: *Albino Alligator* (4AD 9 46504; 48:15: ★★★★★) Guitarist/producer Brook excels in creating detailed sonic atmospheres. With his score for Kevin Spacey's film, Brook adapts his use of infinite guitar and electronics to accommodate slow blues, Western guitar twang and Asian and Middle Eastern themes. A variety of percus-



Michael Brook: manipulates and haunts

sion instruments and reeds support the sustained tones and repetitive vapor trails created by Brook's infinite guitar. "Aftermath" and "The City" demonstrate Brook's knack for evoking moods that are spare and quiet, but also suspenseful and unsettling. Independent of the film, *Albino Alligator* manipulates and haunts the listener with an array of colors and textures.

Kenneth Newby: *Sirens* (City of Tribes 9: ★★★★★) The musics of Indonesia strongly inform Newby, who seduces the listener with the gongs and chimes of gamelan orchestra and the plaintive sound of the suling flute. Newby's flute weaves through the gently insistent, trance-inducing rhythm of "Sarawati" and the more aggressive percussions of "Mistress." The electronics are used primarily to add texture or to create distinctive, electronically processed voicings for Newby's flutes. This exotic, darkly pretty CD also owes a debt to Jon Hassell for his "Fourth World" approach to ethnic trance music.

Paul Haslinger: *World Without Rules* (RGB/Hearts of Space 504; 59:36: ★★★★★) Best known as a former member of Tangerine Dream, Haslinger's powerful second CD surpasses that band's work during or since his tenure. Above electrified tribal hip-hop beats, Haslinger employs plundered vocal and instrumental samples from various world musics to create the feeling of an interconnected global population bordering on chaos. Tracks like "World Without Rules" and "Be-Bop In Baghdad" evoke frenzied, ecstatic drum rituals. Dramatic and exciting, *World Without Rules* compares favorably with Peter Gabriel's best "worldbeat" music.

TUU: *Mesh* (Fathom/Hearts of Space 11078; 52:48: ★★★★★) This British trio blends the oldest and newest technologies, appropriating traditional flutes and percussion instruments from various cultures for use alongside synthesizers. Percussionist Martin Franklin's airy, finely textured compositions conjure mystical, pre-historic rites reminiscent of Steve Roach. Franklin uses clay pots, water drums and kenong bells to establish the patterns and hypnotic grooves at the center of "Mesh" and "Kalpa Taru." The spare surroundings focus one's attention on subtle details and nuances, like the delicate oscillations of Tibetan bells. **DB**

REISSUES

Miles Beguiles

by John Corbett

Rarely has a corpus of music so polarized a star's fans as Miles Davis' electric period did. The trumpeter's incorporation of rock and (much more dominantly) funk in the late '60s was taken by some followers and critics as heresy, as Miles turned his back (literally) on the acoustic jazz audience. His excommunication from certain circles was as severe as the one Bob Dylan earned by strapping on his electric guitar at Newport in 1965. And nearly 30 years later, the grumblers continue to grumble about what critic Stanley Crouch, in a moment of uncharacteristic politeness, called "the mire Miles Davis pushed jazz into."

But like it or not, the records that documented Davis' initial forays into experimental jazz-funk spawned countless new electric bands, inspiring a wave of vanguard fusioners picking at their Fender Rhodes and peeling off electric bass ostinati like they'd found a new page in the big book of ideas. Take *Going To The Rainbow* by German clarinetist Rolf Kühn, for instance, a 1970 record that featured two keyboardists (one of them Chick Corea) coordinated à la Miles. The concept didn't take long to spread, and soon the pervasive influence of Davis' sprawling collage-form funk-jazz was international in scope.

Until now, the full expanse of the electric music from the early-to-mid-'70s was difficult to grasp for American listeners, since many of the key post-*Bitches Brew* releases were never issued on domestic CD. Columbia Legacy is helping to right this by releasing five two-disc sets of live, amplified Miles, remastered (but not remixed) and replete with the freak-out, ghettoid graffiti-art graphics that originally graced their covers and with new liner notes, primarily by former band members. (Note: Though they're being marketed as "first time ever on CD," this music has been available on import CDs.)

Black Beauty (Columbia Legacy 65138; 45:07/34:16; ★★★½) A gritty recording from the Fillmore West in San Francisco, made at the same time *Bitches Brew* was hitting stores in 1970, *Black Beauty* kicks off with aggressive Miles blowing and Airtio Moriera's laughing cuirca on "Directions." Other pert themes are taken from *Brew* ("Spanish Key," "Miles Runs The Voodoo Down," "Sanctuary," "Bitches Brew"). Steve Grossman's soprano is featured throughout, and the fascinating rhythm section of Jack DeJohnette on drums and Dave Holland on electric (often wah) bass keeps the grooves honest and open. Corea mans the electric keyboard alone, overdripping it expressively on "Willie Nelson"; but there are no cranked guitars in earshot, so the density dimension is held in check. And



Pushing jazz into "the mire": electric Miles from the '70s

there's lots of Miles, including a short, stirring ballad, "I Fall In Love Too Easily."

Live At The Fillmore East (65139; 50:57/50:18; ★★★★★) Recorded a few months later, with the same band plus Keith Jarrett on organ (and Holland on acoustic bass, as well as electric), the brush begins to thicken, turn veldt-like. But it still feels like a band, unlike some of Miles' (also wonderful) musique-concrete-ish outings. Basically identical in formula to *Black Beauty*, with many of the same submerged themes, *Fillmore East* consists of scraggly funkified static groove music, each piece segueing into the next, stretching into rambling suites. The interplay and counterpoint between Jarrett and Corea make for especially fascinating listening. And check Miles' aerobatics on "It's About That Time" (from '69's *In A Silent Way*).

Dark Magus (65137; 50:12/50:51; ★★★★★) This is about as demonic as the Prince of Darkness can make it. Carnegie Hall '74, primo sorcery with three guitars displacing keyboards, save Davis' own wicked injections of organ—his drone washes (same jams and jellies he would wield on *Agartha* and *Pangaea*) work very differently from his more flamboyant former key punchers. Exceptional guitarist Pete Cosey takes the lion's share of solos, with Azar Lawrence on tenor sax and Dave Liebman on other reeds. The Henderson/Foster/Mtume rhythm section is in full flower; Miles proudly recalled that by the time of this band "most of the European sensibilities were gone," replaced by a "deep African thing." Burbbling, near frantic congas on "Moja (Part 1)" and "Tatu (Part 2)" presage jungle by 20 years.

In Concert (65140; 46:04/38:26; ★★★★★) The original vinyl release of this 1972 recording, made at New York's Philharmonic Hall, was (like the studio

album *On The Corner*) typically mysterious, containing no information at all—no personnel, recording date, publishing, song titles. But one listen and you know the rhythm concept is transformed; now it's Al Foster holding down the drum kit, with an ever denser mix of Indian instruments (Badal Roy on tabla, Khalil Balakrishna on electric sitar ... man!) and ex-Aretha Franklin sideman Michael Henderson on menacing, but much straighter, funk bass. Check out Henderson's relentless four-note/two-pitch riff on the first 14-minutes of "IFE." More superimpositional, heavily layered, still crystal clear, the electric melange also includes Reggie Lucas on guitar, Cedric Lawson on electric piano and synth, with the excellent Carlos Garnett on saxes and Mtume on percussion. Everyone compares their wah skills on "Honky Tonk," while the fave blues rave "Theme From Jack Johnson" glides along. Sly Stone is clearly the pop totem here.

Live-Evil (65135; 49:46/52:13; ★★★★★½) Initially recorded in '69 and '70, when the band was in flux, this palindrome-titled monster was later assembled out of live and studio tapes by Davis and producer Teo Macero. Davis' amplified wah trumpet strikes like a cobra on "Sivad" (hey, what's the original pre-electric wah but a brass mute?) that also contains an absolutely lunar guitar outburst by John McLaughlin, guesting with the band for a night. Reed stars include Wayne Shorter and Gary Bartz, and combinations of keyboardists: Corea, Jarrett, Herbie Hancock and Joe Zawinul. As on all these records, this isn't pyrotechnic technodweeb fusion, but an outstandingly creative electric collage, folding in black pop, Hendrix rock and a very healthy hit of free-jazz. Today's "post-rock" and trip-hop bands, from Tortoise to the Herbalizer, are deeply indebted to this sound. **DB**

Initial Down Beat rating:
• *Live-Evil*: ★★½ (4/13/72 issue)

BLINDFOLD TEST

JULY 1997

Kurt Elling

by Dave Holland

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.

The scene's two most adventuresome jazz singers—Blue Note's Cassandra Wilson and Kurt Elling—come together on Elling's new release, *The Messenger*. Like its predecessor, the Grammy-nominated *Close Your Eyes*, Elling and his band, led by pianist Laurence Hobgood, combine great accompaniment with ballad crooning, vocalese and scat singing with written poetry and spontaneous storytelling. He's drawn on sources as diverse and fertile as Eddie Jefferson and Hank Williams, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke and the '60s pop/rock group the Zombies (whose "Time Of The Season" he sings with Wilson), not to mention his active imagination.

This was Elling's first Blindfold Test.

Kevin Mahogany

"My Dungeon Shook" (from *Double Rainbow*, enja, 1993) Mahogany, vocals; James Baldwin, lyric; Kenny Barron, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Ralph Moore, tenor saxophone; Lewis Nash, drums.

That's Kenny Barron, right? I've noticed this a couple times on Kevin's records, you can't really hear the lyric he's doing as much because he'd doubling with the horn. Is it a Langston Hughes lyric?

DH: No, James Baldwin.

Sometimes it can be difficult to move from being an instrumentalist, especially a horn player, to being a singer because the physical dynamics are different. You are working with a different instrument. But this is one of the better pieces for Kevin. I would give this 4 stars because it's exploring, it's new.

Jack Kerouac/Joe Strummer

"MacDougal Street Blues" (from Kerouac: *Kicks Joy Darkness*, Rykodisc, 1997) Kerouac, reading; Strummer, bass, synth, guitar; Richard Norris, Beatbox.

It sounds to me like it's either Ginsberg or Kerouac. It could be either one—for a while they were so closely attuned, Kerouac really informed Allen about writing in an automatic fashion, about just sitting down and going stream of consciousness. Jack was really the first person in that group to really try to get to his innermost truths by totally uncensored ... I think he called it auto-poesy, auto-prosy. This is a cool cut, it really updates some stuff, but I don't like the drum-sound thing. Tickety-tickety-tick. What can you say? Jack Kerouac, a million stars, five-billion stars. Just for the cut, they could have mixed him up a little bit higher; but because somebody wanted to do something with Jack, 5 stars. Anybody who wants to bring Jack into the next century, I'm down with that.

Lord Buckley

"Marc Anthony's Funeral Oration" (from *His Royal Hipness*, Discovery, rec. 1951/1992) Buckley, vocals.

Lord Buckley, jazzy words, word jazz—without impinging on Ken Nordine's copyright of the name. He was one of the hippest cats and with an underlying spirit of love for people. He wasn't just about laying hip on people. He really wanted to bring beauty into the world as well. Yeah, Lord Buckley, if you're willing to call it a jazz record, so am I. 5 stars.



Eddie Jefferson

"Body And Soul" (from *The Jazz Singer*, Evidence, rec. 1959/1993) Jefferson, vocals; with nonet and background vocals.

Eddie Jefferson. As tribute tunes go, this is obviously one of his masterpieces. He really tells the story in a way that is matched perfectly with the song. And I'm glad that there are some recordings of Eddie not just massacring his own voice. Part of the charm and part of the difficulty of listening to him is that he was never a trained singer in any sense of the word. I really would just like to hug him and tell him about breath control. The Muse really spoke into his ear; he really opened up so many doors for jazz singers just from existing. Do I have to limit myself to 5 stars?

Allen Ginsberg

"Brooklyn Bridge Blues" (from Kerouac: *Kicks Joy Darkness*, Rykodisc, 1997) Ginsberg, voice.

In a lot of ways, it's classic Jack in terms of writing. Jack was one of the first writers to really translate a concept of Buddhism for Americans and put it into vernacular so people could have access to beauty of the idea. It's really impossible to give it stars. What's its equivalent? The Miles band with Wayne, Herbie, Ron and Tony. [Kerouac, Ginsberg et al.] each had his own direction, his own view, but they were working so closely for a certain period of time in the '50s and they fed each other just like the cats in that Miles band fed each other and fed Miles. But each had his own distinct voice.

DH: So, 4 1/2 stars?

[Laughs] As many stars as we have left. Where great men speak, small men should keep silent. Obviously, that goes for Allen as much as for Jack.

Mark Murphy

"Cantaloupe Island" (from Mark Murphy Sings, Muse, 1975) Murphy, vocals; Dave Sanborn, alto saxophone; Michael Brecker, tenor saxophone; Randy Brecker, trumpet; Joe Puma, guitar; Don Grolnick, keyboards; Harvie Swartz, bass; Jimmy Madison, drums; Sue Evans, percussion.

This is Mark doing his thing, blowin' on it, having a good time—excellent musicality, good-spirited beauty. A lot of people would benefit from listening to Mark. At his best, Mark is really one of the best jazz singers in history. If there was a Mt. Rushmore of jazz singers, his face would definitely be on it. Always 5 stars for Mark: for ingenuity, for ballsiness, for musicianship, for excellence and the highest level of expectations from his own abilities. **DB**