

B-3 Bombers: McGriff, Earland, Lonnie Smith & Johnny Smith

DOWN BEAT

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**Gary Burton &
Chick Corea**

**CLASSIC INTERVIEW:
Sarah Vaughan**

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Carl Allen**

Tom Harrell's

Prime Time





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*Prime Time***

With new exposure for his music through his recording contract with RCA Victor and expanding options to pursue his wealth of ideas, trumpeter/composer Tom Harrell finally seems to be attracting prime-time attention from the listening public.

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Cover photograph of Tom Harrell by John Abbott.

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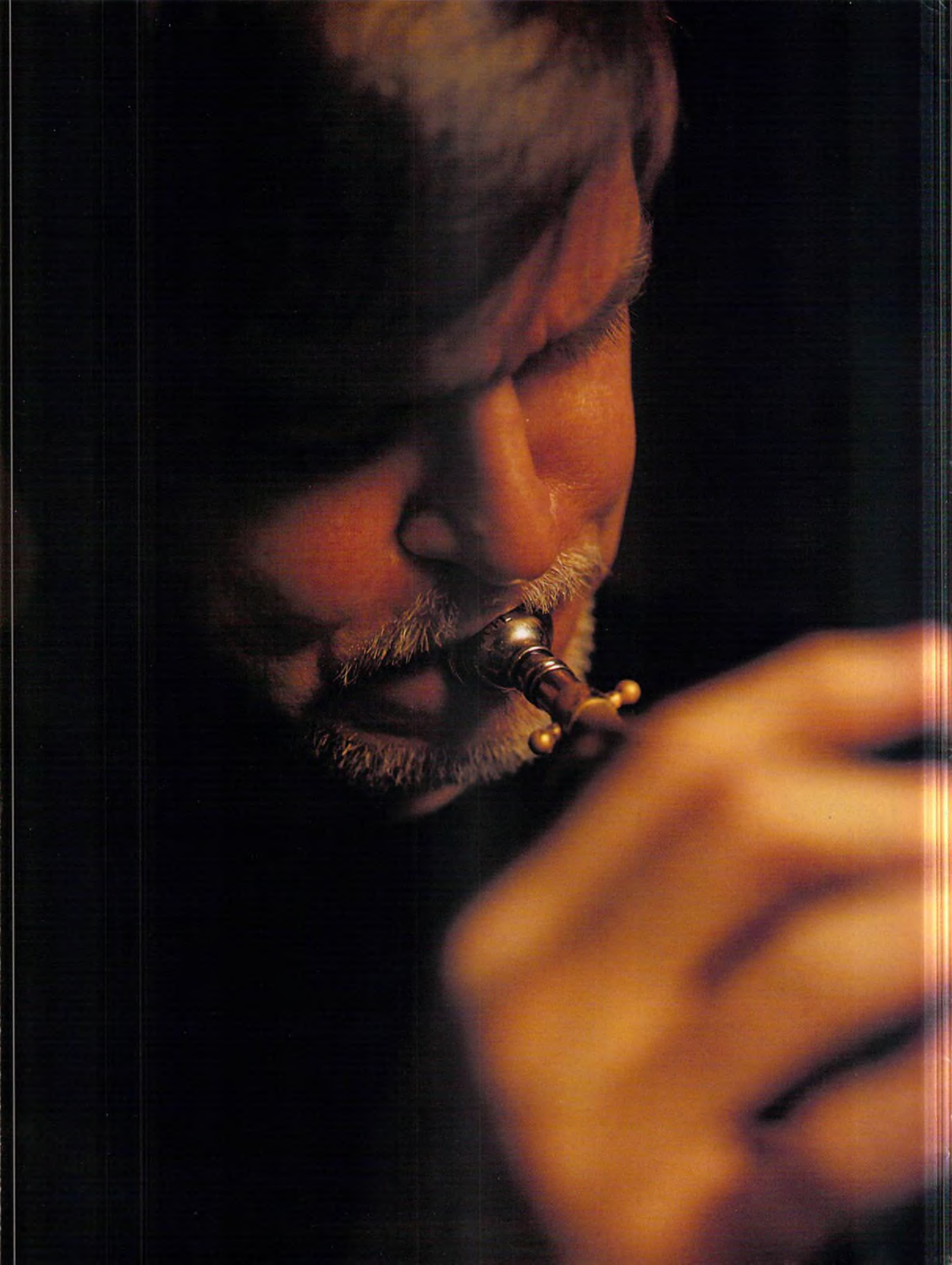


Keith Jarrett



Manhattan Transfer

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BY BOB BLUMENTHAL

Tom Harrell's

To borrow a phrase associated with one of his countless musical partners, everybody digs Tom Harrell. The trumpeter has been gathering superlatives since his sideman days with Stan Kenton, Woody Herman and Horace Silver in the late '60s/early '70s. Probably the most famous comment comes from jazz soldier Phil Woods, who called Harrell the greatest living improviser. And the accolades just keep coming. In a recent interview, for example, Ornette

Prime

Coleman remarked that the very short list of trumpeters he is interested in working with includes Harrell. Having turned 51 in June, with new exposure for his music through his recording contract with RCA Victor and expanding options to pursue his wealth of ideas, Tom Harrell finally seems to be attracting prime-time attention from the listening public.

Harrell's gig with his new octet at Umbria Jazz '97 in Perugia, Italy, this summer presented

Time

an opportunity to meet and talk with the trumpeter/composer. There were some logistical concerns, though. Harrell's well-documented schizophrenia and the strong medication he takes to control it leave him in a condition where time and a lack of outside distractions are strict requirements for him to best gather and express his thoughts. Unfortunately, a relaxed, uninterrupted atmosphere is not what the European festival circuit is all about. But as it turned out,

PHOTOS BY JOHN ABBOTT

Angela Harrell, the trumpeter's wife and manager, offered the perfect strategy: a post-concert discussion after the band had played its midnight set in Perugia's magisterial 14th-century church, San Francesco al Prato.

Harrell's new band is both deep in talent and unique in design, with his trumpet and flugelhorn joined by the trom-

"I used to be afraid that I wasn't accessible. But now I don't shy away, from modern harmony."

bone of Wayne Andre, the twin tenors of Don Braden and Greg Tardy, Gary Smulyan's baritone and a rhythm section of pianist Xavier Davis, bassist Ugonna Okegwo and drummer Billy Hart. Every member of the band radiated a blend of concentration and joy from the bandstand that night at San Francesco. Harrell has taken the bold writing of his most recent CD, *Labyrinth*, even further in expansions of such tunes as "Sun Cycle" and "Blues In One." He's added new and complex arrangements of "Madrid" and "Improv" and a thorough reimagining

of Lennon/McCartney's "Yesterday." The blowing reached a peak during the trumpet solo on an explosive "Train Shuffle," where the horn seemed to jump from Harrell's lips and he was heard to emit a quite audible "wow!"

When we finally sat down to talk at 2:30 a.m., Harrell couldn't have been more voluble. In a conversation that stretched to near sunrise, he spoke with boundless enthusiasm about his current ideas and the music that has inspired him, going all the way back to his jazz-rock days in San Francisco with Cold

Blood and Azteca. Every thought seemed to trigger another musical association, making the session one of the more detailed guides to Harrell's musical philosophy.

"I'm so lucky," Harrell began. "It's been a lifelong dream to tour with a large group, and the spirit in the octet is just incredible. Perugia is so special as well. I had a group here at the Il Contrapunto club for two summers. But before that, I remember a concert I played here in '76 with Horace [Silver] opposite Sonny Stitt that was just beautiful, and another with Horace in

Orvieto opposite Keith Jarrett.

"Everyone in the band is growing and stimulating each other—it's hard not to be stimulated playing with Billy Hart every night. He can shape the song any way he wants, he's so free and secure in what he does. He might go into swing on a Latin tune, or 6/8 over straight eighth notes. Tonight he did something I've never heard him do before, almost like a drummer from India, from a hard groove to the kind of polyrhythmic thing that Rashied Ali does. Billy does things I can't analyze. It's great being exposed to that."

It was this kind of stimulation that led to the "wow" during Harrell's "Train Shuffle" solo. "I felt like my head would explode," he laughed. "Billy, Ugonna and Xavier were playing so great, and the sound system was so good, that I felt I could play anything, that I could explore all of the things I think about. We've talked about doing a string date after I finish my new album, but I'd also love to record this group. The groove is really intense."

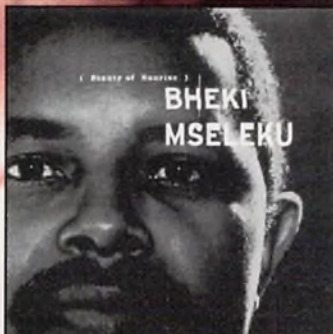
One key to the octet's impact is its instrumentation, which Harrell employs in a variety of ways. "I use trombone," he explained, "because it has a great impact when heard between the trumpet and the reeds. Steve Turre talks

PURE SPIRIT.

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Christian McBride, Nicholas Payton, and Mark Whitfield unite to revisit some of Herbie's masterpieces. The trio interprets a broad spectrum of his work — from simple blues and delicate ballads to complex harmonic explorations and sophisticated funk. Hancock provides insightful comments about each composition in the liner notes.



Photographs: Carol Friedman, Jimmy Katz, Michael O'Neill, Philippe Pierangeli

about Slide Hampton's awareness of that. But I also like to voice the two tenors in seconds, and the two tenors with the baritone. You can use the trombone as a lead, or as part of the sax section; but then I also like the unison sound with the tenors. I learned that effect of doubling when I was with Azteca, and from those rich unisons J.J. Johnson got on *Poem For Brass*. Horace voiced trumpet and tenor with the piano, and Monk voiced with just one horn—that's why I like to write out piano voicings. Herbie Hancock's *The Prisoner* also gives me that incredible feeling of depth.

"Hot Licks On The Sidewalk' [from *Labyrinth*] was the first time I had two tenors play the melody an octave below the trumpet; but then I saw Gil [Evans]'s sketch of the tune 'Miles Ahead,' and he doubled a lot of notes in the middle range. Then there's the *Brass Shout* album Benny Golson did for Art Farmer—Lee Morgan is also on that—or the sound on 'Little Train' from George Benson's *White Rabbit* album, where Herbie plays a Rhodes solo with a ring modulator."

Harrell has clearly been thinking orchestrally for a long time, and has seized every opportunity to refine his

writing skills. "I did one Cold Blood arrangement in San Francisco on 'You've Got It Bad, Girl' with overdubs, where Bennie Maupin played bass clarinet. I guess I've always loved that sound. Part of it was the influence of Alan Broadbent, who showed me a lot of things when we were with Woody Herman. Then with Azteca, Mel Martin and Bob Ferreira both doubled, so I learned a lot about blending flutes with brass. I could write eight-part harmonies, and we'd overdub tracks. But I'm also interested in rhythmic counterpoint, blending different rhythmic phrases like patterns of light and shade, and another thing I wrote for Azteca really taught me how to blend rhythms. Since I've moved uptown in New York recently, I've grown even more aware of how Latin people live with complex rhythms all of the time, and I want to incorporate those ideas more as well."

Harrell feels that the key is refusing to conform to musical stereotypes. "Through education, players are led to focus on the specific role that their instrument is supposed to play," he noted. "But Ornette Coleman talks about changing the roles of the instruments, using horns for rhythm, and Herbie Nichols talked about hearing the piano like a tuned drum. Billy Hart

and I were just talking about the misperception of the drums as an indefinite-pitch instrument. Why, Joe Lovano writes melodies for his gongs."

Mention of Coleman led to discussion of the saxophonist's desire to work with Harrell. "That would be incredible," the trumpeter beamed. "His music has everything, and the feeling of purity and the incredible courage he has are really inspiring. I've got to keep that pure mind thing happening."

Coleman has also had an impact on Harrell's approach to improvisation. "I used to be afraid that I wasn't accessible," the trumpeter said. "But now I don't shy away from modern harmony. On some of the solos tonight, I deliberately played out of the chord for greater impact, though you could still relate the notes to the melody. It's like how Ornette modulates, which Charlie Haden calls making up new chord changes while you play.

"I used to practice that way in high school with an alto player I knew, playing new chord changes over records, and when I warm up I still like to make up chord progressions. But Ornette and Sonny Rollins' trio records showed me how you can play within the chord without proving that you were playing the chords. The ten-

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dency when you play with just bass and drums is to spell out the chords, but Sonny would play real subtleties within the chords. I'm sure Ornette and Sonny influenced each other. Ornette's innovation was to move outside the form, the way Joe Lovano and I do when we play together. But I also heard George Coleman, Frank Strozier and Harold Mabern with Miles at the Blackhawk [in 1963] play 'Oleo' and do really creative things by changing scales within the metric framework."

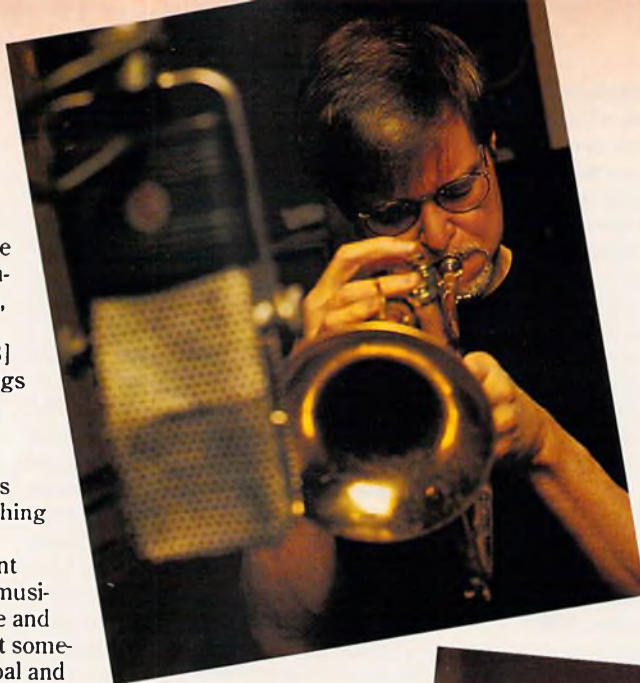
All of these ideas raised questions about just how Harrell approaches his improvisations. "I try to create something that feels good in the moment," he explained, "and it can work in different ways. Sometimes I'm conscious of a musical goal, as if I were painting a picture and can see the horizon taking shape. But sometimes I am less focused on a linear goal and more focused on the moment. It's like the theoretical distinction between 'horizontal' melody and 'vertical' harmony, although Andre Hodeir, Gerry Mulligan and Claude Thornhill talked about the cloud-like, floating feeling that Gil Evans got. Brazilian music gives me that feeling of floating on a cloud as well, and it is so incredible to play with people like Romero Lubambo and Duduka da Fonseca who have that feeling. The main thing about

"Sometimes I'm conscious of a musical goal, as if I were painting a picture and can see the horizon taking shape. But sometimes I am less focused on a linear goal and more focused on the moment."

soloing, though, is to make it feel compositional and to play in the moment. And, sometimes, to reach kinds of beauty not related to Tin Pan Alley. Weather Report taught me how you can have beauty and spaciness, unpredictability."

Harrell is an expert on surprise. He may slip in an occasional quote in passing as he did during his opening solo on "Madrid" at the San Francisco concert by nodding to Bix Beiderbecke with "Dardanella" and Ziggy Elman with "And The Angels Sing." But otherwise he is one of the most cliché-free players in jazz. "I still gravitate to certain phrases sometimes," he confessed, "but am always trying to be creative melodically. Miles really influenced me in using space and playing new melodies, the way Woody Shaw said that Eric Dolphy made him more open melodically. The trumpet allows you several options: half-valves, changing registers, you can even change the timbre within the middle register through dynamics and microtones. These techniques have strong emotional significance to me, and can create a lot of passion. I heard some Jamaican music playing in a taxicab recently, and just the timbre had so much emotion.

"You can quote other people's styles consciously, and you can even do it unconsciously by changing timbre. I find myself doing it unconsciously, tapping into other people's styles, and I don't know where it comes from. Like a night recently when Jon Faddis called me late about a gig, after I had been practicing, and coming



so close to Dizzy. I couldn't figure out how I did it. It shows that there is a spirit world."

Harrell's own sound at present is richer than ever, whether he is using trumpet or flugelhorn. "You can play a french-horn concept on the trumpet," he explained. "In a sense, that's what Miles did. I've always loved the sound of early Miles. In a way, it's close to Louis Armstrong, in both sound and time feel. I'm really lucky to have heard Louis Armstrong live. Booker Little had that glowing quality, and *Birth Of The Cool* had that warm glow. And Thad [Jones] was incredible. Javon [Jackson] played me an early record of Thad and Hank [Jones], where Thad was taking Fats Navarro in another direction. Nicholas Payton sounds great, doing things with sound and melody that I'd like to do. He has everything."

Other trumpet players continue to have an impact on Harrell's thinking. "Graham Haynes' last two albums have really influenced me a lot," he said. "Flip Stories,' from Graham's album *The Griot's Footsteps*, and my experience recording with Leon Parker have really influenced my melodic thinking. I'd also like to write something for a large group without a tempo, the way Carla Bley wrote lead sheets for Jimmy Giuffrè's trio without bar lines. Lester Bowie and I were talking about trying that, the night

Lester introduced me to Graham."

Harrell's deep respect for others cannot mask a growing awareness of his own influence, both in the jazz world generally and among the musicians who work in his band. His new octet, a fascinating multi-generational assemblage of veterans, young veterans and newcomers, is an instructive forum for how he plans to both refine and share what he has learned.

"It's wonderful to see younger players blossom. I remember the feeling of playing with Stan Kenton and soloing every night. You need that to glimpse your identity, although it's hard to get that first break. But the scene is very healthy now, with more jam sessions opening up and big bands forming. Wynton Marsalis has helped a lot, especially in the respect shown to older players."

All of this should come together on Harrell's upcoming RCA Victor album, *The Art Of Rhythm*, which he was scheduled to complete after returning from Europe. "The project includes three different groups, 24 musicians in all," he explained. "Dewey Redman, Mike Stern, Romero Lubambo, Danilo Perez on harmonium and piano, Ken McIntyre, Milton Cardona, Leon Parker, Regina Carter, Akua Dixon ... it should be out early in '98. Then I plan to write an album for strings. I have so many fragments and sketches at the house, there

is a lifetime of music to work on."

Given his combination of talent and enthusiasm, Harrell will most likely see all of these projects through. "You hear that everything's been done before," he concluded, as the clock inched toward 5 a.m. "But I don't think that way. There are still new possibilities, and people will respond if you are involved in what you're doing. You just have to find the magical spaces in the music." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Tom Harrell uses a Conn Constellation model 38B trumpet with a bored-out Bach Magatone 1 1/2 mouthpiece, and a Couesnon flugelhorn with a Bach 1 1/2 FL mouthpiece.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

LABYRINTH—RCA Victor 68512
UPSWING—Chesky 103
PASSAGES—Chesky 64
FORM—Contemporary 14069
SAIL AWAY—Contemporary 14054
STORIES—Contemporary 14043
VISIONS—Contemporary 14063
SUNDANCE—Contemporary 14037
 (co-led with George Robert)
OPEN AIR—SteepleChase 31220
MOON ALLEY—Criss Cross 1018
PLAY OF LIGHT—Blackhawk 50901

with Mike LeDonne

BOUT TIME—Criss Cross 1033
THE FEELING OF JAZZ—Criss Cross 1041

with Don Braden

THE TIME IS NOW—Criss Cross 1051
WISH LIST—Criss Cross 1069
ORGANIC—Epicure 66873

with Phil Woods

THE PHIL WOODS QUARTET/QUINTET
20TH ANNIVERSARY SET—Mosaic 159
HEAVEN—Evidence 22148
GRATITUDE—Denon 1316
INTO THE WOODS—Concord Jazz 4699

with Joris Teepe

PAY AS YOU EARN—Mons 2004
 (Teepe/Don Braden Quintet)
BOTTOM LINE—Mons 874 770

with Jim Hall

THESE ROOMS—Denon 30002
DIALOGUES—Telarc 83369

with Joe Lovano

VILLAGE RHYTHM—Soul Note 121182
QUARTETS: LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD—Blue Note 29125

with Philip Catherine

I REMEMBER YOU—Criss Cross 1048
MOODS, VOLUME I—Criss Cross 1060
MOODS, VOLUME II—Criss Cross 1061

with various others

FIRST FLIGHT OUT—Arabesque 113
 (Charles McPherson)
YOU DON'T KNOW ME—Arabesque 115
 (Thomas Chapin)
THE ETERNAL FLAME—Stash 2504 (William Goffigan)
LOOKING FORWARD—Evidence 22114-2 (Tana Reid)
BELIEF—Columbia 67457 (Leon Parker)
PLAYING WITH FIRE—MAMA 1017 (Bobby Shew)
MEANT TO BE—Bluemusic 1001 (Fleurette)
SEASONS OF ROMANCE—Postcards 1009
 (Steve Kuhn)
SO MANY STARS—Sony Classical 68473
 (Kathleen Battle)
IT'S A LONESOME OLD TOWN—Concord Jazz 4673
 (Ken Peplowski)
TIME TO SMILE—Drayfus Jazz 36566-2
 (Steve Grossman)
THE DEPARTURE—Columbia 57848 (David Sanchez)
SECRET RHYTHMS—Muse 5516 (Fernando Tarres)
THE COMPANY I KEEP: ART FARMER MEETS
TOM HARRELL—Arabesque 112
REAL BOOK—XtraWatt 7 (Steve Swallow)
BROWNIE—Verve 522 363 (Helen Merrill)
FRANKLY—Milestone 9224 (Per Goldschmidt)

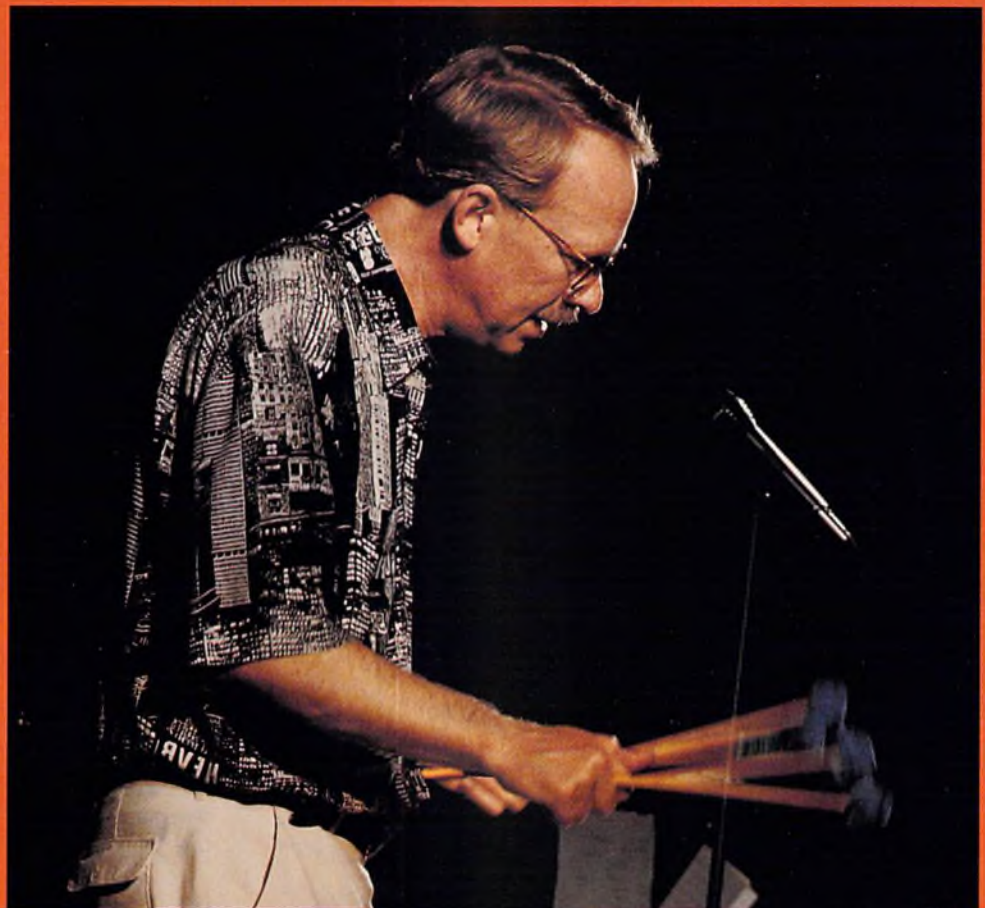
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PHOTOS BY ALAN NAHIGIAN

Pianist Chick Corea and vibraphonist Gary Burton come as close to reading each other's minds as any two players in jazz. Through previous duet albums (one with string quartet), and countless live appearances together over the years, Burton and Corea have developed a rare form of musical telepathy.

"I have it occasionally, a moment now and then, with another player," says Burton, as he sits with Corea during the dinner break of a recording session at Corea's Mad Hatter studio in Los Angeles. "But as constantly and consistently as it happens with us, it's been a one-time-only kind of collaboration."

That collaboration now includes a new repertoire that the pair has taken on the road as well as into the studio. They are now midway through an international touring schedule that has them booked on 75 dates over 15 months.

With this new material, and their first recording together in 14 years, Corea and Burton are once again setting the artistic stan-

Perfect *by Robert Keough* Pairing *Gary Burton & Chick Corea*

dard for the jazz duo, a once-unpromising category that they pioneered a quarter-century ago.

"In the '60s and the early '70s, when you had a jazz group that didn't have bass and drums in it, you thought of it as an economical way to do a gig," says Corea. "It was not a complete group."

At the time, no one—including Burton and Corea—believed that duo jazz was commercially viable. No one, that is, except ECM Records guru Manfred Eicher, who heard Burton and Corea play an impromptu duet—"La Fiesta," which Corea taught Burton at the soundcheck—at a 1972 Berlin concert of jazz soloists. Eicher pestered them into recording *Crystal Silence* later that year.



Chick Corea and Gary Burton together in the 1980s: setting the artistic standard for the jazz duo.

Since then, the duo format has done well by Burton and Corea. Two of their four-handed efforts won Grammy awards for best small-group performance: *Duet*, in 1979, and *In Concert, Zurich*, in 1981. Their 1983 *Lyric Suite For Sextet* filled out the improvisational chamber-music concept by adding, logically enough, a string quartet. Burton made duo albums a kind of cottage industry, recording with bassist Steve Swallow, guitarist Ralph Towner and, most recently, pianist Makoto Ozone. It's a format that shows off Burton's harmonically rich and contrapuntal vibes playing, as well as his ability to tune into a single other musician. But nothing compares to working with Corea, Burton says.

"We have a quick rapport with each other and a broad command of our instruments, two advantages that allow us to really make the most of the one-on-one, intimate situation of the duo," says Burton. "I've played duets with quite a few other people, always with some success. But this one stands out as unique, to me, just because of the breadth of what we seem able to do."

Though they haven't recorded together in a decade, Corea and Burton have made a point of playing together regularly, if intermittently, all that time mining a repertoire now 20 years old. That, in itself, hasn't been a problem, according to Corea.

"No matter how many times we play 'Falling Grace' or 'La Fiesta,' there's always a freshness about it," says Corea. Still, they were long overdue for new material, he admits. "We batted around the idea of a new repertoire for years," says Corea. "I kept threatening to write new music, and never really got around to it."

When they both migrated to Concord Jazz last year—Corea bringing his personal label, Stretch, with him—the time seemed ripe. Corea, a prolific composer who always has a full notebook, nominat-

ed some tunes that he'd recorded before but played sparingly, such as "Love Castle" and "Duende." The title song of the resulting CD, *Native Sense*, though written several years ago, is recorded here for the first time. Corea thought of it as the first of a new set of children's songs (he recorded several in the '70s and '80s), but the rest of that collection didn't materialize. So he pulled the tune out for a grown-up treatment by the duo.

In choosing the rest of the material, Corea and Burton found themselves settling into a vaguely Latin feel, eschewing swing entirely. "Everything, even the ballad pieces, are straight-eighth or have some kind of tango feel," says Burton.

But the most striking influence is classical, which reflects Corea's newfound interest in, as he puts it, "the performance of written music." The album includes two of Bela Bartok's 14 "Bagatelles For Piano," arranged for piano and vibes, linked by a short Corea piece ("Postscript"). The album's tour de force is the Mozart-inspired "Rhumbata," a cross between a rumba and a sonata, Corea calls it. "It's sort of like a sonata form: a first movement, a second slower movement and a third brighter movement," says Corea.

In the writing and the playing, "Rhumbata" is intricate and intelligent; in composition, vintage Corea; in execution, emblematic of the Burton-Corea partnership. It's also a tribute to the unconventional approach Corea and Burton take to preparing new material, one that nobly puts the music first.

"Normally, you get the record dates booked, you write new music and you go in and record the music. Then you go out and play it" in public, says Burton. "On several of our projects, we've made sure we had the luxury of playing it for a while before we went into the studio."

Corea and Burton debuted their new program in four nights at the Regattabar in

Cambridge, Mass., at the end of January, and met on the road for a total of 12 dates over three-and-a-half months. Only then were they ready for the recording session at Mad Hatter, presided over by Corea's longtime engineer, Bernie Kirsh.

"The music would never have come together the way it is [today] without our having played it, let it go for a while, then come back to it," says Corea. "The way we work it out best is when we go out in front of audiences and play."

Native Sense is currently slated for October release on Corea's Stretch label, and Burton and Corea will tour as a duo, off and on, well into next year.

Also on the Burton-Corea docket is another recording project for Concord Jazz, one that will put them, for the first time in their 25-year association, in a more conventional quintet format. But the all-star lineup for the session, scheduled for December, is anything but conventional: Burton, Corea, guitarist Pat Metheny, bassist Dave Holland and drummer Roy Haynes.

That Burton and Corea have remained as close as they have over the years is all the more remarkable considering the divergent musical paths they took with their own bands (though trailing each other from label to label the entire time, from ECM to GRP to Concord) since their last recording together. But in the duo setting, Corea and Burton remain soulmates. Though each is a distinctive stylist on his own instrument, playing together they sound like nothing so much as each other. This musical alchemy Corea can explain only by reference to personal chemistry.

"One way of looking at how to present an artistic effect goes beyond form, or composition or what the story is," says Corea. "You put Gary together with Chick, and it's just what it is. No matter what kind of repertoire we play." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Gary Burton plays a Musser 48 vibraphone with Vic Firth mallets (Gary Burton Signature model).

Chick Corea plays a Yamaha CFIII-S nine-foot concert grand piano.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Gary Burton & Chick Corea
NATIVE SENSE—Stretch/Concord 9014
LYRIC SUITE FOR SEXTET—ECM 21260
IN CONCERT, ZURICH—ECM 21182
DUET—ECM 21140
CRYSTAL SILENCE—ECM 21024

Gary Burton
DEPARTURE—Concord Jazz 4749
FACE TO FACE—GRP 9805
REUNION—GRP 9598
WHIZ KIDS—ECM 21329
DREAMS SO REAL—ECM 21072

Chick Corea
REMEMBERING BUD POWELL—Stretch 9012
TIME WARP—Stretch 1115
ELECTRIC BAND II: PAINT THE WORLD—GRP 9731
CHICK COREA ACOUSTIC BAND—GRP 9582
CHILDREN'S SONG—ECM 212677





The Big Apple's two predominant jazz events met head-to-head this summer in what will probably go down in history as the city's most bodacious festival season ever. Like a good-old-fashioned cutting contest, the Texaco New York Jazz Festival and the JVC Jazz Festival New York turned up the heat and put on their game faces in a contest of raw, no-bars-held enthusiasm that left musicians scrambling from stage to stage and listeners in a state of dazed satisfaction.

As often happened in the friendly jam-session challenges of yore, neither fest emerged as a real victor over the other. Rather, both parties got the chance to flex their jazz-presenting chops and push their abilities to the limit. The collective effect on the marketplace can best be described as near saturation: Both fests drew capacity or near-capacity crowds to simultaneous events, but you got the sense that a few more shows or additional days would have resulted in audience burnout.

More importantly, though, the successful meeting of these two major festivals proves that the audience for jazz and related musics is bigger than previously thought. It just goes to show what good can come from a little civilized rivalry.

In the following pages, we've attempted to recreate the vibe of June 1997 in New York with eyewitness photos, critical reviews of the musical highlights and a look inside the politics of competition.

—Ed Enright

Clockwise, from upper left: World Saxophone Quartet (Texaco New York Jazz Festival), Eliane Elias (JVC Jazz Festival New York), Roy Haynes (JVC), Jackie McLean (Texaco), Manhattan Transfer (JVC), Lester Bowie (Texaco), Bob Brookmeyer (JVC) and Donald Harrison (JVC) in the center.

PHOTO CREDITS: WORLD SAXOPHONE QUARTET, ELIANE ELIAS, ROY HAYNES, MANHATTAN TRANSFER AND BOB BROOKMEYER BY R. ANDREW LEPLÉY. JACKIE McLEAN, LESTER BOWIE AND DONALD HARRISON BY ENID FARBER.

Cutting

Two Major New York Jazz Fests Face Off



ALAN HARRISON

John Lewis (left) with Wynton Marsalis at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall

No other individual is more responsible for more people hearing more jazz than George Wein, the godfather of the jazz festival, who presented his first extended outdoor musical bash in Newport, R.I., in summer 1972. So, congrats to Wein's Festival Productions for this year's 25th anniversary of what, over time, has become the JVC Jazz Festival New York.

Nowadays, the costs involved in presenting all-day sets and big-time concerts have become prohibitive. And, saddest of all the realities, the jazz greats who could fill that many expensive seats have become fewer and fewer. Nonetheless, the festival endures after all the years and all the changes—and in spite of all the critics who've whined about what they feel the festival *ought* to be.

JVC New York 1997 (June 20-28) kicked off with the Manhattan Transfer's own 25th-anniversary concert at Carnegie Hall, Aretha Franklin's gospel benefit for AIDS at Avery Fisher Hall and a swinging celebration of Armstrong, Ellington, Berlin and Dorsey at Hunter College's Kaye Playhouse. Though the festival presented only two or three featured concerts each evening at the bigger venues, Wein also expanded this year's JVC to two dozen cooperating clubs and smaller venues, plus continuing free Newport-ish band-after-band gigs at Bryant Park.

Record labels also presented concerts, including a Blue Note "Sings and Swings" evening with Geri Allen, Joe Lovano and Cassandra Wilson at Carnegie Hall. Lovano's celebration of Sinatra songs featured Manny Albam's exquisite woodwind arrangements and the lyrical counterpoint of Judi Silvano's soprano voice. Silvano's barfly cameo on "One For My Baby" was especially delightful, and Lovano's soulfulness on the tenor sax was that much more passionate resounding among Sinatra's vibes on that stage.

Cassandra Wilson had never before performed at Carnegie Hall, but she sang as if she'd been there always and was *meant* to be there. So cool. Graceful. Grooving. Swinging. Sexy, even if it's not politically correct to say so. She's been heralded as an heir apparent to the great ladies of jazz, and Cassandra stepped up for her generation to be in that pantheon.

Wynton Marsalis and John Lewis proved that a weakness for the classics can lead to greatness. In their unamplified set at Avery Fisher Hall, the trumpeter and pianist confidently swung their way through standards like "April In Paris" and "I'll Remember April." During the quieter moments, Lewis threw a

few left-handed wake-up curveballs, while Marsalis demonstrated great melodic sense and made effective use of his horn's low end. The trumpeter's sometimes exaggerated vibrato and attention-getting note-squeezes might have gotten a little tiresome for the more experienced listener, but it did make for a great show.

Things took a turn for the worse after this intimate duet, though, as McCoy Tyner (backed by a full orchestra directed and arranged by John Clayton) tiptoed and tinkled his way through a weak, sleepy set featuring Burt Bacharach tunes recorded on the pianist's latest CD. Worse yet, Tyner found himself the victim of what seemed to be poor stage monitoring as he and Elvin Jones choked their way through a third set featuring various sidemen/special guests (John Blake,

James Carter, Marsalis, Aaron Scott, Avery Sharpe), all of whom appeared to be completely lost all the time and unable to hear each other. It was the world's largest Trane-wreck, and fortunately nobody was hurt—although Jones gave musicians and audience alike a hell of a scare when he accidentally tumbled off his stool during the intro to the group's only number that held together, "In A Sentimental Mood," featuring Carter.

A more memorable show at this year's JVC fest was a recreation of the Grammy-winning *Portraits Of Cuba* album with a big band arranged by Carlos Franzetti and featuring Paquito D'Rivera. Cuban expatriates were all around, and Paquito was even more of a one-man fiesta than usual. But the finest moment was a "Tu Mi Delirio" with his heart cascading from

JVC Jazz Festival New York Endures At A Mature, Swingin' 25

By Michael Bourne & Ed Enright

his saxophone and turning Town Hall into a romantic puddle.

In a JVC first, Wein called upon other producers for the series of concerts at the Kaye Playhouse, all of which celebrated jazz bedrocks, from Terry Waldo's ragtime centennial and Rich Conaty's big band radio show to concerts of Hoagy Carmichael's songs. George Avakian and trumpeter Randy Sandke co-produced a pure-trad show of recently discovered music of Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong that featured a mini big band of experts in the genre, including guitarist Howard Alden, reedman Ken Peplowski, pianist Dick Hyman and trumpeter Nicholas Payton. New York jazz impresario Jack Kleinsinger, who was honored with an all-star tribute on his 25th anniversary producing "Highlights in Jazz" concerts, produced a heartfelt tribute on the 50th anniversary of Jackie and Roy singing together.

Even more touching was a tribute to Barney Kessel from a Who's Who of jazz guitar: Howard Alden, Jimmy Bruno, Joe Puma, Remo Palmier, Gene Bertocini, Tal Farlow, Herb Ellis, Charlie Byrd, Jack Wilkins, Ron Affif, Sal Salvador, Mundell Lowe and Kenny Burrell. Barney himself, halted by a stroke, thanked them all for the respect and love they all showed plectrally for him.

JVC New York 1997 might not have presented as *many* stellar concerts as George Wein's first Newport 25 years ago, but, as Tracy said of Hepburn, what was there was *cherce*. **DB**



ALAMY/PHOTODISC

Malachi Favors with the Art Ensemble of Chicago at Tribeca Hall

This successor to the nine-year-old What Is Jazz? festival drove home the wealth and diversity of alternatives to the established stars and commercial favorites of contemporary swing-and-blues-rooted music.

Boasting 350 presentations involving well over 1,000 musicians, the Texaco New York Jazz Festival (June 16-30) ranged from free concerts (at a historic fort at the tip of lower Manhattan, in the plazas of the World Trade Center and the World Financial Center and outside the mall-like South Street Seaport) to "premium events" (at

Harlem's Shomburg Center, Time Square's Town Hall and Central Park's Summerstage).

Most of the action swirled around the Knitting Factory, the down-

town club that the New Yorker has dubbed "frathouse of the avant garde." And though there were plenty of straightahead, prominently recorded players, the Texaco New York fest was rife with newcomers, little-knowns and veteran outsiders who've never been fully embraced by those who claim to say what is jazz.

Opening night swelled the pride of Chicagoans-in-exile as the full house (perhaps 500) in Tribeca Hall at the New York Academy of Art gave a standing ovation when AACM's Art Ensemble (Lester Bowie, Roscoe Mitchell, Malachi Favors, Famoudou Don Moye) took the stage. The group proceeded to unfold a narrative that proved loose (if not "free") improv depends upon the quality of participants' *listening*, as well as their responses. Two blocks away at the Knit, AACM saxist Ernest Dawkins, a rare visitor to New York, joined trombonist Joseph Bowie and Kahil El'Zabar in the darkly percussive Ethnic Heritage Ensemble. Downstairs, in the tiny Alterknit room, former Art Ensemble member Joseph Jarman performed solo on woodwinds with tapes.

Amina Claudine Myers (on piano) led hollow-bodied electric bass guitarist Jerome Harris and drummer Reggie Nicholson through a lyrical, billowing set, followed by Roscoe Mitchell's giant-sized (two pianos!) nonet Note Factory, with trombonist George Lewis and trumpeter Hugh Ragin. Bassist William Parker's Organic Trio, with alto saxist Daniel Carter and multi-talented Cooper Moore drumming brilliantly, held forth in the smokey Tap Bar. Colorado-based trumpeter Ron Miles' quartet (with Bill Frisell) over-filled the Alternit. And at 1 a.m., alto saxist Noah Howard appeared as from the mists of a '60s ESP disk, heading a foursome with pianist Bobby Few.

Every night was similarly loaded, necessitating hard decisions and much room-to-room or venue-to-venue set-hopping. Danilo Perez's trio was splashy but not satisfying. Carla Bley played piano in duet with electric bassist Steve Swallow, consciously committing to each successive note, voicing and phrase. At Roulette, Marty Ehrlich was elegant yet probing on clarinet, with bassist Mark Dresser and drummer Andrew Cyrille digging detailed, trenchant rhythms. A few moments listening to Andrea Parkins' Cast Iron Fact revealed her imaginative sampling, backed by acidic Briggan Krauss on alto sax and Kenny Wollesen on percussion.

Cornetist/bluesman Olu Dara assembled his funky Okra Orchestra (a fivesome) for a beguiling, laid-back set, followed by Graham Haynes' seemingly endless ocean of new age electronic clichés. Swiss electric cellist Martin Schutz, reedist Hans Koch and drummer Freddie Studer screamed hardcore at the bourgeois Seaport passers-by, yet upset no one. Long-absent trombonist Roswell Rudd blew for an hour with a golden tone and leather lungs, while 'boneman Steve Swell huffed to outplay him and drummer Lou Grassi stiff-armed rugged beats. Pianist Anthony Coleman's Sephardic Tinge trio played a hilariously quirky, subtly subversive set, and Kenny Garrett's Quartet with Donald Brown, Nat Reeves and Jeff Watts pleased the late-nighters with a half-Trane, half-r&b repertoire.

A daylong symposium on cyber-world music applications, N2K Presents Jazz 2001, was offset by bassist Reggie Workman's complex, all-acoustic ensemble (with straight-alto-playing John Purcell, harpist Elizabeth Panzer, pianist Marilyn Crispell, tablaist Tappan Modek and drummer Gerry Hemingway) as well as by trumpeter Jack Walrath's Masters of Suspense (featuring the wizardly jungle-scat of Miles Griffith, hot drumming from Cecil Brooks III and explosive rock guitar from Bill Bickford).

Texaco New York Jazz Festival Drives Home A Wealth Of Alternatives

By Howard Mandel

Henry Threadgill's Make A Move was possibly the most powerful of all combos during the fest, its leader's fearsome prophecies riding waves particularly propelled by electric bassist Stomu Takeishi, whose concept seemed radically new.

At the noontime Continental Airlines Stage "Women in Jazz" series, composer/vocalist Kitty Brazelton's nonet Dadadah previewed its latest album-length pop-classical project. Judi Silvano, Peggy Stern, Zusaan Kali Fasteau's World Jazz Trio, Jane Ira Bloom's trio, Elizabeth Panzer's Talking Harp, Jamie Baum's quintet and Marike McAuliffe's well attuned Ark Sextet each had stands there.

Chinghiale (Chicagoan reedists Ken Vandermark and Mars Williams) demonstrated the delicate side of their often raucous communion. And Joe Zawinul's Syndicate commanded a gratifying pocket for almost an hour.

This festival should put other music fests on notice that the broadly defined jazz underground is ever-more established and self-sufficient. Indeed, jazz like this fills the Knitting Factory all year long.

Walking The Political Tightrope Of New York's Jazz Festival Wars

By Larry Birnbaum

The tidal wave of jazz that hit New York City this summer was largely the work of two men: George Wein, producer of the JVC Jazz Festival New York, and Michael Dorf, producer of the Texaco New York Jazz Festival.

Until recently, Wein's mainstream-oriented shindig ruled the roost, shrugging off the fringe challengers that have dogged it ever since the Rebel Festival at its first home in Newport, R.I. But last year, Dorf's alternative-leaning festival, with partial sponsorship from Heineken, mounted a serious challenge. And this year Dorf, with full support from Texaco and a massive 350-act program, achieved virtual parity, at least in terms of media exposure.

Despite or because of the fierce competition, audiences showed up in droves. "Both George and I are extremely happy with the success of our festivals this year," says Dorf. "Even though we were completely on top of one another, he's claiming huge turnouts, and so am I. At the Knitting Factory, we sold out every night but one."

"We did incredible business, literally twice the gross we did last year," Wein confirms. "We had only two concerts that drew less than 1,000 people, and they drew 980. I'm talking paid attendance."

While both fests drew huge throngs to free outdoor concerts and capacity crowds at smaller indoor venues, each had trouble filling the larger concert halls. "If we relied upon pure jazz artists for Carnegie and Avery Fisher, we couldn't do one concert," says Wein, who packed those arenas using non-jazz stars like Aretha Franklin and Patti LaBelle. "The clubs in New York are doing very well, but we haven't created new Ella Fitzgeralds or Duke Ellingtons."

"Town Hall was the most disappointing paid attendance," Dorf concurs. "But that's why we have sponsorship. I'm not sure exactly what the solution is, but we just have to figure out some clever ways to get people into those halls."

While success may have taken the sting out of their rivalry, the two impresarios still have their differences. "I want to campaign to see if I can get Michael to move his festival," says Wein, "not because of business, but because of the press. This year I literally got one-third of the press coverage I normally get. It would be much better for everybody if the other festival came a week or two later, because people can't absorb that much jazz, and the press cannot handle it."

"I'm considering a shift to the beginning of June next year," Dorf responds,

"but I think it's important for us to be at the same time in order to expand the audience for jazz. The plan is to create a festival season in New York, to gain critical mass from the record companies, the media, the retailers and the agents and managers who are building tours."

"I think a festival is about overload. At a festival, there's music everywhere, and you can't go to everything. So I'm going to stay in June. Whether I do the first two weeks



Michael Dorf



George Wein

of June is something I need to discuss with George. I respect George tremendously, and the last thing I want is for him to say we're causing problems for him. We need to be working pretty closely, whether we're in friendly competition or not." **DB**

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ORGANISTS CHARLES EARLAND,
JOHNNY "HAMMOND" SMITH, JIMMY MCGRUFF
AND LONNIE SMITH CELEBRATE
THE RESURGENCE OF THE MIGHTY B-3

ROCKIN' The House

By Aaron Cohen

Few jazz instruments have made a recent popular resurgence as forcibly as the Hammond B-3 organ. But everything about the B-3 commands particular fascination.

After its early years in churches and movie theaters, as well as some investigation from Fats Waller, Jimmy Smith made the organ a vehicle for bop improvisation in the 1940s. Throughout the '60s, the Hammond flourished through a club circuit that included Philadelphia, Harlem and Chicago's South Side.

After years of commercial neglect, that sound has caught fire again. Perceptive rappers and DJs have sampled the irrepressible beats from organ-jazz LPs. Blue Note recently unleashed its Rare Groove series to reissue its extensive organ catalog. And a new crop of young keyboardists have begun to find their voice on the weighty instrument.

To celebrate the B-3, the DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago presented a concert earlier this year that featured organists Earland, Johnny "Hammond" Smith, Jimmy McGriff and Lonnie Smith, as well as torchbearer/opening act Chris Foreman. The event was recorded, and the resulting disc, tentatively titled *Charles Earland's Jazz Organ Summit*, will be released this fall. After the four headliners closed the show with a four-organ/two-drummer jam that was felt as much as heard, we sat down for a spirited discussion.

That evening was Johnny "Hammond" Smith's final public appearance. Diagnosed with terminal cancer, he was determined to fly to Chicago from his home in California, play the two shows at DuSable and participate in the joint interview. Smith—who passed away 11 days after the event, on June 4, at age 63—was a master of piano ballads as well as a titanic organist. During our interview, Smith's defiant statement about how he

wants to be remembered became as poignant as his last performance was heroic.

AARON COHEN: *I'd like to start with the beginning, ask who your principal influences were.*

CHARLES EARLAND: My influence was Jimmy McGriff, [pointing] right over there. I used to watch him play every day. I sat over his shoulder and would watch him play every night, and that's how I fell in love with the organ.

JOHNNY "HAMMOND" SMITH: My influence was Wild Bill Davis. Because I'm so young.

LONNIE SMITH: My influence was in the church because all the churches had organs. And they can all tell you that. It was natural that as we went on we started hearing Wild Bill Davis.

JIMMY MCGRIFF: Mine was Milt Buckner. That was my whole thing, and Wild Bill Davis.

AC: *What's your opinion of the organ-jazz revival today, with your records being reissued and renewed interest in the organ?*

LS & JM: They're late.

CE: Yeah, I agree 100 percent. They're very late.

JHS: There's this whole generation that missed this instrument's sound, and now they're hearing it. And now it's all coming back.

CE: They're reissuing everybody in this room.

AC: *What do you think of the younger organists who you've heard?*

CE: Well, we need youngsters to come around and fill our shoes because we're not going to be here forever. That's another reason we did this organ summit. So that we may inspire some younger musicians to want to do what we do.

JM: That might work, that might work.

AC: *What are some of your more memorable experiences in carrying a B-3 around?*

LS: Weight, weight and more weight. When it was time to move the organs, everyone said, "I'll be





Jimmy McGriff (left), Lonnie Smith, Johnny "Hammond" Smith and Charles Earland backstage at a recent organ summit.

JAVET KIMBLE

right back." And you'll be standing around waiting for them and they'll be gone.

CE: When you drive through Pennsylvania, they would have you take the organ out of the trailer...

LS: And then the state troopers would make you pull out *everything*.

JM: It made us late for a job one day, and when we called the club, they just told us not to come.

AC: So did Philadelphia become an organ center because nobody who was already there wanted to leave and deal with Pennsylvania state troopers? [laughter]

JM: It's just the sound. It's like Detroit, the guitars sound; something about

Philadelphia just locked in there.

JHS: If they didn't live in Philly, they moved to Philly.

LS: I'm from New York, but I've lived in Florida for a few years. I miss New York.

JHS: During its heyday, you could go in Harlem and organs were everywhere.

CE: All the clubs had organs in the '60s and '70s. Even in Chicago, when I moved out here eight years ago, all the clubs you would go in had B-3s up on stage. But they started disappearing after a while.

LS: They used them for firewood.

AC: Why did the club circuit for organists disappear?

CE: Well, the instrument wasn't getting

the exposure that it should have gotten. We weren't getting airplay, like the other musicians were getting airplay. And even Down Beat used to criticize organs. They would say we just belonged in church. But they never realized how much technique it takes to play the instrument. We have to split our brains into three ways sometimes. We've got to think bass line, chords, how to complement another player while they're playing. And then we've got to play a solo on top of all that.

AC: Many writers have commented that organ combos were the sound of "the people" and "the community" in the '60s and '70s. What did you see as your role as musicians in the changes that were going on then?

JHS: It reflected the revolution. It got into where it became so popular, it changed the whole bass thing around. It came to be a very important part of the jazz era. In the most popular clubs in the country, Five Spot and Village Gate, they had organ players.

CE: They used to look down their noses at us, but you'd find us up in Harlem, though. But you know what? All those people hanging out at the Five Spot, before the end of the night, they'd be up to Count Basie's, they'd be some place where they had one of those organ groups kicking, man. They'd be groovin', you know, and they couldn't understand what it was. But it was that fire, that groove that was underneath that instrument.

LS: Because you can feel the vibes that you can not get from a regular instrument.

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EQUIPMENT

When the Hammond company closed in 1975, the B-3 was no longer manufactured, but devotees are still able to locate the vintage models and replacement parts. The company reopened in 1992 (it's Hammond Suzuki now) and introduced a new line of fully digital organs, including the X-B3, which Jimmy McGriff uses. Leslie Speakers are the amps of choice.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Charles Earland

JAZZ ORGAN SUMMIT—Cannonball 27103
READY 'N ABLE—Muse 5499
LEAVING THIS PLANET—Prestige 66002
UNFORGETTABLE—Muse 5455
THIRD DEGREE BURN—Milestone 9174
BLACK TALK!—Fantasy/OJC 335

Jimmy McGriff

THE DREAM TEAM—Milestone 9268
AT THE APOLLO—Collectables 5126
AT THE ORGAN—Collectables 57116
BLUES FOR MISTER JIMMY—Collectables 5147
ELECTRIC FUNK—Blue Note 84350

Dr. Lonnie Smith

AFRODESIA—Laserlight 17088
DRIVES—Blue Note 28266
LIVE AT CLUB MOZAMBIQUE—Blue Note 31880
MOVE YOUR HAND—Blue Note 31249
PURPLE HAZE: TRIBUTE TO JIMI HENDRIX—
MusicMasters 65135
THINK!—Blue Note 84290

Johnny "Hammond" Smith

BLACK COFFEE—Milestone 47072
GEARS—Milestones 9062
LEGENDS OF ACID JAZZ—Prestige 24177
TALK THAT TALK—Prestige 24151
THAT GOOD FEELIN'—Prestige 24164
THE STINGER—Prestige 2501 (out of print)

JHS: You could feel that what you were doing was different. You could tell by people's response how you were reaching them.

CE: You can see how they were out there tonight. You can't do what we do with piano players. I'm not putting them down, because I love piano players. But we can rock a house.

AC: Have you worked with DJs who use your records for sampling?

JHS: That DJ, Pete [Fallico, of KUSP in Santa Cruz, Calif.], he doesn't play anything but organ music, and he's very responsible for its revival.

LS: I did a thing with this rap group from Europe, Us3. I like to see that.

CE: They sampled some of my stuff in Europe.

JHS: They sampled some of my stuff about two or three years ago. And we had no idea at that time that I wrote this song. It had Ron Carter on it, George Benson. None whatsoever. Then Ron Carter called me and said, "Hey, man, did you hear they sampled our song?" So, I said, "What's that?" And he said, "That thing you wrote in 1973." I said, "What?"

AC: Did you get paid?

JHS: I got good money. Over \$90,000

was involved. Dr. Dre paid me for this record he did that went platinum three or four times.

CE: On this one sample that they have my music on, man, they must have took every record they could and pieced the record together for themselves. So, how you gonna get paid on something like

JHS: Well, my lawyer did.

AC: What are your current and ongoing projects, specifically recordings and tours?
JM: I just finished an album, *The Dream Team*.

LS: I did something a few months ago, I think they called it *Bongo Bop*.

CE: I'm working on several projects, and this is one of them tonight. And I'm also working in a group with Melvin Sparks and Idris Muhammad called ESP And Music, and we'll be coming out with a CD sometime next year.

JHS: I'm the maverick of the group, I guess. Because I haven't really gotten into the organ thing any longer. I'm working with synthesizers, doing work with classical and jazz music. A lot of people associate what I'm doing with Stravinsky. But I haven't paid Stravinsky that much attention in my life. But a lot of modernistic sounds are what I've utilized. I haven't

worked on being Stravinsky, I've worked on being Johnny Hammond. Letting people know who I am, and not just being "that organ player." There's another side to me, and I refuse to die and leave this world and have people say, "That's it right there." **DB**



Johnny "Hammond" Smith (left), Charles Earland, Lonnie Smith and Jimmy McGriff jam together at Chicago's DuSable Museum of African American History.

that? You've got 900 artists, 900 songwriters on a sample.

JHS: The Beastie Boys did some of my stuff. On one tune they just changed the title and played the whole intro as the song. And didn't want to give me a dime.

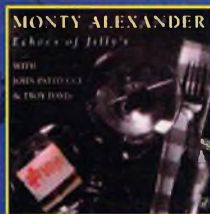
AC: Did you take legal action?

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	Good	★★★
	Fair	★★
	Poor	★



Don Braden

The Voice Of The Saxophone RCA 68797

★★★

There are a couple of telling fade-outs on this record. The leader's piece "The Dust Kicker" suddenly pots down in the middle of a cookin' tenor solo, as stupid a place as could be. (I'll make my peeve public: In general, fade-outs are inherently unjazz, at least in the acoustic, live musician sense.) But by the time "The Face I Love" (also by Braden) meets its fader, it's a relief from boredom. That contrast highlights the unevenness of *The Voice Of The Saxophone*—where it contains sparkling sequences of tough soul-jazz, tender caresses and some unusual octet arrangements featuring a saxocentric frontline; elsewhere, it's saddled with unrefined arrangements and commercially aimed pabulum.

In the positive column, a wonderful reworking of Sam Rivers' "Point Of Many Returns" (originally much sparer on Rivers' 1965 Blue Note record *Contours*) puts Braden's burly tenor on the pedestal alongside Frank Lacy, who starts with a long gliss goodbye, and Hamiet Bluiett, who contributes the requisite scronk. Braden is a sure-footed improviser, as he proves with false fingering and tricky tonguing on the Grover Washington-popularized tune "Winlight." That tune is rescued from the land of lightweight, while Wayne Shorter's "Speak No Evil" gets a slick, funky treatment. An equally redressed take of Hank Mobley's "Soul Station" allows the horns to compare voices, concluding with a convivial swapping of fours, where Braden runs into a Bluiett bari blurt like a brick wall; in Braden's cool head arrangement you can feel the full density of the five horns without it turning too murky. Throughout, the solid rhythm section is a plus, though Brooks' splashy cymbals at times grow wearying.

The thin "great saxophonists" theme of the record (a third of the compositions are by Braden) lead to John Coltrane's "After The Rain," which allows the tenorman to wend his way around a ballad; he's more convincing on a lovely version of the title track, penned by Jimmy Heath. Neither of them are earth-shaking, but they're so much better than Braden's slinky negligee "Cozy," a saccharine spotlight for Brecker's flugel. "Monk's Hat," the theme to

the *Cosby* show, features the comedian on cowbell, clinking beneath Brooks' bouncy beat. Things break down for a couple of the horn-alone honks (a device used on the Mobley tune, too), but don't strain yourself listening, it's TV theme music. —John Corbett

The Voice Of The Saxophone—*Soul Station; Speak No Evil; Winlight; After The Rain; The Dust Kicker; Monk's Hat; Cozy; The Face I Love; Point Of Many Returns; The Voice Of The Saxophone.* (64:23)

Personnel—Braden, tenor saxophone, flute (7); Vincent Herring, alto saxophone, flute (7); Hamiet Bluiett, baritone saxophone, clarinet, contra-bass clarinet; Randy Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn; Frank Lacy, trombone; Dwayne Burno, bass; Darrell Grant, piano; Cecil Brooks III, drums; Bill Cosby, cowbell (6).



Diana Krall

Love Scenes Impulse! 90074

★★★★

Simultaneously ducking bullets and receiving pats on the back, Krall walks the razor's edge—popular with the great unwashed, but bedeviled by certain critics. The put-downs are confusing. The drama that's part of the best improvisation shouldn't squash the validity of a more blithe approach. Krall gets

dissed for being a lightweight. But it takes a degree of authority to properly sell the notion of coy. Interpreters like this singer/pianist should be judged on the depth of the mood they're able to establish with their albums. On *All For You*, Krall's commercially successful nod to Nat Cole, that mood was groove, plain and simple. On *Love Scenes*, it's poise, with a few sighs and whispers rounding out the bill.

Krall's success with the Cole tribute was due to a highly scrutinized group concept (albeit one pinched from the maestro himself). The record had a personality, therefore it stood out from the innumerable vocalist titles that clutter the racks with their contextual cluelessness. That personality is in place again on *Love Scenes*. Benefiting from a prefab snugness, the piano, bass and guitar avoid all friction points. There's a deep sense of balance at work here. Chris McBride is not only a thrust-meister, but the most lyrical bassist under 30. Russell Malone's an underrated accompanist who is able to turn a sketch into a portrait. And Krall's feel for blues is natural; just a note or two from her piano and she conjures a melancholy atmosphere.

Producer Tommy LiPuma contours these subtle elements for maximum effect. On "Peel Me A Grape" the ensemble is cordial enough to stress Krall's vocals, yet emphatic enough to be memorable. Rapport rules, so the inherent minimalism projects a lot of support for the leader's sassy come-on. That compact nature is reduced further on the guitar/voice duet of "Ghost Of A Chance." Sincerity has never been on my list of common vocal flaws—certainly not in this era of hyper irony. The leader's interpretation is as convincing as it is candid. Like the calico swagger of the voice/bass workout "My Love," "Ghost" puts Krall's rounded whisper on full display. It's becoming more and more fascinating an instrument with each new venture.

It's easy to bump into the allusions of Mose Allison, Rosemary Clooney and Nat Cole that float around *Love Scenes*; Krall's still dodging

THE HOT BOX					
CDs	CRITICS	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	John Ephland
DON BRADEN <i>The Voice Of The Saxophone</i>	★★★★1/2	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
DIANA KRALL <i>Love Scenes</i>	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
BILL BRUFORD <i>If Summer Had Its Ghosts</i>	★★★	★★	★★	★★	★★ 1/2
GERI ALLEN <i>Eyes ... In The Back Of Your Head</i>	★★1/2	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★1/2

her influences. But the craft at work is so immense that it becomes silly to carp about references. If you can offer up a plush reading of "Peel Me A Grape" without resorting to schtick, then some kind of victory emerges. And if you can take the bittersweet reminiscence of "Garden In The Rain" to a new level of eloquence, you're jake in my book. By banking on nuance, Krall and company make a major statement.

—Jim Macnie

Love Scenes—*All Or Nothing At All; Peel Me A Grape; I Don't Know Enough About You; Miss You So; They Can't Take That Away From Me; Lost Mind; Ghost Of A Chance; Getting To Be A Habit; Gentle Rain; How Deep Is The Ocean; My Love; Garden In The Rain.* (55:18)

Personnel—Krall, piano; Christian McBride, bass; Russell Malone, guitar.



Bill Bruford

If Summer Had Its Ghosts Discipline 9705

★★½

There is definitely something ghostlike to this music, and not in a new-agey sense. It's almost like *If Summer Had Its Ghosts* is made up of vignettes that offer phrases and ideas, like soundtrack music to a present-day Masterpiece Theater, or, no offense guys, background material for NPR. It's hard to believe this is the same Bill Bruford who steered hard-charging rock and crossover bands from King Crimson and Yes to his own jazzy, polyrhythmic groups of the '70s and early '80s.

But then, Bruford's not alone: He joins the pantheon of rock drummers, from Ginger Baker to all the drummers playing tributes to Buddy Rich, who've recently shown that their formative years included a steady diet of jazz. In all fairness, *If Summer Had Its Ghosts* is very musical, just a tad too delicate, self-effacing. Take the opening title track, where easygoing cymbal work washes like a gentle breeze as it accompanies a kind of bossa lilt. Even the followup tune, the medium-tempo swinger "Never The Same Way Once" (the title a reference to drummer Shelly Manne) is trio music that sounds more like Richie Beirach by way of Bill Evans.

This sound, more chamber-jazz than off-kilter jazz-rock, is due in large part to sidemen bassist Eddie Gomez (playing acoustic) and, especially, guitarist/keyboardist Ralph Towner. It's nice to hear Towner and Gomez together again, but Bruford's (relatively) fiesty temperament seems less than true to form. With a title like "Sommersaults" you'd expect a little more flip and flop; instead, what we get is

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a kind of part two to the title track, featuring a nondescript swinging bossa walk through similar terrain. The bright "Thistledown" is the fifth in a row of Bruford compositions, and it's one of the album's more memorable tunes, featuring Towner on classical guitar and piano, and Bruford's melodic drum triggers (kalimba, or thumb piano). In fact, the heart of the album is right in the middle, as "The Ballad Of Vilcabamba" playfully engages with hand-clapping on 1 and Towner playing what sounds like a synthesized kalliope.

This is not a "drum-driven" album, despite the fact that of the 11 songs here, nine bear Bruford's name as composer (Gomez and Towner contribute one each). The writing, by and large, does not command attention; at least not the kind that asks you to stop what you're doing. Along with the aforementioned notables, exceptions come with Bruford's triggered, pitched Indonesian bells on "Splendour Among Shadows" (a nice touch to an otherwise faceless jam), an ode to drum great Joe Morello on the solo flight "Some Other Time" and more electronic drum triggers recalling clay pots on the cery, atmospheric "Silent Pool," with select, rich arco musings from Gomez and some tastefully placed electronics from Towner.

—John Ephland

If Summer Had Its Ghosts—*If Summer Had Its Ghosts; Never The Same Way Once; Forgiveness; Sommersaults; Thistledown; The Ballad Of Vilcabamba; Amethyst (For Carmen); Splendour Among Shadows; Some Other Time; Silent Pool; Now Is The Next Time.* (49:24)
Personnel—Bruford, drums, electronics; Ralph Towner, 12-string and classical guitars, keyboards; Eddie Gomez, acoustic bass.



Gerri Allen

Eyes ... In The Back Of Your Head

Blue Note 38297

★★½

There is a test I apply to music that offers large claims in the face of questionable content: How many tracks end with a fade? My presumption is a simple one. If the players can't figure a way to end the thing, why should we trust that they had any idea where it was going in the first place?

A Blue Note press release tells us that Geri Allen's new CD, *Eyes ... In The Back Of Your Head*, is "a unified field of sublime artistry." Maybe. She's a remarkable pianist in the post-bop Joanne Brackeen line; but with a fade index of four (tunes affected) in this case, I have doubts about this field. Consider the fade on "Vertical

Flowing," the most egregious of the lot and the first of two centerpiece duets with Ornette Coleman, who announces himself with the penetrating wail of a man who's stubbed his toe on the bathroom door. Allen, who can be heard at length with Coleman on last fall's two *Sound Museum* CDs, accompanies with Cecil Taylor-like arpeggios, dissonant bombs and other assorted bric a brac that seem to fill space without clear intent. It is a not-quite-free improvisation that seems unable to locate any musical or emotional destiny for itself.

The second duet, "The Eyes Have It," is much more cohesive. Allen provides a strong underpinning this time, and Coleman strikes some remarkably poignant, if isolated, sounds. (Nothing here or anywhere, however, justifies the rather ludicrous heights of absurdity to which Coleman worship has risen over the years, capped recently by the propaganda offensives from Lincoln Center and the New York Times; see Page 66.)

For the most part Allen engages Wallace Roney more effectively. Having elected to eschew the comforts of structure that come with a more standard repertoire, she compliments his muted trumpet on "Dark Eyes" (her tune, not the Russian-based standard) with simple fugue-like figures that suggest John Lewis, and light, slinky lines that flutter down around his sustained notes like chards of foil. On "In The Back Of Your Head," she sets a bluesy tempo in contrast to Roney's unmuted astringency and peels off some bass tremolos that echo Avery Parrish's famous "After Hours" with Erskine Hawkins. A third Allen Roney collaboration, "Windows To The Soul," is an empty abstraction of tones and space without context. The soul of Dorian Gray, perhaps.

Allen goes solo on "New Eyes Opening," an impressionistic muse full of soft space and sky anchored in recurring base punctuations. It's an image better imagined than listened to.

—John McDonough

Eyes ... In The Back Of Your Head—*Mother Wit; New Eyes Opening; Vertical Flowing; M.O.P.E.; FMFMF; Dark Eyes; Little Waltz; In The Back Of Your Head; Windows To The Soul; The Eyes Have It.* (54:48)

Personnel—Allen, piano, synthesizer; Wallace Roney, trumpet (4, 6, 8, 9); Ornette Coleman, alto saxophone (3, 10); Cyro Baptista, percussion (1, 4-7, 9).



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Manhattan Transfer

Swing

Atlantic 83012

★★★

Swing, the Manhattan Transfer's vocalese homage to the music popularized by big bands of the '30s, could have been a trib-

setting. Simon's smooth soprano lines serve as the center of gravity, surrounded by energetic percussion, vibes, Peacock's plucked bass and Julian Priestester's muted, drowsy trombone. Simon's notes indicate that only the saxophonist had a score for the piece, allowing the other participants to improvise their parts. "Suite First Take" recalls the jungle chaos of Shorter's *Moto Grosso Feio* (1970).

Simon uses wind-controlled synthesizers effectively to create ghostly atmospheres, but over-reliance on electronics mars other tracks such as "Are You Ready?," an otherwise powerful piece paced by Peacock's racing bass line. Throughout, the rhythm section of Peacock and drummer Bruce Ditmas adds cohesion as well as excitement.

—Jon Andrews

New Vista—*New Vista; Estâté; Real Dreams; So Far, So Close; Christmas Socks; Beauty And The Beast; Jungle Glide; Zingaro; The Grass Man.* (54:58)

Personnel—Liebman, soprano saxophone (1–8), tenor saxophone (6, 9); Vic Juris, electric and acoustic guitars (1–4, 6–9); Phil Markowitz, piano, synthesizer (1–6, 8); Tony Marion, electric and acoustic basses (1–4, 6–9); Jamey Haddad, drums, percussion; Café, percussion, vocals; Davia Sachs, vocals (3).

Music For The Millennium—*Cousin Bruce; The Ballad Quartet Will Now Play; Suite First Take: Down Tuning, Downhill Slalom, Rebecca's Twilight, Una Noche (Mi Centauria); Sweet Sorrow (R Plays Blue); Ghosts Of Goethals (We Are Rolling!); Wind Song; Are You Ready? (Sextet For The End Of Now); Blue In Green.* (48:18)

Personnel—Simon, soprano saxophone, synthesizer; Paul Bley, piano, synthesizer (2–8, 10); Alan Pasqua, piano (11); Gary Peacock, bass (1–6, 8, 11); Julian Priestester, trombone (3–6, 8); Bruce Ditmas, drums, synthesizer (1–6, 8, 10, 11); Jeff Beriman, vibraphone (3–6, 8, 10); Tom Beyer, percussion, synthesized percussion (3–6, 8, 10); Elizabeth Panzer, harp (3–6); Michael DiSibio, trumpet (11).



McBride/Payton/ Whitfield

Fingerpainting: The Music Of Herbie Hancock

Verve 537 856

★★★★½

The post-Art Blakey music of the CD's namesake might resemble expressionism or even action painting. Hard-edged, tumbling rhythms that brim close to Chicago gospel and funk characterize the bottom of Hancock's compositions while lithe melodic lines grace the top.

As for the rendering of Hancock's "Fingerpainting" and other Hancock standards, trumpeter Nicholas Payton, guitarist Mark Whitfield and bassist Christian McBride, by instrumentation alone, take a minimalist route. First they

abandon the legacy of Hancock drummers stretching, say, between Tony Williams and Gene Jackson. Then, in the absence of a pianist, the main responsibility of voicing a melody's shape falls on Payton, who offers his high-definition trumpet/flugelhorn lyricism. A good number of solos reveal the expertise of the 30-and-under threesome, but that leaves the remaining pair in a fill-and-comp mode. Three of the 15 tunes are duets, so each player has ample time to explore the expanse opened up by Hancock's genius.

On the title cut, Payton establishes his role polishing the silvery tonalities at his disposal. In a whispery tone, the trumpeter accentuates the dusky colors of "The Kiss," while on "Sly," Payton's Harmon mute works well to cap uncanny riffs before his studio mates cut loose. McBride engineers both the buoyant runs that spur the music and the tendency to lighten up with his swanky funk and blues. On "Speak Like A Child," McBride pulls suspended notes that suddenly lasso the next run. "Oliloqui Valley" allows McBride to walk and swing at the same time. His arco playing opens "Chan's Song" (from the film *Round Midnight*, for which Hancock won an Oscar in 1987). Via accents, Whitfield brightens his solo, and then Payton on flugelhorn sways the tune into fullness. Though softer in his attack than, say, Freddie Hubbard, Payton shines on this recording.

More than 200 musicians have recorded tributes to Hancock, and this one just might inspire browsing the Hancock archives to get the bottom, the top, the sublime cadences of roving rhythms and the bob and weave of his melodies in total.

—Zoë Anglesey

Fingerpainting: The Music Of Herbie Hancock—*Suite Herbie I: Fingerpainting; Driftin'; Chameleon; Tell Me A Bedtime Story; Eye Of The Hurricane; The Kiss; Speak Like A Child; Suite Herbie II: The Sorcerer; Dolphin Dance; Chan's Song; One Finger Snap; Sly; Oliloqui Valley; Jane's Theme.* (66:31)

Personnel—Christian McBride, bass; Nicholas Payton, trumpet, flugelhorn; Mark Whitfield, electric and acoustic guitars.

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Keith Jarrett

La Scala
ECM 21640

★★★★½

Keith Jarrett first broke through to an international audience with his improvised solo-piano concerts. If he didn't invent the format, it's become his domain, a durable, highly personal forum for a broad range of musical ideas. *La Scala* is Jarrett's first solo concert recording since *The Vienna Concert*

(1991). Like other Jarrett solo concerts, these long improvisations reflect jazz and classical influences (among many others) without falling into any single category.

"La Scala, Part I" creates a bittersweet mood, by turns, sentimental, introspective and bravely hopeful, all with a gentle, weightless surge. One mesmerizing interlude centers on a repeated, Middle Eastern-sounding mode embellished by Jarrett's right hand and voice. In a seamless, logical transition, this passage dissolves into a homespun folk melody. "La Scala, Part II" is more adventurous, developing out of knotty, abstract figures and eventually phasing into a tender, impressionistic passage. During this difficult sequence, Jarrett probes the full range of the keyboard, à la Cecil Taylor, and gasps from exertion as though plucking clusters of notes from the keys. For his encore, a lovely treatment of "Over The Rainbow," Jarrett substitutes chords to evoke a certain emotional ambivalence, unifying the whole concert.

La Scala can be heard as a sonic Rorschach test, allowing the listener to freely associate along with the artist. As Jarrett's conception unfolds and evolves, one may hear flashes of standards, Chopin, Celtic rhythms, Japanese melodies, dissonant clusters, gospel and the blues. *La Scala* argues strongly that Jarrett's more recent solo concerts are at least as compelling and involving as his earlier, better-known performances.

—Jon Andrews

La Scala—*La Scala, Part I; La Scala, Part II; Over The Rainbow.* (78:41)
Personnel—Jarrett, piano.



Ornette Coleman & Joachim Kühn

Colors Live From Leipzig
Harmolodic/Nerve 537 789

★★★★½

So rare do we get to hear Ornette Coleman just play, it's great to be reminded just how good—and original—he really is. As on *Soapsuds*, *Soapsuds* (Artist House), his spare duets with Charlie Haden, Coleman blossoms even more bountifully under direct sunlight. Though you can count on one hand the number of pianists he has recorded with, in the summer of 1996, Coleman invited the eclectic keyboardist Joachim Kühn to Verona. Later that season, Kühn reciprocated, the result being this live recording of eight delightfully engaged duets, performed in Leipzig. Coleman wrote all new tunes for the occa-

sion. Three of them, the quick-spirited melodies "Refills," "Faxing" and "Three Ways To One," are bound to enter the standard Coleman book. The range of emotions overall is remarkable, from aggressive, excited and gamboling to lyric, tender, meditative and sad.

Though he says that "in music there are no leaders," the saxophonist (there's a smidge of trumpet on "Refills") is out front more than half the time here, which is fine. His fat, sad tone flies down those flapping, asymmetrical phrase-ladders, then bursts into a cry.

Kühn employs a variety of partnering strategies beyond mere support, among them the one described brilliantly by Blood Ulmer as "orchestrating Coleman's phrases as he plays them." Kühn's notey, classically inspired runs are harmonically oblique enough that they don't get in the way, his impressionist pools warmly romantic but never cloying. Sometimes, during "Cyber Cyber," for example, he and Coleman get in each other's face. But by and large this is a decorous affair, with no overblowing, clusters or other extra-curricular effects. In fact, it's a bit like Chopin had come back to life, just to jam with Coleman.

Now there's a thought made in heaven. And with the exception of the unwelcome shock of the barnyard fiddle during "Story Writing" and a solo that doesn't really go anywhere on the bittersweet "Night Places," so was this recording.

—Paul de Barros

Colors Live From Leipzig—*Faxing; House Of Stained Glass; Refills; Story Writing; Three Ways To One; Passion Cultures; Night Plans; Cyber Cyber.* (65:38)
Personnel—Coleman, alto saxophone, trumpet, violin; Kühn, piano.

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Larry Goldings

Awareness
Warner Bros. 46621

★★★½

You want fresh Larry Goldings? You got him. *Awareness* is yet another side of this rising keyboardist who is at home in so many styles. It's his first no-organ, all-piano album; it's also his first recording with no straightahead, in-the-pocket tunes, one that warmly embraces his love for both Romantic classical music and free-jazz. The package has many sublime moments.

The piano was Goldings' first instrument, and he plays it superbly, employing a touch that ranges from delicate to muscular, eliciting tones that have a welcoming warmth to them. Even at his most rambunctious, the leader is not harsh. His fondness for Bill Evans and Keith Jarrett is obvious.

It seems clear that the presence of Paul Motian and Larry Grenadier helped chart the direction, and outcome, of the selections on which they appear. Motian's delight in free playing allows Goldings to investigate that genre further. And the drummer's insistence that the group not rehearse prior to performance (and the fact that they are not longtime associates) also adds to the high degree of spontaneity here.

Roughly half of the tunes have an open stance. The medium-slow "Passages" has an attractive, playful theme that serves as a springboard to the leader's expressive improvisation. He finds a phrase he likes, worries it a few times, then examines another thought. Grenadier adds fat notes that wander, and walk, and Motian, right at home, enhances the path the fellows are on, suggests others. The idiosyncratic duo version of "You Do Something" is surprising (I expected the usual swinging rendition), as is the subsequent "Embraceable," given a very free-roaming exposition. "Into Paluma" (Goldings' anagram for "Paul Motian") is interesting: The pianist plays his theme and then the drummer solos; this process is repeated a few times, though the melody comes out a bit different each time.

The quiet "Intermezzo" and the subsequent "Liberia Me," based on an excerpt from Faure, are the classically influenced works, selections that relay a profound tenderness; there's sadness in beauty, and vice versa. The final title track also evokes this position, as Goldings plays simply, and movingly. "Redwood" is a stark, modern solo work that successfully evokes the feeling of standing in a grove of

those magnificent trees.

Finally, there's the compelling "Many Rivers," another example of Goldings' ability to take a pop item and give it instrumental elegance; and the slightly animated "Sticky," which emits a Jarrett-like mood. Goldings could've cooked on at least one tune; he does it so well. Also, the free playing, though it is delivered with authority and artistry, is a bit much. Those minor gripes aside, this is fine music-making.

—Zan Stewart

Awareness—*Many Rivers To Cross; Into Paluma; Sticky Mack; Strays (For Billy Strayhorn); Passages; Intermezzo; Liberia Me; You Do Something To Me; Embraceable You; Redwood Portrait; The Owl Of Cranston; Awareness.* (61:02)

Personnel—Goldings, piano; Larry Grenadier, bass (1-5, 6-9, 11, 12); Paul Motian, drums (1-5, 7, 9, 11)



Keystone Trio

**Newklear Music—The Songs
Of Sonny Rollins**
Milestone 9270

★★★½

Doug Hall Trio

Three Wishes
IGMOD 49701

★★½

Among Sonny Rollins' most notable compositions are "Oleo," "Doxy," "St. Thomas" and "Sonnymoon For Two," each of which the Keystone Trio chose to bypass. Whatever the case for ignoring these popular evergreens, the group covered some choices that more than approximate Rollins' classics. And two selections—"Tell Me You Love Me" and "Here's To The People"—are demonstrative of the composer's genius and the trio's ingenuity.

Throughout the session, Hicks resorts to his well-known assertive style, stating his case with waves of swift, powerful lines. His declarative forte takes a Latin turn on "Tell Me You Love Me," bassist George Mraz and drummer Idris Muhammad hip to his mercurial flights, knowing precisely when to stroke his fury, to quiet his storm. The arrangements keep things interesting as they extend Rollins' thematic improvisation. A thickly layered ballad, "Wynton," is deftly contrasted with a jazzy, passionate "Airegin" that segues beautifully into "Silk 'N' Satin." Hicks moves from quicksilver to molten lava, ever mindful of Mraz's instruc-

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tive harmonic cues and Muhammad's clever modulations. All of it is quite seductive.

The real allure, though, may be the trio's unified way of understating the vigor of Rollins' tune. Rather than a strictly literal interpretation of his music, they hint at its force, offering in several instances—e.g., "Airegin"—a surprisingly laid-back approach, keeping the fire to a simmer. Subtlety is the watchword for this trio.

While the Doug Hall Trio is also a cohesive unit with a tight, collaborative feel, they seem content to stay in a rather limited groove. A soft, pleasant mood pervades most of *Three Wishes*, and there is no meaningful indication of what might be accomplished at a faster pace or at a different collective pitch.

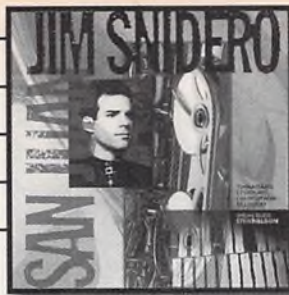
Likewise, there is a sameness to Hall's compositions, featuring primarily a languid, lambent quality. Only on Billy Strayhorn's "The Star-Crossed Lovers" does the group evince a brilliance that suggests the players are capable of stretching beyond self-imposed boundaries. If one more wish could be granted, it would be: Let it hang out, gang, you have the potential.
—Herb Boyd

Newklear Music—The Songs Of Sonny Rollins—
O.T.Y.O.G.; Times Slimes; Wynton; Here's To The People; Airegin; Tell Me You Love Me; Silk 'N' Satin; Kids Know; Love Note For Sonny. (58:30)

Personnel—John Hicks, piano; George Mraz, bass; Idris Muhammad, drums.

Three Wishes—Suite Seven; The Listener; Downside Up; Odyssey; The Sprawl; Remember; The Star-Crossed Lovers; Lonely Reward; Off Senter; Three Wishes. (47:16)

Personnel—Hall, piano; Marc Johnson, bass; Bruce Hall, drums.



Jim Snidero

San Juan
Red 123265

★★★★

Walt Weiskopf

Song For My Mother
Criss Cross 1127

★★★★

Snidero and Weiskopf are members of that mid-30s demographic of journeymen N.Y.C.-based jazz players who, despite a good deal of activity and renown, remain under-recognized. Currently on indie labels, these are the type of stalwart musicians the majors should document and support.

San Juan, recorded around three years ago, bursts with vitality. Snidero's writing—he penned all but one tune here—is a deft mix of edge and compelling melody. He likes minor moods—"Web," for one—and he likes blues: The sizzling "Forward Motion" and the medium 6/8 cooker "Daze" are blues variants.

The zealous Snidero exhibits his juicy tone as he works in a modern bent, though he also values jazz's bebop past. On "Daze" and "Web," for example, he places the occasional hard dissonance next to a ripe, crying tone, or a round bop line that neatly resolves. For emotion, Kenny Dorham's gorgeous "La Mesha" is where to turn.

Solid cohorts are on hand. Hagans scores with his personal style built around selected dissonance, unexpected phrases, a biting sound and technical command. Hays is a superb supporter and telling improviser; Nelson fits in well, too. Irwin plays both big-noted lines, he solos with distinction; Hart's stickwork and fluid cymbal sound are ideal for this diverse straightahead program.

The altoist is spotlighted on *Song For My Mother*, which is Weiskopf's third Criss Cross effort. On this winter 1995 session, Weiskopf fully, and intriguingly, employs his available timbres, craftily interweaving brass and reed lines. Three alto flutes state the dancing theme of "High Noon," underpinned by bass clarinet and brass. The bracing "Barebones," a wild blues variant, has a gritty intro built off a baritone sax/brass ostinato; the theme from "End Of The Year" has delicate contrapuntal lines in its melody statement played by upper-register tenor, alto and flute.

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The leader's tenor is featured on each tune, and he improvises with his customary vigor and enterprise. Like Snidero, he cherishes bebop but looks for other means of communication, mixing lines that have a pleasing mellifluousness with those that are more agitated. On "Barebones," he places intense flurries against long, beseeching notes; on "Where Is Love," he exploits his appealing sound as he delivers sweet yet complex statements.

The crew is first-rate. Magnarelli is a '90s Kenny Dorham: Using a big sound, he finds the hippest notes, no matter the context. Bostrom is a European flutist who can swing handily, Herwig gets a deliciously creamy bone tone, Joel Weiskopf is a splendid, inventive pianist and Robinson is a remarkable baritonist and bass

clarinetist. Washington and Drummond, a regular pair at Criss Cross, are so supportive; they exhilaratingly drive this music. —Zan Stewart

San Juan—*Introspect; San Juan; Mystery; The Web; Forward Motion; La Mesha; In A Daze; To Whom It May Concern.* (56:44)

Personnel—Snidero, alto saxophone; Tim Hagans, trumpet; Steve Nelson, vibes (1-4); Kevin Hays, piano; Dennis Irwin, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

Song For My Mother—*Outsider; Three Armed Man; Barebones; End Of The Year So Soon; Song For My Mother; High Noon; You Won't Forget Me; Where Is Love; Turncoat.* (53:16)

Personnel—Weiskopf, tenor saxophone, flute; Anders Bostrom, flute; Jim Snidero, alto saxophone, flute; Scott Robinson, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet, flute; Joe Magnarelli, trumpet; Conrad Herwig, trombone; Joel Weiskopf, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Billy Drummond, drums.



Steve Swallow

Deconstructed

XtraWatt/9 23209

★★★★

Let me voice a disappointment from the jump: Where were those precise, well-measured Swallow solos we have come to appreciate? Save for the minute-long opening cadenza on "Running In The Family," he seems content to let his compositions—they are all his—and his cohorts speak for him. And each of them speaks energetically and elegantly, whether laid-back and tenderly as on "I Think My Wife Is A Hat" or in a snappy bebop mode on "Babble On" and "Bird World War."

On the two latter tunes, the group expresses a strong, communal feeling with each member of the rhythm section taking turns pushing Kisor and Potter to ever swifter bop-like passages. If Swallow's intent is to pay homage to the legendary Bird, the efforts are gallant, providing guitarist Goodrick enough blues room on "Bird World War" to lay on some heavy metal licks.

Potter's tenor performance on "Lost In Boston" lacks neither drive nor interpretation as he brilliantly maneuvers in and out of the tune's herky-jerky tempo with its fractured melody you might hear if Monk were to improvise on Gershwin's "S Wonderful." Kisor, too, had a cool bead on the tune's jagged rhythm, offering a passionate skein of patterns that danced against Nussbaum's tangy beat.

In a more subdued manner, Kisor and Potter were expressively linked on "Bug In A Rug," which has a lively samba lilt that bears a pretty resemblance to something from Jobim's repertoire. As on all the tunes, Goodrick's moments here are interesting. He moves easily and deftly from chordal chops to neat, almost pianistic runs, never forgetting his obligation to give the front men a pulsating platform to launch their solos. And Potter attacks the gift with verve, endlessly stretching "Name That Tune" until there are lovely vistas and vestiges of Trane.

You will not find a clinker on this luscious date of Swallow tunes, and only more of the composer's marvelous bass could have improved matters. By the way, musicians will love the liner notes, which are literally just *that* with miniature pages of sheet music of each tune. —Herb Boyd

Deconstructed—*Running In The Family; Babble On; Another Fine Mess; I Think My Wife Is A Hat; Bird World War; Bug In A Rug; Lost In Boston; Name That Tune; Viscous Consistency; Deconstructed.* (53:55)

Personnel—Steve Swallow, bass; Chris Potter, tenor saxophone; Ryan Kisor, trumpet; Mick Goodrick, guitar; Adam Nussbaum, drums.

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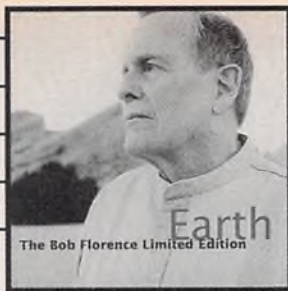
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Bob Florence Limited Edition

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★★★½

Florence is a highly respected, veteran Los Angeles-based composer/arranger/pianist who has been leading his Limited Edition big band for about 20 years. Allowing for personnel changes (some players have been around since the outset), this is his 10th recording. The solid album delivers some intense, riff-driven originals, a unique though flawed look at a Monk standard, a more traditional version of "Black And Tan Fantasy" and the classic Mandel-Mercer line, "Emily." While it's maybe not big-band stuff for the ages, it's darn good.

The leader writes as if he came from the West Coast—he does: He was born in L.A., he currently resides nearby. Florence has his own sound, and he scores for *this* band. His music has a sunny cast: The ensemble voicings, while having weight, offer a pastel glow, lightness as opposed to, well, darkness. Sometimes, one section seems to float above another, as when the brass hovers over the reeds at the start of "Creepy" (though things get hot pretty fast). At other moments, there is undeniable ensemble mass, as on the bounding opener, "Willis." These tunes and the rest are played with decided panache by some of the Southern California's top jazzmen.

There's a lot to like here. "New York Injection," in a fast 3/4, starts with criss-crossing lines from trombones, saxes and bass; early-morning traffic in Manhattan. The melody is composed of small phrases stitched together into an intriguing whole. The piece gathers substantial momentum, and volume; you notice that Florence has written a deft variation on the chords of "What Is This Thing Called Love?" though his piece is outfitted with an extra four bars. Tenorman Terry Harrington, who is fluid in a Stan Getz manner, is a compelling soloist, as is trumpeter Carl Saunders, who works out on four tunes. Saunders plays characteristically, offering long, winding phrases interspersed with brief, pointed ones; he moves between a buttery sound on softer ideas and a diamond-hard one on his high notes.

Another winner is "Willis," written in dedication to the dean of West Coast writers (and of the globe, for my money), Willis "Bill" Holman, an early Florence influence—and some say continued, though that's a hard case to press. Here the leader takes several short, rhythmically powerful phrases (the central one is a descending minor third, repeated two or three times) and creates motion, energy and drama. Trumpeter Steve

Huffsteter, a grand bebop-based soloist, delivers lines, some quite simple, others more complex, that constantly change direction. Tenorist Dick Mitchell is more of a terror, delivering whirlwinds of notes between the occasional breath.

Other pieces that work just fine include "Monday Nights," which closes with a roaring ensemble passage topped by Saunders' screaming high tones; the dulcet "Emily," where the leader showcases his lithe piano chops; and the title track, a stomping slow blues. Among the other stalwart soloists are bassist Trey Henry (two strong showings), soprano saxophonist Don Shelton and warm-toned trombonist Bob McChesney.

"Straight, No Chaser" is not so successful. Florence wrote an arrangement of the Monk theme in the late '50s, and the composer was quite taken by it, as reported in Leonard Feather's Blindfold Test in this magazine. The new version essentially ignores the Monk melody entirely—it's alluded to here and there, and played rhythmically by Field on cymbals, though if you didn't read this bit of information in the liner notes, you might miss the passage entirely. Here the arranger tries to hard to be adventurous, and ends up being tiresome. But this one apple—and not a rotten one, to be sure, simply one not that tasty—hardly ruins the barrel.

—Zan Stewart

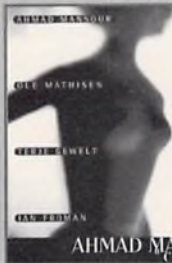
Earth—Willis; Monday Nights; Emily; Black And Tan Fantasy; New York Injection; The Creepy Crawlies; Straight, No Chaser; Earth. (69:12)

Personnel—Florence, piano, arranger; Don Shelton, Kim Richmond, Dick Mitchell, Terry Harrington, Bob Efford, Bob Carr, saxophones; George Graham, Wayne Bergeron, Warren Luening, Carl Saunders, Steve Huffsteter, trumpet, flugelhorn; Charlie Loper, Alex Iles, Bob McChesney, Don Waldrop, trombone; Trey Henry, bass; Gregg Field, drums.

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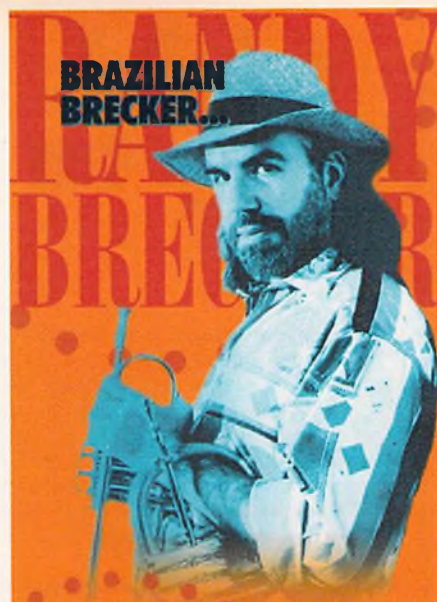
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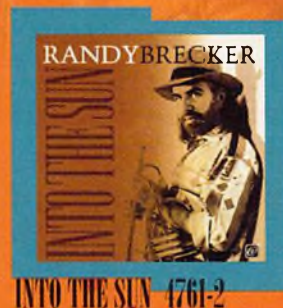
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JAZZ

How Low Can You Go?

by John Corbett

Since Jimmy Blanton revolutionized the place of the bass in jazz, the instrument has taken on countless new functions. It's not out of line for the low stringer to lead a band, feature him- or herself up front, write music that spotlights or is structured around the peculiarities of the bass viol, or slip back into the supportive spot that's always open for those bottom-register dwellers.

Michael Moore & Rufus Reid: "Double-bass" Delights (Double-Time 117; 65:13: ★★★½) Double-double, toil and trouble, here's a project with *nothing but* bass—Moore and Reid share all duties, including comping, walking, swinging, soloing and stating the tunes. Both have agreeable basic tone and chops galore (no annoying intonation problems in earshot), and their strong playing is well portrayed in a clear, warm recording. Material ranges from standards like "Tea For Two," "They Can't Take That Away From Me" and "Sophisticated Lady" to the harmonically intriguing Joe Henderson piece "Recordame" and Sonny Rollins' "Sonnymoon For Two." Sam Jones' stepwise "Seven Minds" has a shared line and tandem groove handled most wickedly by the twin instrumentalists. On Miles Davis' "All Blues," they play revolving-door, Moore laying out the arco melody, then soloing with bow while Reid supports, then vice-versa; "Stompin' At The Savoy" finds them sharing the melody, each hocketing off a little bit of it like brass and saxes in a big band.

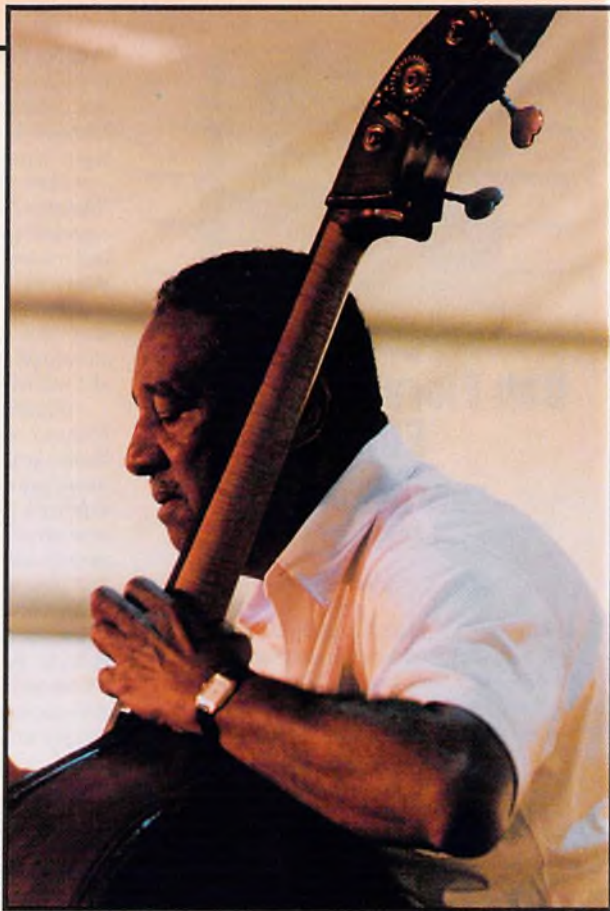
Ray Brown with John Clayton & Christian McBride: SuperBass (Telarc 83393; 53:37: ★★★) One listen to the three-bass take of "Blue Monk" here and one could imagine a musical world with no other instruments. A good bassist can be percussive, rhythmic and melodic, can sing tunefully like a choir or horn section, can slip around like a kid on a waterslide, can belch dissonantly or keep dynamite time? Maestro Brown is flanked by Basie-ite Clayton and ubiquitous youngster McBride live at Sculler's in Boston. "Bye, Bye Blackbird" removes Clayton from the equation, while a slowed-down, bowed-down "Lullaby Of Birdland" does the same with McBride. Brown is vibrantly there all disc long, swinging through "Who Cares?" and "Sculler Blues" with the broiling help of drummer Gregory Hutchinson and pianist Benny Green; Hutchinson joins the bass triumvirate to play McBride's "Brown Funk"—something like an acoustic Parliament vamp.

Intermission: Song Of Low Songs (BVHAAST 9612; 58:08: ★★★) A

multi-bass band with a totally different concept. Intermission situates the bass saxophone of Klaas Heckman in a quartet with bassists William Parker, Wilbert de Joode and Hideji Taninaka. A bizarre instrumentarium like this must be handled carefully, lest it turn to mud; on "Open Heckwerk" the Dutch saxist floats lines and fat chords over a bubbling kettle of energy bass; "Kurk" is a lowest-down skeletal blues; Parker's "Bibbs" is staccato, jagged, tumultuous; "Laaglied" features superb Mr. de Joode against a slowly unfolding background stitched by the others. These fellas are each schooled in making ensembles work, whatever the lineup, so they come up with a fascinating mix, even when all playing fast pizz in open time. Sounds best at very high volume—feel the deep boneshake!

Mario Pavone: Dancers Tales (Knitting Factory Works 205; 58:55: ★★★) Bassist/bandleader Pavone dedicates the last track ("Foxwood Shuffle") on this fine record to the most famous bassist/bandleader of all, Charles Mingus. A telling homage: the whole outing has a slight flavor of Mingus, from the sextet's lineup (Marty Ehrlich and Thomas Chapin on multiple reeds, Peter McEachern on trombone, Peter Madsen on piano, Steve Johns on drums) to the sectional compositions, post-bop solos, jolting time shifts, and Pavone's earthy organicism and root pulse. Ehrlich sounds radiant, Chapin somewhat more snide, and arrangements like "Double Diamond" are thick and intricate. There's bass at the core of each tune; beneath "Lunch With Julius," "Bootleg" and "Alberta Clipper," Pavone kicks out into a confident walk, no fuss.

John Lindberg: Resurrection Of A Dormant Soul (Black Saint 120172; 52:21: ★★★½) String Trio of New York bassist Lindberg has been fronting this big-name group for a few years (and two previous records), with German innovator of multiphonics trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff, expat American drummer Ed Thigpen and pianist Eric Watson. Lindberg and Thigpen commune on a neat rhythm on "Quartet Pluckin'," the bassist matching Mr. Taste's rimshots with the backside of his bow. This relationship is the most interesting one here: Elder percussionist and one-time prodigy bassist often hook up in loose, propulsive swing. Mangelsdorff demonstrates his chordal wares on "Birds Of A Feather," a duct with the bassist, and Watson gets bluesy on "X.1." Lindberg's compositions have a multidimensionality—combination of traditional elements and openness—that



Ray Brown: vibrantly alive and swinging

marks him as a product of the restructuring era. And while I don't find his bass sound the most appealing in this music (boxy, sometimes thin and lacking bottom), it's the overall impression that counts here.

George Mraz: My Foolish Heart (Milestone 9262; 64:24: ★★★½); George Mraz: Bottom Lines (Milestone 9272; 68:45: ★★★) In the standard-issue piano trio, the piano leads—it plays themes, spells the changes, coordinates the subservient rhythm section. On *My Foolish Heart*, Richie Beirach does his share, but it's the ex-Czech who takes the reins. He's known as a premier mainstream melodist, and he's swift and sure enough to pull off a very convincing lead on Monk's "Ask Me Now," with only Billy Hart's potent, sympathetic drum support. Ballads like Miles' "Blue In Green" and Beirach's "Sunday's Song" allow Mraz to show how he can say a lot in just a single tone, not clog up the arteries with lots of unnecessary motion. That wasn't the forte of Jaco Pastorius, whose "Three Views Of A Secret" kicks off *Bottom Lines* (replete with some unattributed, tasteless synth-string washes, which also crop up on an awful foray into Marcus Miller's "Mr. Pastorius"), a less distinctive quartet session with Al Foster on drums, Cyrus Chestnut on piano and Rich Perry on Getzish tenor. The mood and arrangements are softer focus, aiming at a fuzzier sound; sentimental dreck like Buster Williams' "Christina" doesn't help clarify things, though Mraz's waltz "Lisa Marie" and Mingus' "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat" are rays of light through the clouds. **DB**

REISSUES

'Twas Newk's Time

by Zan Stewart

Tenor giant **Sonny Rollins'** career can be roughly divided into the formative period of the late '40s and early '50s, the rapid maturation of the mid-'50s, the amazingly fecund late '50s, the probing '60s, the occasionally contemporary leaning '70s and '80s, and the tradition-embracing '90s.

Of these various stages, the '60s were arguably the hornman's most musically tumultuous—he tried things, he took risks. Early in the decade, Rollins had just ended a two-year sabbatical—a break for study and reflection that many critics, fans and fellow players felt was unnecessary, given the magnificence of his late-'50s playing. During this period, he also signed an extremely lucrative contract with RCA Victor (reputed to be in the high five figures, big money for a jazzman at that time).

The Complete Sonny Rollins RCA Victor Recordings (RCA Victor 68675; 58:49/54:10/61:51/58:06/57:25/56:45:★★★★) In the three years (1962–64) that he recorded for Victor, Rollins alternately teamed with guitarist Jim Hall, trumpeter Don Cherry, saxophonist Coleman Hawkins (his idol), pianist Herbie Hancock and many others. The music these fellows made is a remarkable assortment of potent bop classics, standards, free-leaning items, numbers with Latin or Calypso rhythms and more. Released rag-tag through the years, both here and in Europe, these tracks are finally all available in a very satisfying, six-CD box set that contains the six original LP albums plus alternate takes (one of which has never been released in the U.S.). Even for devoted fans of the master's other eras, this collection provides high musical value.

The set begins appropriately with Rollins' RCA debut, *The Bridge*, named after lower Manhattan's Williamsburg Bridge, where the tenorman practiced during his hiatus to avoid disturbing his neighbors. The album's earmark is the luxurious combination of Sonny's broad tone and fluid line development and Hall's ringing and mist-like sound and his rhythmic pop. "John S." has a Tin Pan Alley structure, while the title track utilizes "Rhythm" changes; on both, the tenorist offers intense, multi-noted improvisations. "Where Are You," in contrast, is almost pure melody, rendered gently and with deep care. This first disc also includes a bracing "If Ever I Would Leave You," done as a sprightly bossa nova.

More Latin-grooved fare kicks off Disc Two, with "Jungoso" and "Bluesongo" with bassist Bob Cranshaw and hand-drummer Candido. These tracks from *What's New* find Rollins working with a harsh, almost braying sound and offering crisply articulated strings of brief statements. Then there's the furor of "52nd Street Theme," another trio set with drummer Roy McCurdy and Cranshaw. Here Rollins, at a roaring boil, is both breathtaking and searching, looking for new ways to play old forms. Mostly, these outings lead to bright, open road; sometimes they lead to cul de sacs.

The probing aspect takes a more prominent role on the 25-minute "Oleo" from *Our Man In Jazz*, highlighted on Disc Three. Performing piano-less with trumpeter Cherry and drummer Billy Higgins, Rollins takes his "Rhythm" changes anthem and delivers it cubist style, turning it this way and that, segueing into a slow blues in mid-tune. Cherry, while rhythmically acute, is a bit pithy and seems to run out of ideas. "Dearly Beloved" and "Doxy"—the trumpeter's expressionistic stance working well—are given similarly fresh expositions. In addition, the band plays "I Could Write A Book" and two others; these tracks were originally released on *3 In Jazz* (incorrectly referred to as *3 For Jazz* in the liners), an album that also included selections from bands led by Clark Terry and Gary Burton.

Disc Four contains the pairing of Rollins with Coleman Hawkins on the extraordinary *Sonny Meets Hawk!* session, made in 1963. Perhaps inspired and honored by Rollins' invitation, the seminal tenorist turns



DOON SCHLITZER

Sonny Rollins: so many moments of breathtaking music

in a remarkably modern performance, full of grit and polish on "Summertime," "Yesterdays," "Just Friends" and three others. Rollins, in turn, is often extremely abstract; but it seems to turn Hawk on. Hawkins' "Yesterdays" solo ends with a trill; Rollins then builds his solo around it, and when Hawkins comes back in, he quotes Rollins. Paul Bley's elusive pianisms are entirely fitting here.

The disc concludes with four tracks from *Now's The Time*; another four from that album lead off Disc Five. This session (recorded on several dates in 1964) is built around jazz classics, and the leader never lets us down, whether a rendition is majestic and warm ("I Remember Clifford," from April 14) or more expansive (as on the same tune from Jan. 20, with Thad Jones on cornet). "Four" is given a good, moderately rough ride, and "St. Thomas" bears a splendid Rollins solo; he uses short, punchy ideas to great effect. Pianist Hancock, Cranshaw and McCurdy are aces. Six selections that were released as "alternates," among them a rough-and-tumble, extended look at "Now's The Time," bring the disc to a close.

The final disc contains *The Standard Sonny Rollins*, a superb mix of pop classics like "Night And Day" and "My Ship," plus three alternates. Rollins, delivering quite tuneful lines, is always accompanied by at least bassist Cranshaw and a drummer, mostly Mickey Roker. Hall is back for "Love Letters" and two others, Hancock on board for a pair. "Night" is Rollins at his zenith: He works seemingly without encumbrance; you sense he's playing exactly what he wants to. Pure music.

The Complete Sonny Rollins RCA Victor Recordings, despite the rating, is not perfect: Some of the explorations wear a bit thin. And the sound, while usually transparent and clear, sometimes presents Rollins far back in the soundstage, as if he's off in a corner. But there are so many moments of breathtaking music that the highest rating must apply. Informative, perceptive liner notes by reissue producer Orrin Keepnews and saxophonist Loren Schoenberg are a bonus. **DB**

Initial Down Beat ratings:

- *The Bridge*: ★★★★★ (7/5/62 issue)
- *Our Man In Jazz*: ★★★ (3/28/63)
- *Sonny Meets Hawk!*: ★★★★★ (12/5/63)
- *3 In Jazz*: ★★★ (4/9/64)
- *Now's The Time*: ★★★★★ (11/19/64)
- *The Standard Sonny Rollins*: ★★ (9/9/65)

BEYOND

Live Dead

by Robert Eric Hollander

More than any band before or since, the Grateful Dead epitomized the attitude of live music, recorded freely. In the wake of the band's demise in '95, tape archivist Dick Latvala has kept the ball rolling by releasing gems from the band's infamous vault. Referred to as the "Dick's Picks" series, the eight volumes released thus far all reflect careful (and in some cases, very tasteful) packaging as well as high audio quality standards. Forget the years the band jammed with Ornette Coleman, David Murray and Branford Marsalis: What follows are "picks" from 1970, a hot year, along with a recent collection from the archives by former Dead bassist Phil Lesh.

Volume Eight: Harpur College, Binghamton, N.Y. (GDCD 4028; 57:47/59:14/60:12: ★★★★★)

The much-requested Harpur College concert (recorded on May 2, 1970) was truly a high watermark in the group's history, a singular moment when the band's jazzy electric psychedelia mixed amicably with their acoustic, folk-flavored material and Ron "Pigpen" McKernan's r&b musings. And all within the span of four hours. Disc One focuses on the acoustic music with highlights being a rare, quiet version of "I Know You Rider," a peppy "Friend Of The Devil" (true to the original and unlike the ponderous dirge that was to emerge in subsequent years), a verse and chorus of "Candyman" segueing suddenly into "Cumberland Blues," and a spirited rendition of a country gospel tune, "Cold Jordan." True, singing was never the Dead's strong suit, but their affection for roots music is apparent and contagious here.

Disc Two (recorded in mono) goes electric, featuring about half a version of "St. Stephen" segueing into what is inarguably the band's definitive "The Other One" (with an outstanding drum jam between Mickey Hart and Billy Kreutzmann). And this "Cryptical Envelopment/The Other One/Cosmic Charlie" is the Dead at their best—young and on fire. After Lesh's thundering bass riff opens the door, guitarist Jerry Garcia and company are contentious friends already immersed in a scintillating conversation, improvising seemingly at will. Disc Three's highlight is a wonderfully expansive, manic "Viola Lee Blues" resolving into the gentle a cappella "We Bid You Goodnight."

Volume Four: Fillmore East (GDCD 4023; 67:00/60:36/62:35: ★★★★★) On the bill with the Allman Brothers Band

the weekend of Feb. 13 and 14, 1970 (imagine that for your \$5 ticket!), and fueled by perhaps more than a little friendly competition, the Dead turn in numerous standout performances here, including a superb 90-minute "Dark Star/The Other One/Turn On Your Lovelight," a delightfully loony "Alligator," the finest existing recording of the much-sought-after "Mason's Children," a one-time-only medley of "China Cat Sunflower/I Know You Rider/High Time/Dire Wolf," and a fevered "Caution" jam dissolving into eight-and-a-half minutes of feedback. The playing is inspired throughout, generally more introspective and less ferocious than the Harpur concert, but the audio quality is exponentially better. For example, rhythm guitarist Bob Weir's refined approach can be heard to great effect.



The Grateful Dead & co., 1967: young and on fire

Fallout From The Phil Zone (GDCD 4052; 61:31/62:25: ★★½) Disc One of Lesh's collection includes a rousing "Dancin' In The Streets" ('70) with the Dead making for very poor Martha & The Vandellas on vocals but very good Cream on the jam, a meandering "Viola Lee Blues" ('69) that occasionally loses its compass, a humid "Easy Wind" ('70) featuring Pigpen's raunchy blues shouting and the band's tireless jamming, and concluding with a blistering "Hard To Handle" ('71), performed at the Hollywood Bowl in front of an audience that, if this PA tape is any indication, was more than ready to boogie.

Disc Two offers a solid "The Music Never Stopped" ('89), an entertaining half-hour relic "In The Midnight Hour" with Pigpen pleading with the small audience to get up and dance (Lesh recounts that perhaps all of 25 people were in attendance in a rural pub back in 1967); Garcia's take on Bob Dylan's moody, ambitious "Visions Of Joanna" ('95) that could have used a little more rehearsal; and finishing with Lesh's signature tune, the beautiful "Box Of Rain" ('89), presented in one of its better concert performances.

DB



CHRIS POTTER

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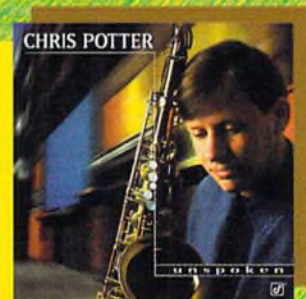
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BLINDFOLD TEST

OCTOBER 1997

Carl Allen

by Larry Birnbaum

The "Blindfold Test" is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information about the recordings is given to the artist prior to the test.

At 35, Carl Allen has established himself as one of the most active and in-demand drummers on the New York scene. The Milwaukee native moved to New Jersey to study at William Paterson College in 1981; the following year he began an eight-year stint with Freddie Hubbard's band. He's also worked with such old masters as Jackie McLean, George Coleman, Billy Taylor and Benny Golson and such young lions as Christian McBride, Benny Green, Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison. In addition, since 1992 he's produced some 50 albums, many with saxophonist Vincent Herring, his partner in the Big Apple production company.

Besides recording prolifically as a sideman, Allen has cut two albums under his own name, *Testimonial* and *The Pursuer* (both for Atlantic Jazz), and several more with his band Manhattan Projects for the Japanese Alfa label, three of which, *We Remember Cannonball*, *Echoes Of Our Heroes* and *The Dark Side Of Dewey*, have been released in the United States (on Evidence).

This was his first Blindfold Test.

Bobby Watson & Curtis Lundy

"Minority" (from Bealtudes, Evidence, rec. 1983/1997) Watson, alto saxophone, Lundy, bass; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Kenny Washington, drums.

Kenny Washington. Kenny's a walking encyclopedia. You can pull out any record, and he'll tell you when it was made, what the cats wore on the date, everything. I've always really respected Kenny because of his level of thoroughness. Kenny always had a very clean ride cymbal. Is that Bobby Watson? Curtis Lundy? The piano is maybe Kirk Lightsey or Mulgrew Miller. I would give this 4 stars. This is an old record, early or middle '80s. Kenny's sound has changed since then. He's using different cymbals, too. And Bobby's sound was brighter then. Curtis taught me a lot. When I first joined Freddie Hubbard, Curtis is the one who used to pull me aside and talk to me about road stuff, like how to deal with skycaps and bellhops. It sounds simple, but those things are real important, especially for drummers, when you have all that equipment to deal with.

Steve Swallow

"Bite Your Grandmother" (from The Real Book, XtraWatt/ECM, 1994) Swallow, electric bass; Tom Harrell, trumpet; Joe Lovano, tenor saxophone; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

Is that Jack DeJohnette? He's not playing his drums. I can tell those are his cymbals, but those are not his drums. They're probably studio drums. Jack's drums have more resonance. Tom Harrell? Tom is rough, boy. Joe Lovano. Is it Anthony Cox on bass? The bass player's choice of notes reminds me of David Williams, but I don't recall David and Jack playing together along with Tom. Is it Dave Holland? It sounds like Cameron Brown, but I don't think it's Cameron. I'm stumped on the bass player.

LB: *It's a bass guitar.*

Oh, Steve Swallow. I'm not that hip to Swallow, but I've heard some stuff of his. See, Cameron and David Williams get a sound that's on the edge, that almost sounds electric. But Steve Swallow and Bob Cranshaw are two of the only cats that can get



a sound on the electric that sounds like an acoustic. I would give this 4 stars. With Jack on there, you're not going to give it much less than that.

Kenny Garrett

"Sounds Of The Flying Pygmies" (from Songbook, Warner Bros., 1997) Garrett, alto saxophone; Kenny Kirkland, piano; Nat Reeves, bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums.

Kenny Garrett with Jeff Watts, Nat Reeves and Kenny Kirkland. You know, when Jeff left *The Tonight Show*, he very methodically thought out how he wanted to do things, in terms of taking time off from the scene and just shedding. He wouldn't even take gigs. He just wanted to shed. A lot of cats, when they do a show like that for a couple of years, they lose so much in terms of reaction and so many other subtle things. Jeff didn't lose it, or if he lost it, he got it back. He's a bad cat. 5 stars. This is a bad record. I mean, it sounds like a *band*. I know they had been playing this music for a while before they went into the studio.

Roy Haynes

"Limehouse Blues" (from True Or False, Evidence, rec. 1986/1997) Haynes, drums; Ralph Moore, tenor saxophone; David Kikoski, piano; Ed Howard, bass.

That's Roy Haynes with the band—Ralph Moore, Dave Kikoski and Ed Howard. Roy Haynes is so slick. I've had the honor of meeting and spending time around Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones and Max Roach—all of those great cats, including Roy. And Roy is the one guy that I've always been intimidated by. Now that's no disrespect to the other guys, but what's so intimidating and so amazing about Roy is that if you put on some records he did with Bird or Monk or Mary Lou Williams or Lester Young, it's still the same concept, but it always sounds fresh. It's amazing to me how you could play the same thing, have the same approach for 50 years, and it still sounds fresh. I mean, none of his stuff sounds dated.

And the other thing that's so hip about Roy is that he defies the things that you're told you shouldn't do. When you're coming up as a drummer, you're always told, "If you're going to hit the crash cymbal, hit the bass drum and put some bottom underneath." And Roy will hit the crash cymbal without the bass drum, and you don't hear anything missing. It just sounds hip. But there's a characteristic about his playing that only a few people have. If other people tried to do that, it would sound corny. I've tried many times to play the crash cymbal without the bass drum, and it just sounds funny. 5 stars.