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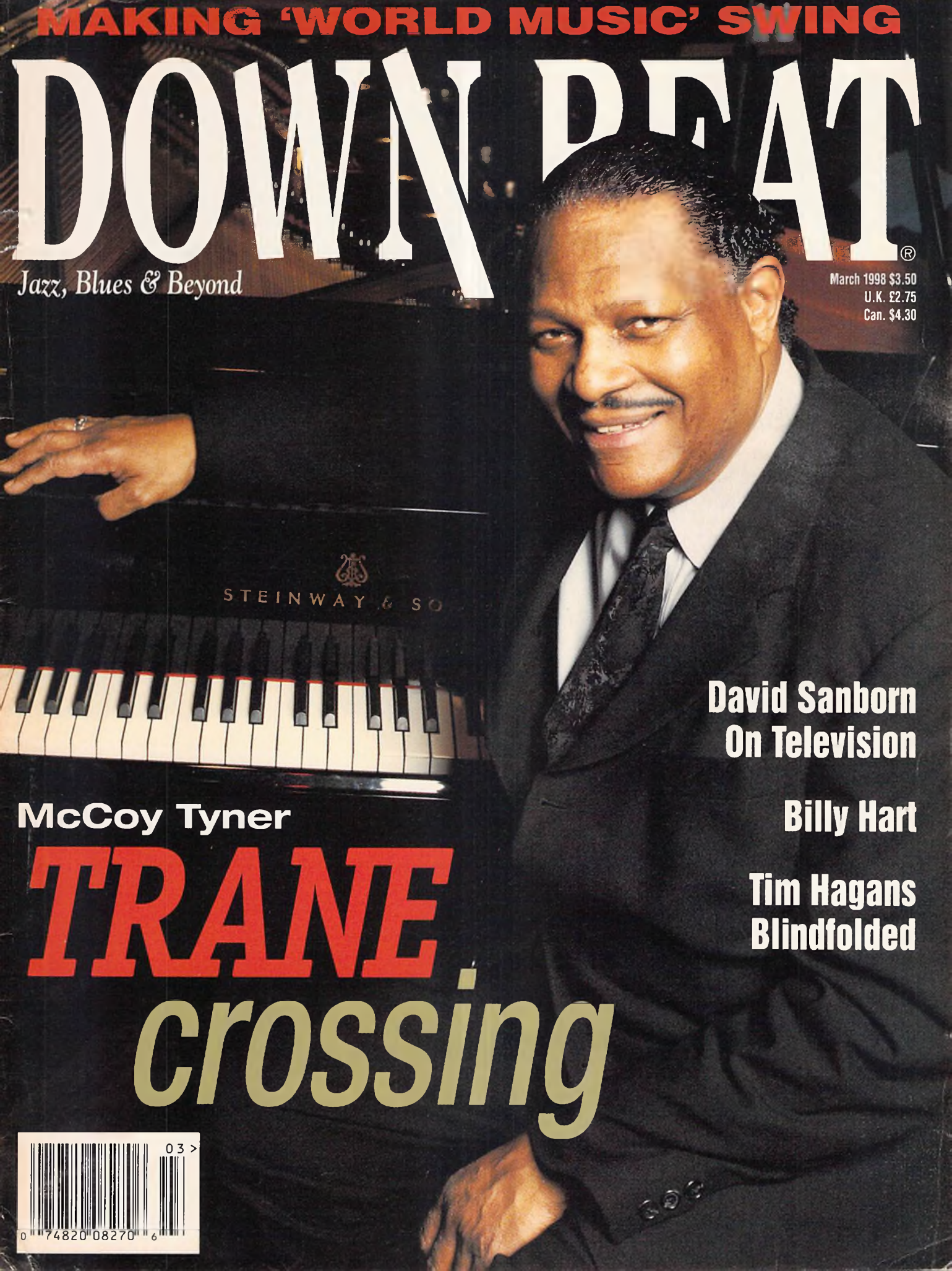
DOWN BEAT

Jazz, Blues & Beyond

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David Sanborn
On Television

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Blindfolded

McCoy Tyner

TRANE
crossing



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In an on-stage interview for Down Beat at Sweden's Stockholm Jazz '97, the influential pianist and bandleader discusses his experience with the great John Coltrane and beyond.

By John Corbett

Cover photograph of McCoy Tyner by Mikael Wallerstedt.

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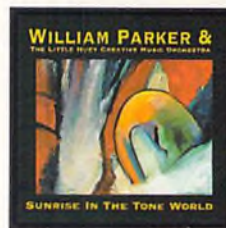
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A radiant last day of October in Stockholm, Sweden. The air was cool and clear and the sun exceptionally bright as McCoy Tyner stepped into the Royal College of Music, parting a throng of fans and students, some hoping to add a John Hancock to their vintage John Coltrane Quartet LPs.

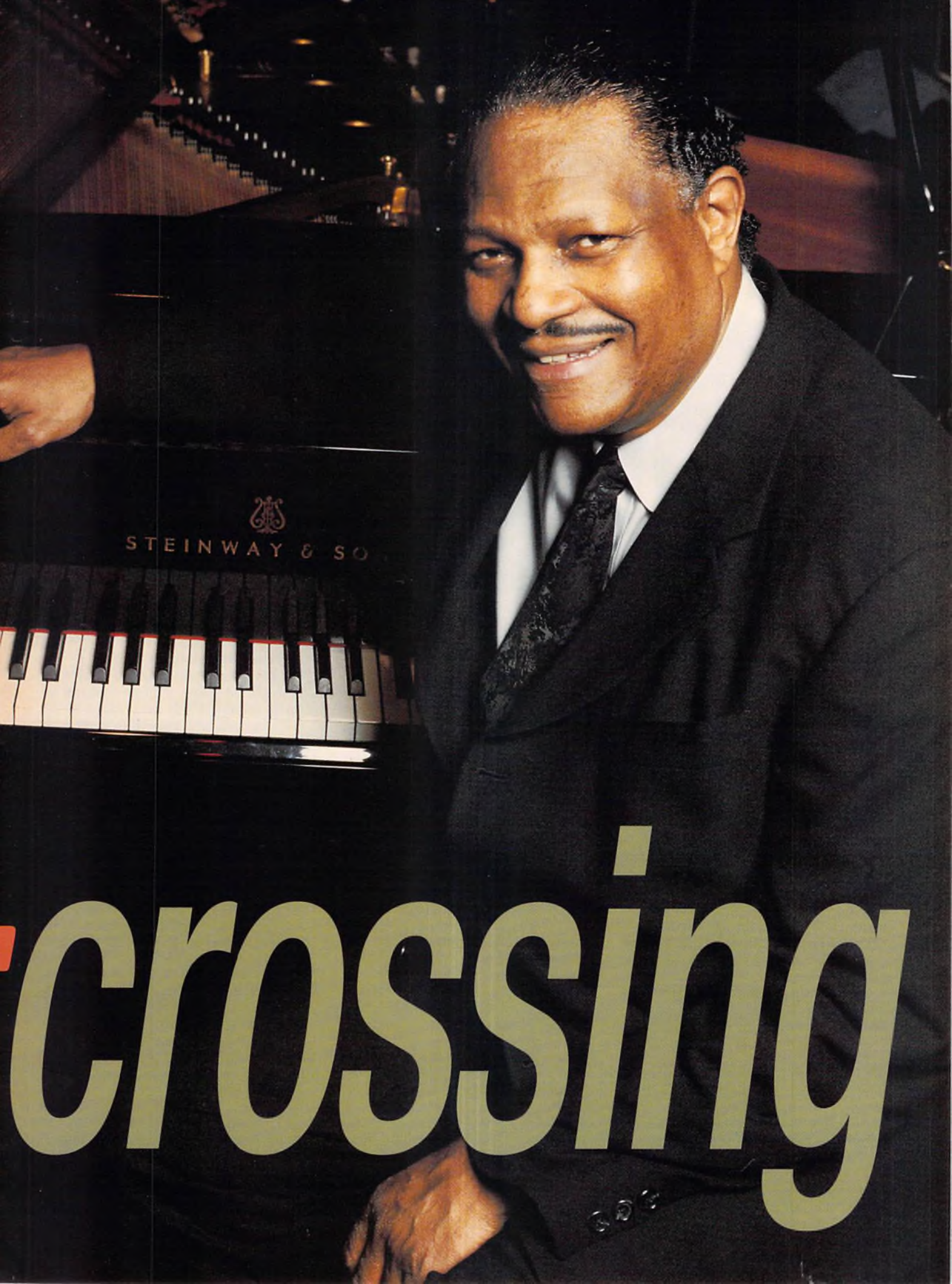
Since being catapulted onto the world's stage as a member of that legendary band 35 years ago, Tyner has influenced several generations of young pianists, and his individual solution to the challenges of modal jazz and late hard-bop is still audible in his open chords, reverberant bass-register/pedal combo and searching right-hand lines. If there was ever any question what role Tyner played in revealing the saxophonist's concept, a quick spot-check of one of the few pieces from the period without him, "Chasin' The Trane" (from the newly compiled *The Complete 1961 Village Vanguard Recordings*), offers expert testimony: It's a fascinating moment, but with a wholly different harmonic character from the ensuing ensemble. Needless to say, it couldn't have been the Coltrane Quartet without him.

Tyner's taken on a few new challenges of late. Last year, the 58-year-old released a record of orchestral arrangements of Burt Bacharach tunes—part of a renewed relationship with the Impulse! label (see "CD Reviews" July '96)—and he continues to lead his big band and sometimes works in small-group contexts and solo. He was in Sweden as one of the principal artists, along with Cecil Taylor, at Stockholm Jazz '97, where he played solo, trio with his long-term rhythm team of bassist Avery Sharpe and drummer Aaron Scott, and with the Swedish Radio Jazz Group under the direction of saxophonist Lennart Aberg. But he broke his heavy rehearsal schedule to allow an interview for *Down Beat* in front of more than 300 attentive listeners. When it was over, he treated us to a thoroughly revamped version of "I Should Care," adding surprising bits of stride, trademark thunderous bass and delicate treble trills.

by John Corbett

TRANE

McCoy Tyner on his experience
with John Coltrane and beyond



STEINWAY & SONS

crossing

JOHN CORBETT: *I thought I could begin with a bit of background on how you began to play music and jazz. You came to be known first playing with the Jazztet, but fill us in before that.*

McCOY TYNER: Right. I grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which has a tremendous background in terms of the people who lived there and were born there, the historical musical tradition. It's very old, and it was a great place to grow up. I started to play piano when I was 13. I had this teacher who taught beginner piano, studied with him for a little while, then moved to a more advanced teacher

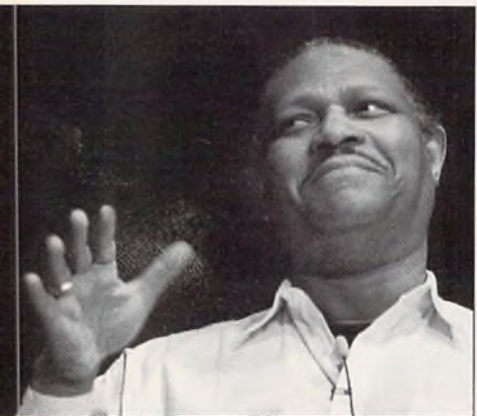
they said, oh, wow, we like the way you play. So they took me under their wing, and we used to have jam sessions almost every day at each other's homes, and we had a place where we'd go, and the musicians could live there for a while if they wanted to. Dances on the weekend. In improvised music, you have to do it. I think the classroom is very important, but I think the jazz club is the classroom.

JC: *It's something you have to immerse yourself in. It's a culture, it's a life.*

MT: It's a life, absolutely.

JC: *What was your initiation into professional musicianship?*

so I was very excited. He came home and spent some time with his mother in their house, which is now the John Coltrane Museum. At that time we had to play matinees—I'm glad we don't do 'em now. ... So Calvin introduced me to him. We were playing at the Red Rooster, in West Philly, where I was raised, and the clubowner said, well, John, you're here, can you come in next week with a band and play for a week? And John said, I don't have a band. But he asked Calvin's rhythm section—myself, Jimmy and Tootie—if we could work with him, and we said, of course. That was the first time



Three faces of McCoy Tyner during an on-stage interview at Stockholm Jazz '97.

who took me through Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, whatever. Then I decided to put the books away and I started an r&b band for my junior high school friends. That was a lot of fun.

JC: *Rhythm & blues band, that's part of your history that not everyone knows.*

MT: That's part of my history.

JC: *Is that something that you've gone back to? Does that feel still inform your music?*

MT: I don't think it should ever leave you. I think that's one of the foundations of jazz. It's all part of the same thing.

JC: *Are your other family members musical?*

MT: My brother started playing music, but then he went into politics. [laughs, along with the audience] My mother liked piano, but she was a beautician. I didn't have a piano for one year, but my mother had three clients, and they all three had pianos, so I had no problem having a place to rehearse. I would practice after school at their homes. At 14, my mother bought me a piano.

JC: *So as a teenager, you were playing r&b. How did you make the transition from rhythm & blues to jazz?*

MT: First of all, I don't make a distinction between them, except that it's another stage of the same development. The blues, r&b, it's basically all the same, except that jazz is a more advanced concept in terms of the techniques you use. But basically what we want to do is keep that same blues feeling. That's very important in this music. What happened is some older musicians came to me and

MT: My first gig was a party in someone's house.

JC: *First time you got paid for playing music?*

MT: Let me see, how much was it? It was so small. [smiles] And a meal. The food was ... [makes the international sign for "so-so"]. After that, we had a few little jobs at private clubs. At the Uptown Theater in Philadelphia they have a talent show, and my r&b band entered. It was the first time we'd won anything. And I started working with all the local musicians at clubs around the city. When I was about 15, I was working professionally.

JC: *At that time Philadelphia was such an active jazz city.*

MT: Yeah, from a black cultural point of view, it was definitely deeply rooted. From the underground railroad, the Pennsylvania Dutch people and the Amish—who I respect—they were Christians, so they helped Harriet Tubman, and when the black people reached Pennsylvania from the South, they felt free. They opened up the African Methodist Church, a lot of institutions.

JC: *In the mid-'50s, you got hooked up with Art Farmer and Benny Golson.*

MT: Well, prior to that, when I was 17, I met Coltrane. I was working with Calvin Massey, in his band, with Jimmy Garrison, Tootie Heath and a guy named Clarence Shaw playing saxophone. John and Calvin were very close friends. I knew about John. I had never met him, but I'd heard his recordings on Prestige,

I played with John, when I was 17. It was a great experience.

JC: *What a fantastic house-band.*

MT: I'm telling you! [laughter] After that, he rejoined Miles. And he told me he would come to Philly when Miles wasn't working and he'd ask me to work with him. I remember when he was working on "Giant Steps" and all those songs. He said when he would leave Miles for the second time, he wanted me to join his band. He took so long, because every time he wanted to leave, Miles would say, here's more money, please stay. So he stayed longer. In the meantime, I wanted to leave Philadelphia. So Benny Golson came and I did a concert with him, and we went to San Francisco for about three weeks, played there. He said, listen, me and Art Farmer are going to form a band, would you like to join? I said, I'll join, but there's only one thing: When John Coltrane leaves Miles Davis, I'm joining his group. He says, OK. So I worked with them about seven months, then John left Miles and I had to make a big decision. It was very difficult, but I had to do it.

JC: *Then you had a quite remarkable stay with John Coltrane.*

MT: Yeah, it was fantastic. It was always exciting; we didn't always know what was going to happen. In improvised music, you never know what's going to happen, but with that band the dynamics were unbelievable. We just came in and did the best we could and hoped that it would happen. And it did.

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Cecil Taylor leads a workshop at Stockholm Jazz '97.

Stockholm Jazz '97:

Long an important stop for American musicians and boasting a sturdy indigenous jazz history, Stockholm is one of Europe's most active jazz metropolises. One look at the schedule of the city's prime venue, Jazz Club Fasching, with its constant flow of new and old natives and major outtowners, and the scope of the jazz scene is apparent.

Aside from some seminars and workshops at the music school, nothing much differentiated the first few days of Stockholm Jazz '97 from routine jazz life in the active locale. The weeklong event, only in its second year, featured a cobbled-together theme of Scandinavian jazz, but that hardly seems to distinguish it from any normal week of the year. On one hand, it's refreshing to go to a festival that has only a couple of events a day, allowing listeners to digest the music. On the other hand, at some point it stretches credibility to call it a "festival." Things picked up substantially by the weekend, however, and the fest built momentum as its two featured figures—pianists Cecil Taylor and McCoy Tyner—took center stage.

On the regional tip, Norwegian keyboardist Jon Balke led his Magnetic North Orchestra through two sets. The leader has a nice touch on piano, but the charts were often too clever for their own good and the echoey "Nordic" mix was especially unpleasant. The fuzzy ghost of Stan Getz was in Magnus Lindgren's tenor sax during the 23-year-old's overly brassy big band concert, while a fellow Swede, confident trumpeter Anders Bergcrantz, fared better with his 11-piece ensemble (though Cennet Jönsson's limp synthsax was a big mistake!).

Pure invention.

MARC JOHNSON

THE SOUND OF SUMMER RUNNING

In the tradition of his '80s supergroup Bass Desires, virtuoso bassist Marc Johnson leads an all-star quartet through an innovative album of new "heartland" music. *The Sound of Summer Running* is a creative blend of "avant-Americana," incorporating elements of jazz, folk, country, and blues that reflect Marc's roots in the Midwest. A major musical event, Johnson's Verve debut also marks the first time guitarists Frisell and Metheny have recorded together. It's a sweet sound.

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Typical Week On A Great Local Scene

A loose-limbed drummer was particularly impressive one late-night after-set jam at Fasching. He turned out to be Fredrik Norén, a stalwart player who's made a career starting in the '60s surrounding himself with young talent, à la Blakey. The most engaging, unusual Scanda-jazz came courtesy of Jan Wallgren. In a program called "Raga, Bebop And Anything," the recently deceased pianist/composer's group played a retrospective of his fascinating work since the '50s, which stitched together jazz, romantic classical music, plainchant, and various Asian and Indian musics. At the end, his widow, Henrietta Wallgren, gave a quite lovely poetic recitation, interspersed with the voice of outstanding mezzo-soprano Ingrid Tobiasson, backed by a string quartet.

Assorted other sets included a wildy entertaining selection of songs—some unabashedly kitsch, like a medley of "Shadow Of Your Smile" and "Wave"—by guitarist Bill Frisell and drummer Joey Baron. John Taylor's solo piano gig was technically impressive, but I preferred Taylor's trio sets with drummer Peter Erskine and bassist Palle Danielsson, mostly because of the latter's huge sound and unflagging drive.

The idea of featuring McCoy Tyner and Cecil Taylor—arguably the two most influential pianists of the last three decades—side-by-side was an inspired move, and it turned out to be an education in styles and vocabularies. Tyner played elegantly in his solo spot. He startled me a couple of times by slipping all the way into stride, pointing out an obscured resource for his patented left-hand bombs—of course, the huge leaps

and locked open chords link up with that earlier tradition! Tyner played two trio sets, too, his trusty comrades Avery Sharpe (bass) and Aaron Scott (drums) at his side through standards, originals, even some Trane tunes, and the Radio Jazz Group worked out his big band charts, Viktoria Tolstoy adding vocals to the bright, splashy proceedings.

In one of the best solo performances of his I've ever heard, Taylor dove headlong into the responsive piano at Berwaldhallen, coaxing undulating waves and tidal powers from its high-strung stomach. Taylor left the keys to perform some of his poetry, and a harrowing moment came as he leaned against a 25-foot tall pillar/prop, which turned out not to be anchored. It barely cleared the piano, landing with a monstrous bang that even seemed to surprise the unflappable Taylor. Composing himself, he read the serendipitous next line of the poem, casting an eye at the inert object: "To develop a nature possessed of daring." Taylor spent two sessions workshopping a band of free-minded young musicians; much to their disappointment, Taylor opted out of the ensemble's brief club concert, where the piano was instead manned by Arne Forsén. But it was the pioneer pianist's connection with German drummer Paul Lovens (in the context of Taylor's European Quintet) that was most stunning—at blistering speeds, the two of them installed a direct pipeline pumping energy back and forth, sometimes mediated through cellist Tristan Honsinger's sawing pedal tones. If Stockholm Jazz '97 needed a *raison d'être*, the combination of Taylor and Lovens was *raison enough*. —J.C.

Pure verve.

CHARLIE HADEN

THE MONTREAL TAPES

As a tribute to reknowned bassist Charlie Haden, eight historic concerts were presented at the 1989 Montreal Jazz Festival showcasing him with a series of exceptional collaborators. As Charlie recalls, "these were some of the most memorable moments of my life and I will cherish them forever." Haden was named "Best Acoustic Bassist" in the 1997 Down Beat Reader's and Critic's polls, and the inventiveness heard throughout *The Montreal Tapes* reminds us why.

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JC: Did you have a sense, while you were a part of that unit, that this was a band that would be changing music history?

MT: You know, when you're in a situation like that, it's like being on top of a wave: You go with the flow. I knew we were doing something unique and tremendous. I could tell by how we felt and by what was happening in the audience, you know. But I didn't realize we were making so much history until I looked back in retrospect and said, oh my God, we did this, we did that. But it was only an honest effort, a matter of integrity. Because he was like that, always practicing and always writing something different.

JC: You have a unique approach to voicings in the left hand. When did you discover and develop that?

MT: Well, with John, I think I had a chance

od in the music. There were a lot of bands, so a musician could go from one band to another, sort of like graduate from one thing to another. There were a lot of bands around: Thelonious Monk, Coltrane, Miles, Horace Silver. And also big bands. So there were a lot of things you could do and experiences you could have. And a lot of work. The cost to go into a club and hear the music wasn't so much. There were a lot of places to work around the country. The jazz market was a lot bigger.

JC: The economics of running a band—which is something that, subsequently, you've had a lot of experience doing—have changed a lot since the mid-'60s, as well.

MT: Yeah, now it costs a lot more to go from one place to another. It's a problem.

JC: Especially doing something as unwieldy

JC: Can you talk about the transition out of the Coltrane band? Why did you leave, what were the circumstances?

MT: There are many stories, but I want to set the record straight.

JC: This is the perfect time.

MT: I didn't leave because of the music. I left because I couldn't hear the piano. He had two drummers: Elvin here [points to one side] and Rashied Ali on that side, and I couldn't hear the piano. I remember we played opposite Carmen McRae, and Norman Simmons was her accompanist. Norman said, "That F-sharp is terrible!" I said, "F-sharp?" I couldn't hear my instrument. That can work if the drummers are compatible, you see, but the musical personalities of those two people just didn't work. John was hearing a lot of percussion at the time, and he was experimenting—he was always experimenting with something. So that's the main reason why I left.

JC: The two drummers squeezed you out.

MT: Yeah, they squeezed me out. It was a vice. [laughs]

JC: After your years with Coltrane, you went on to make a series of classic records for Blue Note and Impulse!

MT: John and I were the first two jazz artists on Impulse!, and we had the great producer Bob Thiele. It wasn't a thing where I wanted to have a contract, like it is now, everybody, "Oh, I've have to have a contract!" During that time, I just wanted to make some music. I was recording with John, and I'd made the Jazztet record, so when Bob Thiele came to me and said, "Why don't you make something of your own?" I said, "I don't know." I was young and very skeptical. But I'm glad I did. He was very encouraging that

way, a great producer.

JC: You made some of my favorite Impulse! records, some of them lesser known, like Reaching Fourth [with Henry Grimes and Roy Haynes] and the one with John Gilmore [Today And Tomorrow].

MT: Thad Jones was on that, too.

JC: Let's turn to more recent projects. You've been working with a very successful big band for quite a while now. Why did you start that group?

MT: We started it in 1984, but prior to that I always wanted to have a big band. I have a very strong curiosity. I always liked big bands, but I never pictured me having one. Basie and Ellington, I would see



BY ANDREW LEVLEY

to develop that. I had dexterity when I was with the Jazztet, I had technique, but when I was with him I had a chance to develop my style.

JC: I can't help but ask about something that seems very different now from that period of jazz history: the fact that you could have a band like that working so regularly. The unity that the quartet had at the end of its lifespan was clearly a result of working together so much. Can you reflect a little on the difference between then and now in terms of having an ensemble as a working band?

MT: I think that, not only during the '60s, but prior to that, was a very glorious peri-

as having a big band, which is almost impossible these days.

MT: I've tried to keep the members of my band together, not jump from one musician to another. I think it gives them an opportunity to become compatible. [Bassist] Avery Sharpe has been with me for about 15 years, [drummer] Aaron Scott has been with me a little over nine. You get familiar with each other and hope the music will develop to another level each time as opposed to changing constantly. But it's very expensive to keep that many people together, because a lot of them work in Broadway shows or lead their own bands.

them and [think], oh, wow, that's wonderful. But I never thought I would. ... Though I did make a record in the '60s, on Blue Note [*Tender Moments*], which was the first time I'd used a larger ensemble. I always liked to write for the band, to make arrangements and write songs. So I formed this band in 1984. We came to Europe a few times, which was very successful. Then we played the Playboy Jazz Festival in Los Angeles, and the Newport Festival. Chicago in Grant Park, the major festivals. It's ongoing.

JC: You've been making some smaller-group records lately, too.

MT: *Infinity*, with Michael Brecker, and I've been doing some solo work. And I just finished an album with an orchestra doing Burt Bacharach's music.

JC: What drew you to want to do an orchestral record?

MT: I was offered the opportunity. I'd written for strings before, but never in an orchestral setting, with so many people. So Tommy LiPuma, a great producer and the president of [GRP Records, which now owns] Impulse!, came to me with this idea of doing somebody's music. I thought about it, all the people that had written such great tunes. A lot of the tunes we consider standards, show tunes, were pop music of their period. I figured it would be nice if I were to do an album of Burt's music, because he's still alive and he wrote some very beautiful melodies: "A House Is Not A Home," "Alfie"—Sonny Rollins recorded that years ago—"The Look Of Love." In an orchestral setting, it was very beautiful.

JC: We're here in a prestigious music academy, and I wonder if you have any words of wisdom for jazz students?

MT: I tell young musicians that all the answers to their questions are in themselves. We always look outside, but the answer is usually inside of us, already there. If we have the opportunity to per-

form, try different things, challenge ourselves, then we will develop. I think teaching is not so much teaching as it is helping an individual to see what he already has. This is more important than showing someone a chord or something, just getting someone to open up and see what he has himself.

JC: When you were coming up, after you had the fundamentals, how did jazz education work for you?

MT: See, in this music, you have to do it. You can go to school and learn how to improvise a little bit, get the techniques down, but this music is an ongoing expe-

rience. You have to jump into it and do it. It won't come just by going to school. I think schools are good, but the real growth comes outside, when you deal with the world. There's no formula. You jump into it and see how it goes. Hopefully, you reach your goals, but you don't know. It's the same as life. That's the edge you want to keep, the edge of the unexpected.

JC: Speaking of the unexpected, let me pop a question on you. We have just about five minutes left, how about playing a piece for us?

MT: That's unexpected! OK, I'll play one. **DB**

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-Musician Magazine



EQUIPMENT

McCoy Tyner prefers to play a Steinway Hamburg nine-foot. The piano his mom gave him when he was 14 was a console spinet from the Jacobs Piano Co.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

(McCoy Tyner's discographical information last appeared in January 1996; these are just the most recent releases and reissues, and few faves.)

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW—Impulse! 197
INFINITY—Impulse! 171
PRELUDE AND SONATA—Milestone 9244
MANHATTAN MOODS—Blue Note 828423
ATLANTIS—Milestone 55002
McCOY TYNER PLAYS ELLINGTON—Impulse! 216
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David Sanborn

Made For

TV

Like jazz and blues or red beans and rice, David Sanborn and TV go together well.

He regularly sits in on the *Late Show With David Letterman*. He makes the occasional appearance on network specials like *Nissan Presents: A Celebration of America's Music*. And you probably remember him from *Night Music*, the incredibly cool and now sorely missed weekly program he hosted and jammed on a decade ago.

Sanborn is a natural on the tube: His laidback confidence, slim build, expressive body movements and close-cropped grayish hair all add a video-friendly element to his passionate playing.

But on this particular December afternoon in midtown Manhattan's SIR Studio, as Sanborn and an assemblage of musicians rehearse for the taping of ABC's *After New Year's Eve*, the ubiquitous, Grammy-awarding alto saxophonist senses an enthusiasm and electricity that tells him this is more than just business as usual. "People were really into it," says Sanborn of the one-hour program, which aired at 1 a.m. on Jan. 1, right after *Dick Clark's New Year's Eve Countdown*. "I've done a lot of television on both sides, as a host and also as an artist, and I know when people are bullshitting and when they're not."

After New Year's Eve marks Sanborn's long-awaited return to late-night television as a musical ringleader. If the show draws a good viewer rating, it could land Sanborn back on the air for a new series and provide some exciting and diverse music along the same lines as *Night Music*, which for two-and-a-half seasons presented intriguing performances and collaborations with artists like Pat Metheny, Betty Carter, Sonny Rollins, Leonard Cohen and Miles Davis.

"I can't tell you how many musicians over the years have come to me and said how much they enjoyed the show. Jazz musicians [like] Sonny Rollins and Joe Henderson, and others like Bruce Springsteen and Eddie Vedder. ... And I think it was very influential in that it turned a lot of people on to music that they probably had not been aware of because we presented it in a very interesting way. We would combine Sonny Rollins and Leonard Cohen. A Leonard Cohen fan may not know who Sonny Rollins was, and vice-versa. We combined them in a way that was respectful of their individual talents and also demonstrated the commonality that existed. We were in the business of bridge-building. People seemed to get that."

If Sanborn does indeed end up with a new show of his own, it will create a lot of excitement, not only in the musical community but among a wide range of viewers, as well. Marcus Miller, the musical director for *After New Year's Eve*, has worked with Sanborn since 1975 and was also a part of the

Night Music experience. He says he feels that Sanborn's new venture is tailor-made for a generation of young viewers raised on videos. "In this day and age, where it's such a visual age, it's important for younger people," Miller relates.

Vinny of the rap group Naughty By Nature, who performed on *After New Year's Eve*, can relate to the younger viewer's perspective. "In our music, there's a lot of sampling; so we're just taking a finished product off the record and it's not like you really get to see the actual instruments being played," he says. "So that kind of feel with live instruments is a side we don't get to do a lot."

As acclaimed as *Night Music* was, it suffered from the age-old problem of how to balance artistic success against the realities of corporate-TV advertising and ratings. "I think there was probably a combination of reasons why it went off the air," Sanborn says. "Michelob [the show's main sponsor] decided that what they were getting back from ratings was not commensurate with the amount of money they were spending. We never got a great time slot. It was subject to whims of the local affiliates and when they decided to put us on. I think it's to Michelob's credit that they supported the show for as long as they did. We didn't get bad ratings. It was respectable, it wasn't like a bomb. The problem was that it was a very hard show to get a fix on in terms of the Nielsen ratings. It was a very tough sell to advertisers because it was such a diverse audience and it was such a diverse show. We had a lot of people watching the show. At that time, the question was, 'Who is our audience? Is it the Volvo demographic? Is it the Michelob demographic?'"

By Eugene Holley

Photos Courtesy of ABC Television



"Ever since *Night Music* went off the air, we've had discussions over the years about wanting to bring back to television a show that was not necessarily a vehicle for people to present their latest single," Sanborn relates. "It was more along the lines of demonstrating how different genres and styles of music really cross-pollinate and affect each other."



David Saltz, a former *Night Music* producer who now heads up music programming at ABC, provided the ideal forum for Sanborn to mark his comeback as a presenter of adult-oriented music on TV. "The network on New Year's generates prime-time numbers," Saltz says. "There something like a 9- to 10-point share rating accomplished with the *Dick Clark's New Year's Eve Countdown* show, which has a 25-point share of the audience watching the show. It's almost like having a shot after *Home Improvement* or *NYPD Blue*. So it's a great opportunity to re-launch the program."



At the show's taping at Manhattan's Studio 55 on Dec. 18, Sanborn and his backup band—bassist Miller, percussionist Don Alias, keyboardist/organist Ricky Peterson, guitarist David Gilmore, drummer Gene Lake and pianist Dr. John—perform in a close-knit, club-like atmosphere. On each tune, the band is joined by different special guests: underground rock icon Lou Reed, hip-hop DJ Ali Shaheed Muhammad from A Tribe Called Quest, rappers Vinny and Treach of Naughty By Nature, and singers Isaac Hayes, Boz Scaggs and Joan Osborne.

The eternally hip Reed, with his sideman rhythm guitarist Mike Rathke, runs the band through two edgy, guitar-driven reworkings of "Dirty Boulevard" and "Perfect Day." Boz Scaggs' tenor reincarnates "Oh Mary" (a funky and obscure Bay-area '70s hit) and christens Sanborn and company's dancing rendition of Scaggs' signature hit "Lowdown." Isaac Hayes' Memphis-born baritone takes Billy Joel's "New York State Of Mind" to Beale Street (with Miller inserting a Soul Train-ish bass vamp from the Jimmy Castor Bunch's hit "Potential"), after which Hayes tries out his trademarked sexy rap on Joan Osborne in a Latin-tinged version of the Classic IV's hit "Spooky."

Vinny and Treach of Naughty by Nature, along with Ali Shaheed Muhammad, take stage uptown with a head-bobbing medley of their hits "It's On," "The Craziest" and the booty-shaking "Feel Me Flow." Dr. John sings "St. James Infirmary" with a longing and feeling that can only come from someone born in the Crescent City. Everybody returns for the finale "People Make The World Go Round," powered by D.J.'s Ali's percussive turntable scratching, which is only outdone by Miller's thunder-thumbed bass solo. "I'm really happy with the way that tune came out," Sanborn beams afterwards. "If I could play one tune that demonstrates what the show is about, I'd play that tune. If you get this tune, you get the show."

Many musicians and viewers alike hope that Sanborn will find a new home on the ABC network if *After New Year's Eve* is a hit with the sponsors. "I guess it's kind of unavoidable," Sanborn says as he shrugs his shoulders in mock resignation. "I guess the reason I try not to think in those terms is [because] I know better. The whole television thing is so volatile, you just never know. Obviously, we'd like to do this on a long-term basis. ... Sure, in



the back of my mind I'd love for this to become a regular thing. But I know how tough it is, and I know what kind of commitment it would take from the network to do this."

Two days after the taping, Sanborn relaxes in the five-story, West Side Manhattan home he shares with his wife. Sipping tea and wearing a black sweatsuit and sneakers, Sanborn, 52, appears cheerful, and he has good reason to be: For more than 25 years he's been able to carve a niche for himself in contemporary music as a sideman with Stevie Wonder, David Bowie and Bob James and as a leader on albums like *Taking Off*, *Hideaway*, *As We Speak* and his 1982 gold album *Voyeur*.

While Sanborn did make his mark in the so-called contemporary jazz radio format, the guts of his sound go back to the blues-based upbringing he received in his hometown of St. Louis. "There was a great blues band that was led by Oliver Sain," Sanborn says with happy, faraway reflection. "I also was friends with Julius Hemphill, Lester Bowie, Oliver Lake and Phillip Wilson coming up in St. Louis. Those guys are very ecumenical about their musical tastes. If it's good, it's good. Whether it's the Four Tops, Mahler or Miles Davis or a circus band, it's all music, and it was very non-judgmental in that sense. So, my attitudes were formed by that kind of sensibility.

"The music that's always moved me was rhythm & blues-based jazz, the more r&b-flavored players like Hank Crawford, David 'Fathead' Newman, Stanley Turrentine, Arnette Cobb, Willis Jackson, Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson. Charlie Parker was an incredibly sophisticated blues player ... Jackie McLean, Phil Woods and Ornette Coleman! When I heard Ornette's quartet for the first time, I said, 'This is country r&b.' It made laugh, and it made me happy."



The grand-finale jam on the set of *After New Year's Eve*. Opposite page: Keyboardist/vocalist Dr. John, singer Isaac Hayes and guitarist/vocalist Lou Reed.

For Sanborn, it's drive to find the primal joy in music-making that keeps him going, which may manifest itself in a variety of formats outside of contemporary jazz. "I think about playing and putting myself in situations that are going to challenge me and feel natural for me," Sanborn reflects. "Sometimes they've been pop-oriented, song-oriented formats. Sometimes, they're more open-ended formats. Sometimes they've been more traditional formats. I did a string album with Johnny Mandel called *Pearls*, and I did a tribute to Julius Hemphill. I did a record that was a stretch for me called *Another Hand*, although when I listen to that I don't hear anything unusual—maybe the context was a little different; it was more generally acoustic. I look to do things that are going to keep my interests. It's really that simple."

A cursory glance at the end of Sanborn's kitchen table reveals where his interests lie these days: There's a copy of *Rappages* magazine, which covers the hip-hop scene,

with rapper Rakim on the cover. "[I like] what they're talking about, where they put the time ... it's so hip," Sanborn says of the genre. "The way they think rhythmically, it's like drum solos. It's great, and it relates to this time, and I think there's something to be said for that. I think music that's vital reflects the times. I understand the argument about maintaining the tradition, and I respect that, but I also feel that you run the risk of stagnating unless you push the

boundaries. Young players 25 years old today grew up listening to rap. How could you play music and not have that affect you? It doesn't mean you have to graft that music on to your music, but in some kind of way, you have to comment on it."

"I'm working on another album with Marcus, trying to use different elements of what we hear out here," Sanborn says. "I've been listening to a lot of [hip-hop/soul vocalist] D'Angelo, A Tribe Called Quest, Naughty By Nature ... rap, hip-hop, I go back to old James Brown, I listen to bebop. I'm going on the road with the Danish Radio Big Band at the end of January and early February in Europe, playing the music of Gil Evans with Maria Schneider as the musical director. I did a tour this past summer with a group we put together with Marcus, Steve Gadd, Joe Sample and Eric Clapton. We're going to try to go into the studio and do an album."

There is, however, one person Sanborn would love to play with. "I've never played with Ornette," Sanborn says with a sly smile. "I know Ornette and have been inspired by his music for years, but we've never played together. I would love to do that." **DB**

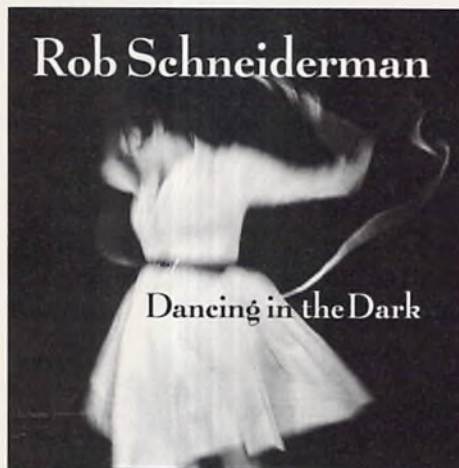
EQUIPMENT

David Sanborn plays a Selmer Mark VI alto sax, a Selmer Mark VI soprano sax and Yamaha soprano saxes. He uses Dukoff D7/D8 and Saxwork alto mouthpieces with Vandoren V-16 and La Voz medium reeds.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

THE BEST OF DAVID SANBORN—Reprise 45768
SONGS FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE—
 Warner Bros. 61950
PEARLS—Warner Bros. 61759
ANOTHER HAND—Elektra/Musician 61088
AS WE SPEAK—Warner Bros. 23650
BACKSTREET—Warner Bros. 23906
A CHANGE OF HEART—Warner Bros. 25479
CLOSE-UP—Warner Bros. 25715
HIDEAWAY—Warner Bros. 3379
SANBORN—Warner Bros. 2957
STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART—
 Warner Bros. 25150
TAKING OFF—Warner Bros. 2873
VOYEUR—Warner Bros. 3546
DOUBLE VISION—Warner Bros. 25393
 (with Bob James)

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Jazz Musicians Who Seek
'World Music' Connections
Must Learn To Digest And
Balance Cross-Cultural Differences

going global

When you listen to music, you learn about new worlds—sometimes quite literally, if you're checking out what's now commonly known as "world music." And if you're an active listener, you don't just sit back and absorb all of the cross-cultural elements at play; you reach new conclusions about these far-reaching influences, about what roles music plays in distant lands and what messages it carries from its creators.

The same is true of the musicians who seriously seek their own personal brands of geographical divergence. Take saxophonist Arthur Blythe, who recently released the CD *Night Song*, an extremely creative project that vibrates with international overtones (see "CD Reviews" Jan. '98). Blythe's percussionists bring Armenian, South American and African American experiences to the table, and the saxophonist realized how to make his own statement while striking a creative balance among these backgrounds.

Saxophonist Arthur Blythe: embracing sounds from different parts of the world with great sophistication.

"The Armenian thing is related to Africa and the Mideast," Blythe says. "I guess all of us on the planet are related. Whatever the blend would be, I'd superimpose what I do on top of that, or within that. I could hear common rhythmic ties throughout all of it, and the ethnic-ness of it didn't matter."

Blythe's connections are just one way that jazz is embracing more sounds from different parts of the world with greater sophistication than ever before. Throughout the past 10 years, there have been many first-rate recordings that merge traditional jazz rhythms with melodies that emanate from East Asia and Eastern Europe. While jazz composers have explored similar regions in the past, they've never been investigated as thoroughly as they are today (see Page 32). Such instruments as the accordion and violin have a higher profile in jazz now, and others, like the komungo (a Korean stringed instrument), are being featured in new improvised music. Of

course, the foreign influences that have always been a major part of American jazz are still prominent. Record store bins are loaded with new releases that include reflections from Africa, the Caribbean or Latin America. Considering all of these disparate sounds, jazz seems to have come a long way from simple exotica trends—like the period when one hardcore jazz-record collector recalled, "If you had to choose between two records by a saxophonist, you chose the one that's not a samba."

BY
AARON COHEN

PHOTO BY
RONALD HEARD



Baritone saxophonist Fred Ho's (top) melodies are an extension of his Chinese-American sensibility. Pianist Horace Tapscott has brought together African and African-American musicians for decades.

Or has it? With the influx of international strains throughout popular music, jazz still has its share of shallow stylistic mixtures.

Longtime listeners know how many times there's been an American musician whose career has stagnated until he brought in a chorus from some distant shore, and then introduced them as his instrumental back-up singers. And what could be more pathetic than when an attempt at Cuban grooves comes across sounding calculated? Also, with a lot of art that emanates from within this country or reaches these shores from abroad, some musicians have made artistic compromises in an attempt to reach a widespread American audience. Just like with a lot of shoddy mainstream jazz from the past 25 years, the results are usually awash in such attributes as bland and overdone synthesizers. Even the term "world music," which is used to cover completely dissimilar

genres from far-flung continents, invites unwelcome homogeneity.

Despite such misguided efforts, worldwide influences on jazz are inevitable now. With the rapid spread of new media and communications technology, there's more information about more music available to more people than ever before. Such

resources as the Internet and recent books (notably the extensive and well-written tome *World Music: The Rough Guide*,

which Penguin published in 1994) complement the flow of records and musicians' tours. Besides, impressive singers and instrumentalists have qualities that easily transcend national borders and pre-supposed stylistic boundaries. And just as jazz musicians continue to investigate different parts of the world for material, jazz audiences will have to learn more about geographically distant music to fully appreciate these developments. The jazz and world music communities (including record companies and presenters) face many of the same obstacles in bringing these sounds to wide audiences in the United States. Recurring questions about

how to build an interest in both jazz and world music in this country while maintaining their integrity have similar promising answers.

Whether a jazz performance includes worldwide influences or not, integrity is often a matter of personal taste. But some qualities are consistent in internationally conscious, artistically successful, jazz-meets-the-world projects. Of primary importance are always the innovation, emotional outpourings and improvisational skills of the musicians, especially group leaders. Also, the combination of different influences must convey a sense of equilibrium. Particular understandings are essential for cross-cultural collaborations.

Jin Hi Kim, a komungo player who has worked with American bassist William Parker and saxophonist Oliver Lake, as well as European guitarists Derek Bailey and Hans Reichel, says that a comprehension of the different cultural perceptions of playing music is crucial for a dialogue.

"The function of the music is different in Africa and Asia than it is in the West," Kim says. "In the West, especially in the 20th century, it's more for entertainment. Music has a richer role in Africa and Asia: It's performed from birth to death, for the harvest, religious festivals and blending in with dance and other rituals. There are so many different kinds of esthetics that we need to balance the differences. That way we don't have to stick with one side."

As a result of this balance, the collaborations benefit all the participants. Kim feels that in working with jazz improvisers, she finds "new sounds out of the komungo. When I do solo work, I don't find different material, so they inspire me to create new material whenever I work with them."

The artistic possibilities and rewards for jazz musicians are that in breaking away from a traditional instrumental format, they can draw on these different textures to establish their own individuality.

"I like this kind of setting because I am my own reference," Blythe says about the *Night Song* lineup. "I can't listen to a record to see how someone else would approach playing with the guitar, tuba and conga drums. I go for myself and use my own musicality without referencing someone else who's done it previously."

These combinations can also succeed if a musician feels that singular creativity is all that ties together seemingly incompatible elements. Fred Ho's *Monkey Part One* and *Part Two* use Chinese cultural ideas as well as his love for the potent big band swing of Count Basie and extended suite designs of Duke Ellington.

"I don't think there's any intrinsic commonality between Asian music and African-American music," Ho says. "Asian American music is not the simplistic play of playing a 'jazz' tune on a Chinese instrument or a jazz version of a Chinese tune.

When you listen to *Monkey Part One* and *Part Two*, those aren't traditional Asian folk melodies. Those are Fred Ho's original melodies, and they're an extension of my own Chinese-American sensibility."

Perhaps the growth of these different perspectives—from Blythe's universal individualism to Ho's polemical stance—are key to why so many of these combinations are working so well. World Music Institute Director Robert Browning adds that more musicians today are taking the time that's necessary to understand what makes all of these sounds work.

"I think there was a period when everybody was jumping on the bandwagon and saying, 'Well, we ought to add a bit of Indian stuff here, or a bit of Arab stuff there,' in terms of jazz as well as rock and pop music in general," Browning says. "But I think now there's a lot more serious stuff. I think some of the experiments are great and some completely fall flat. But it has to be done."

Even if more American musicians are aware of music from around the planet, this interest does not signify a widespread consumer trend over here. Aside from National Public Radio and some college stations, airplay is scarce for both jazz and world music; quality television programming is virtually nonexistent. David Bither, senior vice president of Nonesuch Records, describes who purchases recordings by the outstanding Cape Verdean vocalist Cesaria Evora in this country:

"It still is a very specific and select audience. This is not mainstream, Top 40 entertainment media. But in many ways it is also more serious work, and the audience for this is an audience that wants to dig deeper, that is more curious and more adventurous. At the same time, when something is done really well, it will find a place on a slightly different scale."

And in many parts of the U.S., finding the audience is particularly difficult. Michael Orlove, music coordinator for the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, has been unfailingly active in inviting a wide range of jazz and international musicians to his Midwestern hometown. One memorable free concert brought together Max Roach with saxophonist Zim Ngqawana's South African Ingoma jazz sextet. While that event was well attended, he does not always have the ability to present such a notable personage.

"Unfortunately, I would say that Chicago's music audience hasn't caught on to 'world music' as they have in other cities, especially New York and Boston and D.C. I don't know what it is," Orlove says. "Part of it is we don't have that many presenting organizations, that there's not one organization clearly focused on presenting world music year 'round."

Ideally, there would be a nationwide World Music Institute circuit, similar to the informal nationwide network of jazz societies. But until that day comes, if the

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More Than Mere Exotica

The following CDs are recommended for listeners eager to hear some truly creative examples of jazz informed by the music of other worlds:

Ⓢ: **Dave Douglas**, *The Tiny Bell Trio* (Songlines 1504)

One of the most talented trumpeters in jazz includes the traditional Hungarian tune "Czardas" and other sources of inspiration from Eastern Europe.

Ⓢ: **Cesaria Evora**, *Cabo Verde* (Nonesuch 79450)

A beautiful performance from one of the world's great vocalists who soars over an arrangement of strings that draws on French and East African arrangements.

Ⓢ: **Jon Jang & The Pan Asian Arkestra**, *Tiananmen!* (Soul Note 121223)

Pianist Jon Jang assembled a great line-up of Asian American jazz musicians and flautist James Newton to turn Chinese melodies and the collective ideas of the big bands into a moving testimony for the events of '89.

Ⓢ: **Joyce**, *The Essential Joyce* (Mr. Bongo 009)

Whether she's fronting a solid bossa nova group, or just accompanying herself on guitar, this is an ideal introduction to one of Brazil's most impressive singer/songwriters.

Ⓢ: **Trevor Watts Moiré**, *Music Drum Orchestra, A Wider Embrace* (ECM 1449)

Saxophonist Trevor Watts' subtle personality

as a player blends in exceptionally well with Ghanaian drummers who also swing through Celtic melodies.

Ⓢ: **Randy Weston**, *The Spirits Of Our Ancestors* (Antilles 511 896)

A landmark '91 meeting between the legendary jazz pianist, a large African ensemble, and such distinguished guests as Dizzy Gillespie and Pharoah Sanders. It's still the standard by which all such projects should be judged.

Ⓢ: **John Zorn**, *Masada, Alef* (DIW 888)

This ongoing project from saxophonist John Zorn seamlessly fuses klezmer melodic ideas with the harmonies and rhythms of early '60s free-jazz.

Ⓢ: **Various Artists**, *Cuba: I Am Time* (Blue Jackel 5010)

An amazing four-disc collection of the history of music from the island and features many great contemporary artists who have never made it over to these shores.



Above: John Zorn
At left: Cesaria Evora



ANTHONY BARBOZA

audiences for jazz and world music combined forces (making a point of checking out each other's shows), a sizable impact can be made in the marketplace. Meanwhile, jazz musicians we talked to offer some concrete proposals of how listeners can get a better understanding of international music; these solutions are, not coincidentally, similar to the ways jazz should be presented.

"I think master musicians should be brought to different campuses or school situations and hired as faculty members on the same level as tenured Eurocentric classical composers and instrumental teachers," Fred Ho says. "And treat them as equals rather than adjuncts, guest lecturers, or temporary residents."

Another way both jazz and international musics can be brought to wider audiences is the grass-roots work of pianist Horace Tapscott. Since 1960, Tapscott has organized the Pan African Peoples Arkestra in Los Angeles. His work has inspired members of his own community (including former colleague Arthur Blythe), and Jon Jang once said that Tapscott was a model for his own Pan-Asian Arkestra in San Francisco. Throughout the decades, Tapscott has brought African musicians in to work alongside African-American musicians in the city's black neighborhoods.

"It brought the community a little bit

closer to the music," Tapscott says. "They brought themselves closer to understanding what the music was about by that influence from African music, and then putting it together. An example was when a person came up to me and said, 'Well, listen, I think I've heard that before, that kind of beat. Where was it?'"

Today, Tapscott's band includes the Nigerian percussionist Ngite, who worked with the late African superstar bandleader Fela Anikulapo Kuti. "He brings the authenticity we're after," Tapscott says. "We use a lot of the things that he brought from Africa with him, songs and things that were written by old African brothers that he knew. And the reasons that they were written."

On the other coast, Jason Hwang has started establishing workshops in New York's Chinatown through the Meet The Composer New Residency Program. While Hwang leads the Asian/Western free-improv group Far East Side Band, and did some orchestrations for the film *Kundun*, he feels his endeavors in the Chinese working-class community are particularly significant.

"When you're involved with music, your own personal music might be hard for some people to take in," Hwang says. "I'm looking for ways that the community can feel invested in the music and one way to do that is compose music of their stories,

their oral histories."

Hwang reiterates his optimism in an inspiring manifesto he e-mailed a day later:

"The history of jazz has demonstrated its great potential to absorb and transform world influences into a dynamic American expression. This is the dawn of synergistic cross-cultural exchanges. To absorb and transform other musical languages with one's own is the rich art of improvisation." **DB**

EQUIPMENT

Arthur Blythe plays a Buescher alto saxophone with a Berg Larsen mouthpiece and Rico Select reeds.

Fred Ho plays a Selmer Low A baritone saxophone with a Lawton 9-star B metal mouthpiece and Rico #4 reeds.

Horace Tapscott plays a Yamaha acoustic piano.

Jason Hwang plays a Tucker Barrett electric violin with a Multi Verb Alpha amp, and a Kita acoustic violin.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Arthur Blythe
NIGHT SONG—Clarity 1016

Fred Ho
MONKEY PART TWO—Koch Jazz 3-7840

Jason Hwang
CAVERNS—New World 80458

Horace Tapscott
THOUGHTS OF DAR ES SALAAM—Arabesque 128

Jin Hi Kim
KOMUNGUITAR—Nonsequitur/What Next 12



No Time **FOR**



billy hart

may be the most in-demand session

drummer in jazz today. A veteran of over 400 albums, including Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock classics, he remains a ubiquitous presence at clubs, festivals and recording sessions worldwide, drumming behind everyone from Joe Lovano and Tom Harrell to Toots Thielemans and Charles Lloyd. An adept multistylist, he's as comfortable playing "inside" as "out." But whether he's playing bebop, free-jazz, fusion or funk, his crisp, limber touch is utterly distinctive. As Davis once noted, he can play behind, ahead of or right on the beat, and it all swings.

"Billy's very flexible, able to complement a lot of different musical situations," says saxophonist Sonny Fortune, who's featured Hart on several of his albums. "He's one of my go-to-first guys, and it's been that way since we met. I met him around 1965 when he was working with Jimmy Smith. At that time I was equating the organ with a commercial sound, and yet when Billy and Jimmy were together, it was very progressive and contemporary."

"He is among the most creative drummers I know, completely adaptable to any style," says saxophonist Dave Liebman, who spent 10 years with Hart in the group Quest and recently recorded two albums of his own with the drummer for the Arkadia Jazz label. "Drumwise, he is a combination of a lot of elements, but he has a certain slant that's completely unique: You know it's Billy from the snare drum and the cymbals. And also Billy is a real friend; he's a very wise, humane person. He's really selfless; he's just in it for the music."

"He's a great human being, first of all," says bassist Dave Holland, who worked with Hart in Stan Getz's band and played on one of Hart's solo albums. "He's got a profound depth to his thinking and his playing, and he always approaches the music from an absolute creative point of view. He's constantly feeding the music with creative ideas, dynamics and dramatic moments, and he has a wonderful feel for interpreting many different compositional directions."

Though he's led his own bands sporadically since the '70s and is practically worshipped by fellow musicians for his highly stylized and skilled drumming, Hart suffers the stigma of the perpetual sideman, receiving far less recognition than contemporaries like Jack DeJohnette and the late Tony Williams. "The sooner you can be a leader and be marketed as yourself, the easier it is to be known, and I never really did that," he reflects. "I always had a family, so I was desperate to earn a certain amount of bread. And at the time it seemed the only way I could learn the craft was to go out and play every day. Now the way I did it almost seems ridiculous—to just stay on the road for 30 years, playing with anybody and everybody."

By Larry Birnbaum

Stardom



At his band's annual engagement at New York's Sweet Basil, Hart took the opportunity to traverse a range of musical directions he rarely gets to explore as a sideman. High-energy modalism mingled with edgy fusion and spiky free-jazz, as Mark Feldman's violin swirled, David Kikoski's piano scampered, Santi Debriano's bass rumbled, Chris Potter's saxophones angled sharply and David Fiuczynski's guitar dripped molten metal. Hart's drums never dominated, but his loping rhythms surged with electricity, and his explosive solos flashed a kaleidoscope of fiery colors. By the second set, the club was barely half full, but a dreadlocked Cecil Taylor stalked the house, inspiring the musicians to stretch out further.

The same band, with John Stubblefield as well as Potter on saxophones, can be heard on Hart's latest album, *Oceans Of Time* (see "CD Reviews" Dec. '97), where he runs the gamut from Afro-Cuban clave and funky backbeats to modal polyrhythms and abstract free time. But even the spiciest numbers are tightly structured, and the sense of pulse is never lost. "To me, it's accessible," says Hart. "It's definitely contemporary, but I've been around enough to project the traditional link. I heard John Coltrane's quartet; I heard Eric Dolphy; I heard Ornette; I heard Mingus. So I'm not just guessing; I was there."

Hart is acutely conscious of his place in a history he's experienced during four decades as a musician and five years as a visiting professor at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. "As I began to study what I do and why I do it," he says, "I began to get more spiritual with this stuff, and I realized that the rhythms have a purpose for humanity." Genial and loquacious, he's quick to digress into topics like the evolution of New York studio bands, the architecture of theaters in black neighborhoods and the origin of

jazz musicians' African names. But behind the smile there's a note of regret that his contributions have not been properly appreciated. "Nobody seems to know that I'm part of the process," he says. "I got one criticism that I was basically some obscure cat from the early '70s who hadn't done anything since."

Born 57 years ago in Washington, D.C., Hart is essentially self-taught. At 15 he was turned on to jazz by a neighbor, saxophonist Buck Hill; after playing in high school r&b bands, he worked with Hill at a club called Abe-Art's. Meanwhile, he backed touring soul stars like Otis Redding, Joe Tex and Smokey Robinson as the house drummer at the Howard Theater. He spent the early '60s as a member of Shirley Horn's trio; later, he was instrumental in obtaining the recording deals that revived both Horn's and Hill's careers.

In the mid-'60s Hart toured extensively with Jimmy Smith and Wes Montgomery but did not appear on either leader's Creed Taylor-produced studio sessions.

"I don't know what validity I have in the scene, historically. But if nothing else, I can definitely say that I was there—I was in the middle, I saw it all."

After Montgomery's death in 1968, Hart moved to New York, where he recorded albums with McCoy Tyner, Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul in quick succession. He began working steadily with Eddie Harris and with avant-garde standard-bearer Pharoah Sanders.

Hart's arrival in New York coincided with the advent of the fusion movement, and he recorded on such electric Miles

Davis albums as *On The Corner* and *Big Fun*.

Many aficionados consider Herbie Hancock's early '70s free/fusion band—with Hart (then known as Jabali), Eddie Henderson, Bennie Maupin, Julian Priester and Buster Williams—to be his finest ever. "People still talk about that band," Hart says, "but the general audience, including the musicians, never heard us. We would play some of those little funk tunes for an hour at a time, but it was too vague or too subtle or something. But Herbie had a certain commercial potential, and they weren't going to let him shirk that responsibility, so the band ended.

"I went with McCoy Tyner," Hart says. "And as soon as I joined McCoy, that's when I started winning the Down Beat polls."

After a year with Tyner, Hart took an unexpected mainstream turn, joining Stan Getz's band for four years. "To play with Stan Getz you have to learn certain things about a part of jazz history that I didn't necessarily know," he says. "He wanted to teach us what the other thing was, and I think it worked. It was a whole different acoustic texture." Hart was already into the Brazilian side of Getz's repertoire, having accompanied bossanova pioneers Antonio Carlos Jobim, Joao Gilberto, Bola Sete and Luiz Bonfá back in Washington at guitarist Charlie Byrd's Showboat club.

But Hart would not wear a straight-ahead straitjacket, and in 1977, while still with Getz, he recorded his first album as a leader, *Enchance*, a decidedly avant-garde session featuring Eddie Henderson, Dewey Redman, Oliver Lake, Marvin "Hannibal" Peterson, Don Pullen and Buster Williams. "That shocked everybody," says Hart. "Nobody was more shocked than Stan." Though not a big seller, the starkly dissonant yet carefully contoured LP won critical acclaim. "A lot of people heard that record," Hart says. "People like Wallace Roney, Don Byron

and Marvin 'Smitty' Smith, they all have this record. Of all my records, it's the one that's been most influential."

Not until 1985 did Hart release his next album, *Oshumare*, with Dave Holland, Branford Marsalis, Steve Coleman, Bill Frisell, Kevin Eubanks, Kenny Kirkland, Didier Lockwood and Mark Grey. "This is before any of these cats had recorded under their own names, except Dave

Holland," says Hart. Three years later the same label issued *Rah*, with Henderson, Eubanks, Kirkland, Frisell, Grey, Dave Liebman, Eddie Gomez and Ralph Moore.

Through the '80s Hart performed and recorded as a member of the collectives Quest (with Liebman, Richie Beirach and Ron McLure) and Great Friends (with Fortune, Billy Harper, Stanley Cowell and Reggie Workman). In 1992 he began teaching at Western Michigan, where he's delved ever-deeper into rhythmic traditions along with playing in their Western Jazz Quartet.

Hart's chameleonic energy has kept him in constant demand at home and abroad. But his name rarely appears at the top of the bill, and beyond the circles of players and cognoscenti, he has yet to be recognized as the premier musician he so plainly is. "His loss is many other people's gain," says Holland, "because he's been a key element in so many musical situations and groups and has brought his talent to enhance many, many situations."

Leadership may indeed be the fastest

road to recognition, but until now Hart has kept his solo career on the back burner. His first album with his current group, *Amethyst*, came out in 1993, but his hectic sideman schedule leaves little time for the band to perform. "I'm trying to figure out how to do that now," he says. "I've got a great band. What do I have to do, wait until they all become superstars and I can't even get them? So we did our first European thing this summer, and I'm going to try to do more gigs. The new CD is out, which I'm very pleased with, at least musically. I don't expect it to go platinum, but I'm proud of the musical choices that I made."

Meanwhile, Hart continues to raise his public profile through sheer omnipresence—a drummer who's just too good to ignore. A typical recent month found him on the road with Don Byron, John Patitucci, Kenny Burrell, Wallace Roney and Nick Brignola. "Obviously, you can't work with everybody all the time, so I'm forced to get into a juggling act," he says. "But I really like playing all kinds of music. I'm lucky; I'm still playing, and I'm still playing with the best cats in the world. I don't know what validity I have in the scene, historically. But if nothing else, I can definitely say that I was there—I was in the middle, I saw it all."

DB

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OF ONE MIND—CMP 47
QUEST III—Storyville 4158

with Charles Lloyd

CANTO—ECM 21635
ALL MY RELATIONS—ECM 21557
THE CALL—ECM 21522

with various others

BUG MUSIC—Nonesuch 79438 (Don Byron)
LABYRINTH—RCA Victor 68512 (Tom Harrell)
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A BETTER UNDERSTANDING—Blue Note 32799 (Sonny Fortune)
THE SEARCH—India Navigation 1059 (Chico Freeman)
PORTRAIT—Concord Jazz 4383 (Hal Galper)
BLUE SKIES—Concord Jazz 4676 (Stan Getz)
MWANDISHI: THE COMPLETE WARNER BROS. RECORDINGS—Warner Bros. 45732 (Herbie Hancock)
ON THE CORNER—Columbia/Legacy 53579 (Miles Davis)
BIG FUN—Columbia (Miles Davis—out of print)
IMPRESSIONS—SteepleChase 31173 (Buck Hill)
A LAZY AFTERNOON—SteepleChase 31111 (Shirley Horn)
YES, YES NONET—SteepleChase 31119 (Lee Konitz)
QUARTETS: LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VAN GUARD—Blue Note 29125 (Joe Lovano)
KARMA—MCA/Impulse! 153 (Pharoah Sanders)
ODYSSEY OF ISKA—Blue Note (Wayne Shorter—out of print)
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The late bluesman Johnny Copeland gained recognition as a fiery guitarist and vocalist in the mold of T-Bone Walker. His recordings earned him numerous awards, including a Grammy for Showdown, his collaboration with Albert Collins and Robert Cray, as well as a W.C. Handy Award for the album *Copeland Special*. This April 1982 "Classic Interview" finds Copeland reflecting on the need for blues revitalization, his respect for Texas tenormen and his association with many jazz musicians.

Stoking the Blues Flame

Johnny Copeland

By Cliff Tinder

"Everybody in the place had the same blank expression on their faces; no smile, no expression at all. They just stood there and looked at me. The ones who ain't down into it good, they'd clap a little bit, but the ones really off into the punk thing, they just stand there and try to psych you out—all the way out. I didn't know what they be thinkin'. They might be thinkin' about shootin' me or somethin'." Chapter One of *Texas Bluesman Meets The New Wave At The Mudd Club*. "But they don't fool me," Johnny Copeland chuckles, "because I know they're just actin'. I just come straight on at 'em no matter what."

Coming straight on at them with a razor-edged guitar, a powerful, raspy voice and a smoldering band that cuts right to your dance impulse, the current sensation of the blues scene won the standoff in convincing style. By the time Copeland returned a few weeks later for round two, he had the punkers packed in the Soho club, shakin' their butts all around the dance floor.

"Somebody's got to put the fire back into this music and get people buying it again," Copeland says humbly. But if anybody's cut out for the job of vitalizing contemporary urban blues, Copeland's the man. A local favorite in his home town of Houston for decades, Copeland's real break onto the national scene didn't come until last year's release of his first full album as a leader, *Copeland Special*. And although he has been a hot item at Harlem spots like the Top Club since moving to New York in the mid-'70s, downtown society knew little of his punchy blues. *Copeland Special* changed all that. All of a sudden, music critics were foaming at the mouth, and Copeland became one of the hotter acts on the blues circuit almost overnight. His thoroughly authentic yet contemporary urban blues style began winning converts from the ranks of young white college crowds, jaded new-wavers and even a bus load of German tourists that happened by the Top Club one night. It became obvious that Copeland's blues could penetrate the soul of almost anyone who came in contact with it.

"The blues is like the Bible, because it talks directly to you. And it can scare people to death," Copeland says in between mouthfuls of a special (a *Copeland Special*?) turkey hero made to exacting specifications at his favorite mid-town Blimpies. "In a lot of ways, being a blues singer is like being an actor, because you protect what you see around you. Every song can't be just about your own personal experiences. Hell, if an actor was really the dude he'd be playin', boy would he be in big trouble, and I'd have a one-way ticket to get drunk, being a blues singer. But you know that ain't the way it is with me. I don't want to be just a person, I want to be a productive person. I want to make an impact on this world and enjoy myself in the process."

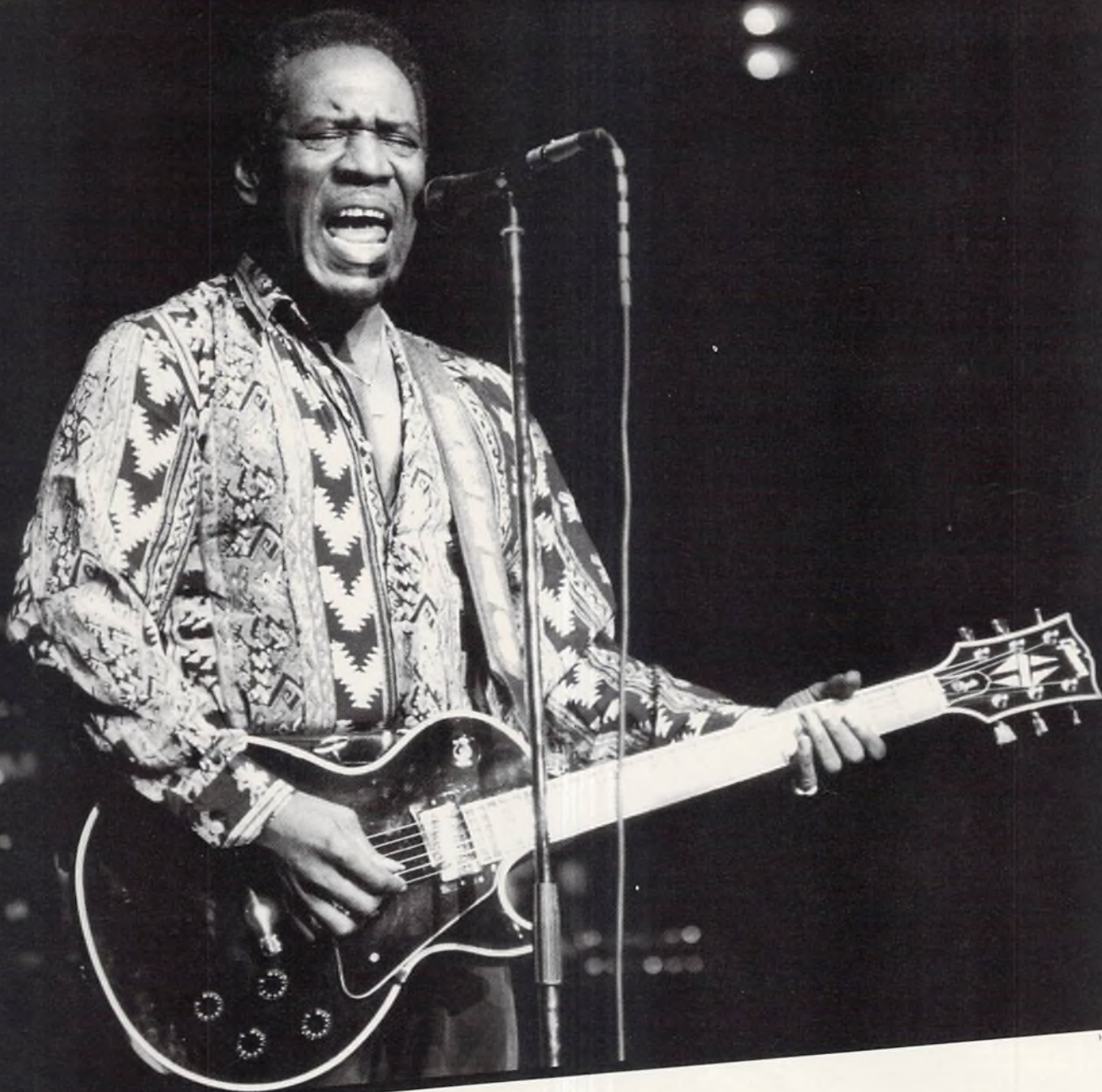
Copeland is certainly on the way. *Copeland Special* has been rec-

ognized as one of the most important blues albums to be released in years, and won the W.C. Handy award for best blues album of 1981. But Copeland's music is even more powerful, more inspiring when heard in the intimacy of a nightclub. With bassist Michael Merritt (son of the great Jymie Merritt), guitarist John Leibman and drummer Julian Vaughn tenaciously laying down the bottom, Ken Vangel handling the keyboards and arrangements, and John Pratt and Joe Rigby punching out horn parts, Copeland sings and plays pure fire. His voice becomes a hot amalgam of full-blooded richness and gutsy power. The inflections he uses are deeply rooted in the traditions of the blues but have a distinctive, clearly original flavor, and his energy and forcefulness are among the most potent of any living blues artist. Rounding out this exceptionally complete bluesman is a hard, trebly guitar sound, emotion-packed licks and formidable songwriting chops. Songs like *Everybody Wants A Piece Of Me*, *Copeland Special* and *Third Party* demonstrate Copeland's ability to take solid blues esthetics and translate them into infectious contemporary settings.

"Right now, all the young kids uptown are listenin' to that rap music, but it's just a matter of minutes before that'll be in the past. When the real music is ready to go, it has to dig back to the roots before it can move forward. But now, some of the young kids are discoverin' my music. I had some young people come up to me the other day and ask me what kind of new music it is that I'm playing," Copeland says as he cracks into hearty laughter. "They never even heard of the blues before, they thought it was somethin' completely new."

Born in Homer, La., 44 years ago, Copeland first became "possessed" by the blues after his family moved to Houston. "My daddy played guitar and sang the blues as a sideline." And by the time a guitar was passed down to Johnny, he "really started to get into learnin' that instrument. At about 15 or 16 it looked like I was possessed by the thing, man. When I'd get up in the morning, I'd run straight for that guitar. I couldn't get into nothin' else."

Texas, at that time, was exceptionally fertile soil for a young blues aspirant, and Johnny didn't have to look far for inspiration and camaraderie. "My little band of young musicians would be walkin' around with guitars entertainin' the whole neighborhood—like, 24 hours a day. We were listenin' to doo-wop, T-Bone Walker and Gatemouth Brown. But our idol was Widemouth Brown [Gatemouth's younger brother] because he was the local guy re-



ally doin' it around town. If we'd just get a chance to hear Widemouth Brown, we'd be happy. We'd also listen to guys like Albert Collins, Cory Carter and Lester Williams."

Texas was not only full of blues guitarists and singers, but it was also home for an indigenous species of hard-blowing, gutsy tenor players. Just a glance at the liner notes to *Copeland Special* indicates that Copeland hasn't lost a bit of his Texas-bred taste for hot saxophonists. Included are some of the best sax talents available—George Adams, Arthur Blythe, Joe Rigby and Byard Lancaster. "George has got the blues better than me, it looks like. Dig his playin' on *Third Party*—that's some shit! And Arthur got it, too. Both of them got the real roots of the music to 'em."

Adams so enjoyed playing with Copeland that it's not unusual to find him sitting in with Johnny's band. "I've always used great horn players. I like a real good, hard tenor sound with feeling," Copeland states emphatically. "Arnett Cobb and Cleanhead [Vinson] would come by and play with my band all the time in Houston." While a young Hubert Laws would sit in with Johnny from time to time, such luminaries as Don Wilkerson, L.A. Hill and Wilton Felder were regular bandmembers.

"Wilton Felder was workin' with my band when the Crusaders

decided to move out to California. He sure could play that honk music. The bass player in my band was also with the Crusaders, so I really tried to talk those guys out of leaving Texas. I did do a record with Joe Sample and that whole bunch out in California in 1970. At that time they weren't workin' too much—just sittin' around catchin' the chestnuts and stuff. But now they're millionaires," he chuckles, slaps me on the shoulder and demonstrates his impressive ability to put the hardships of the blues world, as well as its joys, into perfect perspective—an attribute that I suspect has greatly contributed to the absence of wear and tear in his face, the lean boxer's body he has maintained since his days as an itinerate prizefighter, and the constant sparkle in his eye.

"If you know how it feels when the door gets slammed shut in your face, you'll know how to treat it when it finally gets opened. Like, I always thought that I could do the blues, and do them well. But I still felt as good about myself five years ago, when I just came to New York and nobody knew my name, as I do now that all the doors are startin' to open for me. If you don't *love* what you're doing, you ain't got *no* business doing it," Johnny concludes, laughs a little laugh at himself, and takes the last bite of his Copeland Special sandwich. **DB**

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Transcending Musical Borders

The process of finding one's own voice on an instrument can follow strange, unexpected paths. For 28-year-old trumpeter Cuong Vu, one of the most distinctive stylists on New York's Downtown music scene, the journey was defined by a love/hate relationship with the trumpet itself.

A Vietnamese native, Vu was a fifth-grader in Seattle when his father decided that the trumpet was the instrument for his son. "I wanted to play drums or guitar, but trumpet was my dad's favorite. I thought it was a geeky instrument, plus you couldn't play any of the pop music I was listening to on it."

Despite his initial reservations, the instrument soon became something that defined him as he developed into a strong player. "I still didn't like the instrument, but when people tell you you're good at something at that age, it's pretty cool."

One high school music teacher introduced him to the music of Miles Davis and Clifford Brown, and a full scholarship to the New England Conservatory of Music was waiting after graduation. But Vu still wasn't sure the trumpet was for him.

"I went to NEC because I thought it would help me figure out what I wanted to do with music. I considered switching instruments, but I had a serious chip on my shoulder from people telling me how good I was. I knew it would take a lot of work to learn a new instrument, and I just couldn't deal with not being among the best players."

It's difficult to square the soft-spoken 28-year-old with the brash teenager. Today, Vu talks about the value of group interaction and says he doesn't view the trumpet as having a set role in ensemble work. What happened in the intervening decade to turn him around?

"In my last year at NEC, I studied with Joe Maneri, and he opened my eyes and ears to how I really heard music. He helped me realize the elements in music that moved me. Joe is able to find someone's strength and get them to play at their top level. He pushed us to find new sounds, new forms, new ways of approaching every improvisation."

Vu recalls one class that changed his life. "He stopped us in the middle of an ensemble and told each of us what we were doing and where we were going. When we started again, it was some of the best playing I'd ever done. I knew right then that he'd helped me find what was important to me."

Since graduating and moving to New York in 1994, Vu has recorded with trumpeter Dave Douglas, drummer Bobby Previte, saxophonists Andy Laster and

Chris Speed, and bassist Jeff Song. A joint project with Jamie Saft was released on John Zorn's Avant label, and he's saving toward recording his three-year-old quintet with Speed, Jim Black, Stomu Takeishi and Curtis Hasselbring. Although he cites influences as diverse as Beethoven and Prince, Vu says his peers move him more because they share a desire to transcend musical borders.

"What we have in common is that we're interested in music, not in styles or idioms. We're developing our own language and trying to get past preconceived ideas of what we should play. It's like being a kid in the sandbox again and not worrying about what anyone thinks. You mess around and you're not really sure of what you're doing, but then you look and you've made something cool."

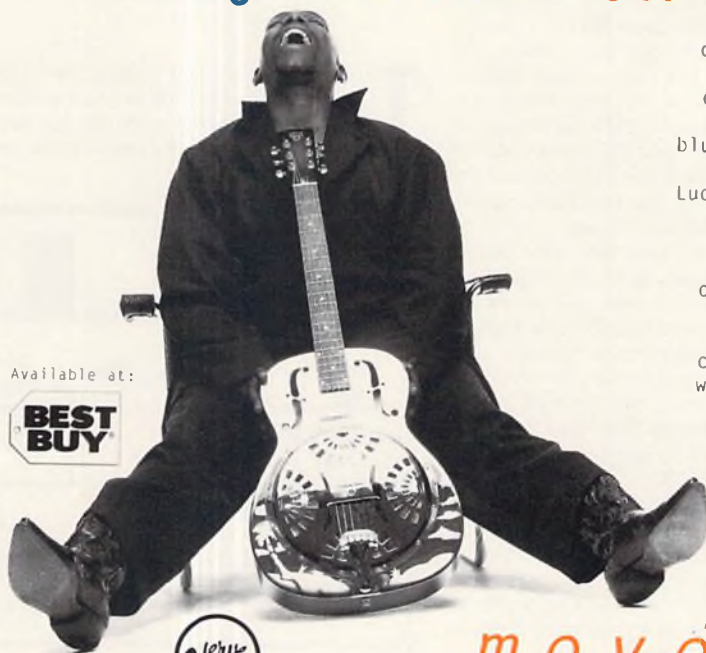
In achieving a unique trumpet voice, Vu says he has come to view the instrument as simply a vehicle for his music. "I'm trying to faithfully follow my intuition and let my love of certain aspects of music dictate who I am musically, rather than trying to make music fit into any preconceived style or genre."

—James Hale



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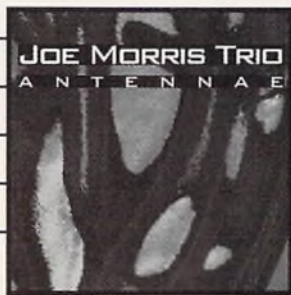
CD REVIEWS

MARCH 1998

KEY

Excellent
Very Good
Good
Fair
Poor

★★★★★
★★★★
★★★
★★
★



Joe Morris

Antennae
AUM Fidelity 004

★★★★

Only a few years back, Bostonian guitarist Joe Morris was having trouble getting his music produced, and for a long while he solved the problem by putting out projects on his own Riti label. Suddenly, over the last two years he's swimming in releases, with CDs emanating from hatOLOGY, ECM, Leo, No More, Soul Note and even the indie rockers Homestead. The last of these companies recently folded, but their man in jazz, Steven Joerg, opened Aum Fidelity in its wake, and Morris can add this imprint to his lengthening list.

One can easily understand the boom in Morris' stock—he's one of the very few guitarists continuing to explore the uncompromising turf that others, especially James "Blood" Ulmer, seemed to abandon in the late '80s. He works without anything cutesy or haut-conceptual—no cover tunes or pastichery, no obvious hooks or nostalgia to snag the audience. The sound of Morris' Les Paul is bare, sinewy, unadorned with effects, and often his phrases are sharp as glass splinters. But the music's not characterless skronk; quite the contrary, it's hot-blooded free lyricism, an extension of the unbounded linearity and social interplay of Ornette Coleman and Jimmy Lyons.

The pieces on *Antennae* took their inspiration from Lowell Davidson, a sadly little known multi-instrumentalist with whom Morris worked fairly extensively before his death in 1990. Skeletal compositions provide grist for wide-ranging improvisations—"Human Pyramid" is an emotionally charged ballad, "Stare Into A Lightbulb For Three Years" (a reported experiment of Davidson's) has a great, terse, jumpy theme; "Elevator" rises to blistering runs and particularly nice lower-register guitar, while on the title track Morris turns his pick 90-degrees to alter the timbre until it almost sounds like he's bowing a spike-fiddle. (Note: There's some sort of editing or mixing error at around 11:55, as a ghost track of drums plays past the drum solo.)

Jerome Deupree played drums with Morris on some of his fine Riti efforts, and he sounds wonderful here: loose, rolling and tumbling, but

right on target in the abrupt tutti parts. Bassist Nate McBride should catch some ears. The 26-year-old has already waxed with Morris a couple of times, but this is his best representation yet—he's at once aggressive and sensitive, adding productive energy to the most free-whorling sections, holding down ferocious time on "Stare Into A Lightbulb," and walking purposefully on the bluesy tune "Silent Treatment."

Antennae is a rich trio outing from Morris, who continues to stretch jazz guitar into strange, beautiful new shapes. —John Corbett

Antennae—Synapse: *Antennae*; Silent Treatment; Stare Into A Lightbulb For Three Years; Human Pyramid; Elevator; Virtual Whatever. (74:03)

Personnel—Morris, guitar; Nate McBride, bass; Jerome Deupree, drums.



Django Reinhardt

Nuages
Arkadia 71431

★★★

This material, recorded in the 1930s by the Quintet of the Hot Club of France, represents a portion of the work that has been reissued countless times by many labels, and

this particular grouping is neither the best nor the worst, as reissues go. If they want to append the subtitle "with Coleman Hawkins," for instance, they might play straight and give us the two other titles Django Reinhardt and Hawk made on that session. Such skimpiness does not endear me to this CD. Nor does the 54 minutes of playing time, which misses such essentials of the period as "Djangology," "China Boy," or the sides with Eddie South.

And forget the utter nonsense on the sleeve about the Hawkins sides being "newly discovered performances." Only idiocy or intent to defraud could lead anyone to claim that one of the half-dozen most famous sessions of the decade is "newly discovered." They are the same superlative takes that have been making the rounds for 61 years. Deduct one star.

All that aside, I am forced to say that this is still a good pocket-size introduction to a remarkable and unique body of pre-bop work. Though Reinhardt led a short and dark life that has made him the focus of the Hot Club records (a status he took for granted), the primary and defining voice, it seems to me, is the lead voice of Stephane Grappelli. And he is in consistently sensational form here. Though nobody could ever outswing him, he has been described as proper and polite in his playing. Yet, listen to the stabbing charge with which he attacks his second chorus on "Shine." The vibrato absolutely smolders and should extinguish any sense of quaintness this music may have to new ears. His skills show best at high speed. On "After You've Gone," his notes have a lifting, often thrashing sting that is simultaneously elegant and ecstatic.

Behind Grappelli, Reinhardt pushes with a pounding rhythmic chonk and chorded comping that drives in a tight groove, even when the rhythm has a two-beat feel ("Charleston," "Exactly Like You"). But four is better ("Shine"). His solo voice was his signature, however. He pours great detail into his playing with an immaculate attack. On his own

CDs	CRITICS ▶	THE HOT BOX			
		John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	John Ephland
JOE MORRIS <i>Antennae</i>		★★	★★★★	★★★1/2	★★★
DJANGO REINHARDT <i>Nuages</i>		★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★1/2
OSCAR PETERSON <i>The Trio</i>		★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★1/2
MARC JOHNSON <i>The Sound Of Summer Running</i>		★★★1/2	★★1/2	★★★	★★★1/2

"Nuages," a piece still played today, notes quiver with the sharp, intense vibrato that give his sound a distinctly European voice, never copied here. The remarkable thing is that even at fast, furiously swinging tempos, this lush romanticism remains present in flourishes of suave, often doubletime phrasing.

The two titles with Hawkins (and let's not forget Benny Carter) come from one of his most enduring sessions. The unexpected logic of "Out Of Nowhere," with its D-flat and D-natural benchmarks in the first six bars, have helped make it tempting material for improvisation. And Hawk climbs the changes with a passion that, by his second chorus, may border on the cloying to ears weaned on Rollins and Coltrane. But this is romantic tenor. Listen again. Its mate, "Sweet Georgia Brown," has a carefully paced double-barreled ensemble finale.

—John McDonough

Nuages—Nuages; Minor Swing; Swing Guitars; After You've Gone; Linehouse (sic) Blues; Georgia On My Mind; Nagasaki; Shine; Charleston; Exactly Like You; You're Driving Me Crazy; Ain't Misbehavin'; Rose Room; Chicago; Out Of Nowhere; Sweet Georgia Brown; Japanese Sandman; Farewell Blues. (54:04)

Personnel—Reinhardt, Joseph Reinhardt (1-8, 14), Eugene Vees (1), Pierre Ferrel (3-13), Marcel Bianchi (9-13), guitar; Benny Carter (15, 16), trumpet; Carter (18), Alix Combielle (1, 15, 16), Coleman Hawkins (15, 16), Andre Ekyan (15, 16), reeds; Stephane Grappelli, violin (all tracks except 1, 15, 16, 18), piano (16, 17); Tony Rovira (1, 9-13), Louis Vola (2, 4, 5, 14), Lucien Simoens (3, 6-8), Eugene d'Hellemmes (15, 16), Dick Fullbright (17), bass; Pierre Fouard (1), Tommy Bedford (15, 16), Bill Beason (17), drums; Freddy Taylor (4, 6-9), vocals; Benny Carter Orchestra (18).



Oscar Peterson

The Trio
Verve 539 063

★★★★½

There was a time when a cohesive, relatively longstanding jazz band was recorded live for the sake of the music, pure and simple. Miles Davis at the Blackhawk and Plugged Nickel, Shelly Manne at the Blackhawk, Coltrane at the Village Vanguard, all manner of groups at Carnegie Hall (e.g., Dave Brubeck, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, you name it). Nothing contrived. The notion of a "concept" for recording was obvious: Here was a great band in a great locale, playing what they always play. Guest stars were great, but it was the *band* that mattered most.

In fact, the idea of recording live seems like a dated way to present a working band. One of the great on-site recording dates that's come and gone was the Oscar Peterson Trio (featuring Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen, clearly the pianist's best group) live at Chicago's London House (also come and gone). This release, which adds five additional songs to the original album and previous CD issue, was the first in a series of four vinyl titles from a summer 1961 engagement (captured in a five-CD set smothered in ridiculous packaging; though, the present set also reflects over-the-top design).

For those who love the hard-charging, swinging Peterson style, the bonus tracks include two numbers that buttress what was the only truly uptempo tune on the original release (their set-ending "Billy Boy"). Gillespie's "Woody 'n' You" and Clifford Brown's "Daahoud" are played at blinding speeds, Brown and Thigpen shadowing their leader, never overtaking him, providing just the right rhythmic support.

And yet, it is the ballads and medium-tempo tunes that showcase this group best, with added finesse, dexterity and novel arrangements to boot. "Sometimes I'm Happy," the set's longest tune (clocking in at almost 12 minutes) is a study in even-tempered swing, Peterson at will quoting in his solos any number of past jazz greats he's accompanied (try Lester Young, for starters). Similarly, the opening song, "I've Never Been In Love Before," is the quintessential set starter, what with its joyful, meandering gait, full of warm spots and group chitchat. But the best tunes on *The Trio*



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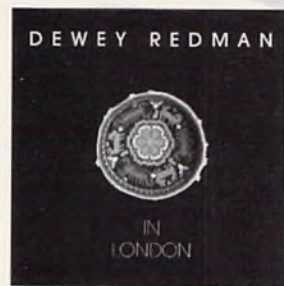
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The bonus tracks are a mixed bag: Given the wealth of material, "Soon" (an absurd choice given its fadeout) and "Daahoud" are clearly marginal, while Brown's funky "Gravy Waltz" and Peterson's lovely "The Lonesome One" become perfect companion pieces.

Maybe most everyone else either hears Peterson's speed as a turnoff or turnon, but I'll take those medium grooves and ballads any day, any time. And with such stellar company!

—John Ephland

The Trio—*I've Never Been In Love Before; In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning; Chicago; The Night We Called It A Day; Sometimes I'm Happy; Whisper Not; Billy Boy; The Lonesome One; The Gravy Waltz; Woody 'n' You; Soon; Daahoud.* (76:24)

Personnel—Peterson, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Ed Thigpen, drums.



Marc Johnson

The Sound Of Summer Running
Verve 539 299

★★★

Establishing itself just as much on mood as it does content, *The Sound Of Summer Running's* band is made up of baby boomers fluent in the regional lingo(s) at the heart of its style. Bill Frisell, Pat Metheny, Joey Baron and Marc Johnson have all previously dabbled in what one pal currently calls "covered bridge jazz." Frisell's Nashville was brainy new age for the hoedown set; Metheny's chart-topping confluence with Charlie Haden was a snoozy stream of prairie lullabies. Johnson may seem an arriviste, here to lap up some of that heartland gravy with superstar pals in tow, but he too has walked these meadows before. Over a decade ago, on *Bass Desires*, he, Frisell, John Scofield and Peter Erskine lilted their way through the trad lament "Black Is The Color Of My True Love's Hair."

Some deem Johnson a cipher for other, more meaningful talents, but here the bassist's role transcends that of a mere catalyst. He wrote most of the pieces on *Summer Running*, including the disc's esthetic centerpiece, "Porch Swing." A paean to ruralism, it glides through

fleeting allusions of "Tennessee Waltz" on its way to a place where sighing is the liveliest activity around. Like a few of the record's tunes, "Porch Swing" pushes your warm 'n fuzzy buttons: a confluence of melancholy and ease that conspires to elicit a sense of ho-hum leisure. But through the poise of the players and strength of the melody, you forgive its manipulation. Its beauty comes through unscathed. Indeed, even as the disc stirs pastoral familiarities, the program offers a great breadth. It gathers posies and chases twisters, but also allows the band to stop at a roadhouse for a quick one ("Union Pacific"), where Metheny and Frisell, recording under Johnson's auspices for the first time, wind up playing the blues. The unit also sticks its collective nose into the suburbs to catch a garage band trying to iron out the rough spots on "Dingy-Dong Day." Between Baron's mock simplicity, and the guitarists' crazed surf picking, it's as wry as it is cool.

Though it offers plenty of old-school soloing, *Summer Running* sidesteps the kind of swing that drove, say, Django's escapades. Its rhythms are idiosyncratic, largely in the service of the songs themselves. The lighthearted sheen of cymbal washes effected by Baron on the title cut is a perfect example. (In general, he keeps the guys on their toes, dropping a bomb or two on the golden sunsets.) The tune takes its cues from that other early cornerstone of Americana, Pat's 1979 solo opus *New Chautauqua*.

Cinematic in its approach, relentless in its investigation of melody, rife with opportunities for reflection, *The Sound Of Summer Running* is a bucolic array of dispositions whose riffs and voicings conjure notions of American originals like Creedence Clearwater, Georgia O'Keefe and Buck Owens. Pouring over a lot of elsewheres, it finds itself.

—Jim Macnie

The Sound Of Summer Running—*Faith In You; Ghost Town; Summer Running; With My Boots On; Union Pacific; Porch Swing; Dingy-Dong Day; The Adventures Of Max And Ben; In A Quiet Place; For A Thousand Years.* (53:23)

Personnel—Johnson, bass; Bill Frisell, electric and acoustic guitars; Pat Metheny, electric and acoustic guitars, 42-string pikasso guitar; Joey Baron, drums.



Ruth Naomi Floyd

With New Eyes
Contour 0925

★★★

Ruth Naomi Floyd, whither thy goest, I will follow, but first something must be done about the repertory. Most of the originals or new tunes are neither distinguished melodi-

cally nor lyrically. What is needed truly to showcase a voice that has gospel fervor and conviction and jazz feeling rarely occurs on *With New Eyes*, the vocalist's second release.

Much too often the force of things is commanded by the ensembles and with Uri Caine, Craig Handy, Bobby Zankel and Terri Lyne Carrington in the vortex of the mix, this is not surprising. There were moments when I thought of Doug and Jean Carn, but it was fleeting. Again, it may have been the tunes, which comparatively are far less profound and with melodies that are hardly fetching.

When Floyd is alone with just Ed Howard's bass as accompaniment on the title tune, or when she flexes her expressive vocal range and technique on "Some Other Spring," she is both refreshing and engaging. Just the voice to bridge that seemingly expansive gap between jazz and gospel.

Keep the deep spiritual quality, fix up the repertory with more compelling tunes, and you can bet there will be others who will follow.

—Herb Boyd

With New Eyes—*Stand To The Glory; Reap What You Sow; Looking Above; With New Eyes; Glass Ceilings; Some Other Spring; Path Of Life; The Substance Of Things Hoped For; Relinquish; The Balance (Between Extremes); Holy! Holy! Holy!; With New Eyes (reprise)* (68:08)

Personnel—Floyd, vocals; Ed Howard, acoustic bass (4, 6, 9); Reggie Washington, electric bass (1, 2, 5, 10); Steve Beskrone, six-string electric bass (3, 7, 8); Conrad Korsch, electric bass (10); Barbara Walker, guest vocal (4, 12); Steve Moss, percussion (1, 2, 5, 10); Uri Caine, piano, organ and keyboards (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10); James Weidman, piano (3, 6, 11); Jason Shattil, keyboards (2, 3, 9); Craig Handy, tenor and soprano saxophones (1, 4, 5, 9, 10); Bobby Zankel, alto and soprano saxophones (2, 4, 7, 10); Bryan Carroll, vibraphone (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10); Terri Lyne Carrington, drums (on all numbers except 11 and 12).



Arcana

Arc Of The Testimony
Axiom 524 431

★★★★

Arc Of The Testimony should have been celebrated as Tony Williams' return to the powerful, guitar-oriented jazz fusion he pioneered and refined with Lifetime in the '60s and '70s. Instead, his second Arcana collaboration with Bill Laswell will be remembered as a final salvo from the drummer, a project completed after his death in February 1997. This CD deserves better, as Laswell has assembled a bracing, challenging recording that references but updates the classic Lifetime sound, always featuring Williams' churning rhythms and staccato beats in a central role.

While the first Arcana project, *The Last Wave*

(DIW, 1995), took its direction from the wild, plugged-in improvisations of guitarist Derek Bailey, *Arc Of The Testimony* is a more composed effort. Laswell is much more involved in production and sound design than as a bassist. Pharaoh Sanders solos on two tracks, and he's particularly effective on "Gone Tomorrow." Over the racing pulses provided by Williams, Sanders starts from an almost tender, elegiac sound, progressing to shrieks of anguish. Williams counters Sanders with a multifarious assault on the drum set, joining the saxophonist on a plateau of intensity. "Illuminator" and "Returning" feature dual guitarists Nicky Skopelitis, who adds texture and color, and Buckethead, whose heated solos suggest Hendrix by way of early John McLaughlin. Williams envelops and drives the guitarists with a firestorm of drumming. Along its ferocious jazz-rock fusion, *Arc Of The Testimony* suggests other directions, including open improvisations and ambient soundscapes.

Like the first Arcana CD, *Arc Of The Testimony* shocks the listener by returning Williams to an aggressive, amplified, rock-based format after an absence of two decades. Listening to the primal ferocity and tense moods of this CD, one can't help but wonder what the drummer might have done next.

—Jon Andrews

Arc Of The Testimony—*Gone Tomorrow; Illuminator; Into The Circle; Returning; Calling Out The Blue Light; Circles Of Hell; Wheelless On A Dark River; The Earth Below.* (53:43)

Personnel—Tony Williams, drums; Bill Laswell, 4 and 6-string basses, fretless bass, ebo. SFX; Pharaoh Sanders, tenor saxophone (1, 6); Byard Lancaster, alto saxophone, bass clarinet (1, 3, 5); Graham Haynes, cornet (1, 3); Nicky Skopelitis (1-7), Buckethead (2, 4, 6), guitars.

Catherine isn't easily buttonholed, either as instrumentalist or composer (he contributes five originals). His sound ranges from softly soothing to hard-edged and almost metallic, the latter two aspects recalling his Django Reinhardt influence. As a soloist, the leader can be both rhapsodic, issuing expansive tones as on "Rene Thomas," a touching tribute to that Belgian plectrist, and an ardent swinger, offering measured, bop-based gushes on "Stella."

The guitarist's songs, outfitted with grand melodies, are designed for expression. A good example is the opening "Piano Groove," a 24-bar tune with a blues undertone, and the suite-like "December 26th," which starts as a tender ballad, moves from medium to steaming fast, then slows again. There's lots of heat in those two numbers, and others such as "Dance For Victor" and "Freddie Freeloader." But there are several moderate-to-slow numbers as well, among them "Mingus In The Sky" (where bassist Van de Geyn's fat, elastic tones are showcased) and der Brink's lovely "Wondering Why."

The performances are sparked by the interplay between the Oscar Peterson-influenced den Brink and the leader; attentive and keen low-end support from Van de Geyn and Oosterhout adds an appealing roundness.

—Zan Stewart

"Live"—*Piano Groove; Dance For Victor; I Fall In Love Too Easily; Rene Thomas; Wondering Why; Nem Um Talvez; Mingus In The Sky; Freddie Freeloader; Stella By Starlight; December 26th.* (61:02)

Personnel—Catherine, electric guitar; Bert Van den Brink, piano, keyboards; Hein Van de Geyn, bass; Hans Van Oosterhout, drums.



Carol Sloane/ Clark Terry

The Songs Ella & Louis Sang
Concord Jazz 4787

★★½

This album is party music. The kind of party that happens at the Resthaven Retirement Home. If you were born after World War I, it's hard to buy into mischievousness this tame and self-conscious.

Carol Sloane and Clark Terry perform songs recorded by Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong on their mid-'50s collaborations *Ella And Louis* and *Ella And Louis Again*. Sloane's style is so quiet that she risks the soporific, but her caressing clarity evokes some of Ella's silkiness. Terry's trumpet is a worthy descendant of Armstrong's dramatic sense of form, not to



Philip Catherine

"Live"
Dreyfus 36587

★★★★½

A Belgian born in London, thoroughly recorded guitarist Catherine has done it all, from leading various units to playing robust straightahead with Charles Mingus and free with Jean-Luc Ponty. Indeed, it's the go-anywhere quality of these performances, coupled with their sense of swing, that makes this 1996 recording at a club in Laren, Netherlands, so listenable. It's simply a pleasure to hear this mature artist and his decidedly simpatico partners investigate a variety of mostly modern mainstream material with depth of feeling and consummate musicality.



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mention his swing. But Terry the vocalist should limit himself to one novelty number per album, and he sings on 10 of the 12 songs here.

The pointlessness of Terry's coy jive and banter becomes fully apparent when he finally shuts up, like on "Moonlight In Vermont." By herself, Sloane surrenders to this simple, flawless song with such sincerity that she implies whole territories of emotional nuance. She is on her way to texturing a similar mood on "The Stars Fell On Alabama" when Terry enters, and his hoarse, strained, spoken-word singing evaporates the magic. (He has most of Louis' gravel, but little of his relaxed phrasing and none of his charm.)

Terry takes the last song with just his open horn and the rhythm section, and shows what this album might have been. "When It's Sleepy Time Down South" is a beautifully unadorned tribute, concise and complete. That excellent rhythm section, by the way, is underutilized. Bill Charlap, Marcus McLaurine, and Dennis Mackrel are rendered anonymous by their restricted support function. Charlap, one of the most promising new pianists in jazz, stays deep under cover, peeking out only rarely, in eight-bar snatches.

—Thomas Conrad

The Songs Ella & Louis Sang—*I Won't Dance; Tenderly; Don't Be That Way; Can't We Be Friends; Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You?; Autumn In New York; Let's Do It; The Stars Fell On Alabama; Moonlight In Vermont; Blueberry Hill; Stompin' At The Savoy; When It's Sleepy Time Down South.* (59:20)

Personnel—Sloane, vocals; Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn, vocals; Bill Charlap, piano; Marcus McLaurine, bass; Dennis Mackrel, drums.



Bob Berg

Another Standard

Stretch 9013

★★★

Bill Evans

Starfish & The Moon

Escapade 63654

★★★½

The common denominator in the careers of saxophonists Bill Evans and Bob Berg is their sideman duties in Miles Davis' pop/rock/funk/jazz fusion bands of the '80s. When Davis reentered the jazz world in 1980 after his seven-year hiatus, he recruited Evans on the recommendation of Dave Liebman. In 1984, after Evans took his leave, Davis wel-

comed Bob Berg to his band. Berg held the saxophone chair until 1987. Even though their association with Davis figures prominently in their respective resumes, both saxmen moved on to significant gigs in other bands (Evans with Mahavishnu Orchestra and Herbie Hancock's Headhunters; Berg with Chick Corea) along with launching impressive solo pursuits.

Their latest releases find them operating in vastly different jazz territory. Evans, age 40, emerges from his hip-hop-infused fling of recent outings into more eclectic acoustic terrain with a batch of catchy originals, while Berg, 46, takes the standards route, putting straightahead jazz spins on familiar tunes, many of which were put on the map by Frank Sinatra. Both CDs satisfy, with Evans earning bonus points for his successful experimentations with ensemble instrumentation.

Berg's *Another Standard* is a fine collection that showcases the leader's lusty tenor blowing and pianist David Kikoski's imaginative and at times scintillating keyboard displays. The best takes on Sinatra material are "You And The Night And The Music," which leads off the set with a fast and furious wallop, and "Just In Time," with the delightful pendulum-swinging arrangement that opens and closes the piece. Also noteworthy: The sole original, Berg's "No Trouble" (based on "I Got Rhythm" changes), which features former bandmate/guitarist Mike Stern joining the leader in propelling the rhythm, and an emotive rendition of the Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess* number, "My Man's Gone Now," with trumpeter Randy Brecker guesting and Kikoski offering a beautiful piano coda. Less effective is Berg's soprano sax delivery of Frank's classic "It Was A Very Good Year," recreated as an uptempo waltz that bears a little too much resemblance to Coltrane's "My Favorite Things."

Low point of the proceedings: an unadventurous rendering of the Lennon-McCartney hit "Michelle," where Berg's tenor comes off sounding whiny instead of romantic.

While Berg's CD is characterized by a straightforward post-bop approach, Evans pushes the envelope, with varying degrees of success, on *Starfish & The Moon*. Plusses: Lyrical tunes, driving rhythms with percolating percussion and tinges of funk, and a splendid support team that includes guitarists Adam Rogers and Jon Herington, who cart out crisp, chiming acoustics and gritty electrics to flavor the pieces. Rogers even straps on a mandolin for the title track, giving it a country-music feel while Evans warbles and trills on soprano saxophone. The strongest numbers are the cookers. Evans bites and howls on tenor sax and producer Bill Beard gushes with B-3 glee on the big sound of "Whiskey Talk," and the whole crew digs a deep trench of funk on "Red Dog," which features a stingo guitar solo by Rogers.

On the flipside, however, Evans' ballads, with their saccharine romanticism, prove to be disappointments. And those Metheny-esque atmospheric wordless vocals—well, they mollify like synth wash, except when Arto Tunçboyacıyan breaks out of the soothing zone on the title track and "It's Only History," and Caroline Leonhart slips in a bluesy touch at the end of "Something In The Rose." But the misses come with the hits when you take chances, which Evans, in the true Miles spirit, does on *Starfish & The Moon*.

—Dan Ouellette

Another Standard—*You And The Night And The Music; Summer Wind; Michelle; Just In Time; My Man's Gone Now; All The Way; No Trouble; It Was A Very Good Year; I Could Write A Book.* (56:40)

Personnel—Berg, tenor and soprano saxophones; David Kikoski, piano; Ed Howard, bass; Gary Novak, drums; Randy Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn (5, 9); Mike Stern, guitar (7).

Starfish & The Moon—*Something In The Rose; Starfish & The Moon; Little Slow Poke; I'll Miss You; Whiskey Talk; The Last Goodbye; Red Dog; It's Only History; Big Blue Hat; Shady Lady.* (54:27)

Personnel—Evans, tenor and soprano saxophones; Jim Beard, piano, Hammond organ, synthesizers; Henry Hey, keyboards; Adam Rogers, acoustic and electric guitars, mandolin; Jon Herington, acoustic and electric guitars, acoustic bass guitar; James Genus, acoustic bass; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums; Arto Tunçboyacıyan, percussion, vocals; David Blamires, Caroline Leonhart, vocals.



Jimmy Bruno Trio

Live At Birdland
Concord Jazz 4768

★★★½

Bobby Watson

Advance
enja 9075

★★★½

Guitarist Jimmy Bruno must be a promoter's nightmare. He plays ferocious post-bop guitar out of a lineage that might extend to Wes Montgomery and Pat Martino, among others, but he offers no gimmicks, angles or other lures to attract attention. He has too much grey hair to be counted as a young lion, and he's too young for rediscovery. *Live At Birdland* captures a night's work for Bruno's tight, Philadelphia-based trio, with the added attraction of Bobby Watson's alto sax on six of the 10 tracks.

The combination of Bruno and Watson immediately clicks, with Watson's control and cool complementing Bruno's heat and energy. The saxophonist's presence seems to take the trio to another plane. Bebop predominates, with the group taking on three Charlie Parker tunes. Bird's "Au Privave" and "Anthropology" turn into high-speed chases with the guitarist and saxophonist challenging and goading each other. Bruno plays these tunes at a dazzling speed, but his solos are inventive and melodic. Watson matches and ups the ante, smoothly maneuvering the changes and evoking Bird's combination of stamina, fluency and invention. On the final choruses of "Au Privave," Bruno

pushes Watson, goading him to a faster, frenzied pace. "These Foolish Things," played as a tender duet for alto and guitar, lets everyone catch their breath. The success of this date should encourage Watson to examine Charlie Parker's music extensively.

Advance documents a live performance from 1984, when Watson had only recently parted from Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and had yet to sign with Blue Note. Watson makes an immediate impression by conveying exuberance and charisma, along with complete command of his instrument. Two Watson originals, "E.T.A." and "Karita," are the highlights of the performance, and he packs energy and conviction into every phrase and each new iteration of the theme. Pianist Jim McNeely adds a strong solo to "Karita," extending and embroidering the infectious melody. McNeely and Watson fly through "E.T.A.," a proven crowd-pleaser that evokes John Coltrane's "Giant Steps." "Round Midnight" gets new life from Watson, as he lingers over each note, adding nuances while he expands and reworks the composition.

With the saxophonist's Blue Note releases inexplicably out of print, *Advance* preserves an interesting stage in Watson's development. The performance clocks in at under 40 minutes, and it's disappointing that additional numbers from the concert weren't included for this reissue. —Jon Andrews

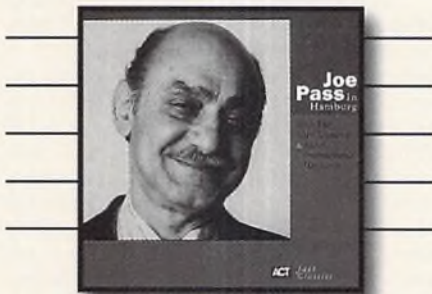
Live At Birdland—18; *Move; Groove Yard; Valse Hot; Segment; Au Privave; These Foolish Things (Remind Me Of You); For J.T.; Anthropology; My One And Only Love.* (66:06)

Personnel—Bruno, guitar; Watson, alto saxophone (5-10);

Craig Thomas, bass (1-6, 8-10); Vince Ector, drums (1-6, 8-10).

Advance—*But Not For Me; Karita; 'Round Midnight; You're Lucky To Me; E.T.A.* (39:08)

Personnel—Watson, alto saxophone; Jim McNeely, piano; Todd Coolman, bass; Adam Nussbaum, drums; Burger Solbruck, congas (4).



Joe Pass

In Hamburg
ACT 9100

★★★

While big bands in American broadcasting seem to have gone that-a-way (the NBC Tonight Show Band was the last to go), in Europe, subsidized radio orchestras are not only still around, they're providing opportunities for American soloists to record inexpensively with a big band.

To wit: these specimens of thinking persons' mood music by Joe Pass made during five days in February 1992. They are clean, bright and full of straight, transparent voicings that put a pleasant, if slightly bland, zone of commercial comfort around the guitarist's epicurean taste and virtuosity. With orchestral resources on hand, Pass is generally relieved of being his own rhythm section and accompanist, assuming the simpler role of lead voice. "Soft Winds" is the most open-ended of the program, with satisfactory solos by Walter Norris on piano and Wolfgang Schluter on vibes before a subtle modulation that sets off Pass distinctively.

Herb Geller delivers a good, medium-fast chart on "Love For Sale," which gives Pass time for some especially penetrating single-note soloing. But the reed ensembles, though tight if not quite swinging, have a rather shallow sound here and throughout the CD. They achieve their most rounded sound on a too-short "Sister Sadie" at the end.

There are five Pass originals, and he chose to use a string ensemble on three of them. "For Nina" dwells on a simple, chorded riff through a series of lovely changes but without extensive variations. "Sweet Bossa" is light stuff, while "I'll Know" has a somber undertone.

Ballads like "Polka Dots And Moonbeams," "Indian Summer" and his own "Waltz For Django" provide for enough unaccompanied solo time so Pass can deliver in capsule form his full range of studied dynamics, elegant arpeggios, compounding counterpoint and internal dialogs. As always, the notes and flow are flawlessly realized, enabled by a superb sense of time. —John McDonough

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In Hamburg—*On A Clear Day; For Nina; Polka Dots And Moonbeams; Love For Sale; Indian Summer; Sweet Bossa; Fragments Of Blues; I'll Know; Summer Night; Waltz For Django; More Than You Know; Star Eyes; Lullaby Of The Leaves; Soft Winds; Sister Sadie.* (66:47)
Personnel—Pass, guitar; NDR Bigband (sic), Band; Jiggs Whigham, conductor (3, 4, 7, 9-11, 13-15); Lennary Axelsson, Ingolf Burkhardt, Heinz Habermann, Manfred Moch, Lawrence Elam, Rolf Poschka, trumpet; Wolfgang Ahlers, Herman Plato, Arnold Schon, Egon Christmann, trombone; Wolfgang Bielbel, Emil Wurster, Harald Ende, Tobias Schmiot-Relenberg, Stephan von Dobrzynski, Thomas Zoller, saxophones; Wolfgang Schluter, vibraphone; Walter Norris, piano; Lucas Indholm, bass; Alex Riel, drums. NDR Bigband and Radio Philharmonie Hannover: Lex Jasper, conductor (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 12); Alexsson, Burkhardt, Moch, Bob Lanese, trumpet; Schon, Christmann, Joe Galladro, Joe Welch, Charles MacInnes, trombones; Wurster, Ende, Roman, Christmann, Herb Geller, Roman Schwaller, Andreas Boether, Howard Johnson, saxophones; Harry Grube, piano; Lindholm, bass; Wolfgang Haffner, drums; unidentified string section.



Matthew Shipp Duo with Joe Morris

Thesis
hatOLOGY 506

★★

Joe Morris & William Parker

Invisible Weave
No More 4

★★★½

Guitarist Morris' rapport with both pianist Shipp and bassist Parker was proven on *Elsewhere*, a 1996 quartet date. Each musician enjoys creating a thicket of notes, and their kinship was illustrated as they collectively cut a path through a forest of converging lines. That inspired teamwork continues on *Thesis*. The ominous "Particle 1" illustrates how thoughtful dialog can change delicate strands of sound into girders; "Our Journey" explains that parallel thoughts sometimes force a cluster of lines to display the reasoning at its core. Huddled together, these au courant iconoclasts seem to raise the flag: All hail momentous abstraction!

But the term "thesis" is sometimes defined as "a hypothetical proposition, especially one put forth without proof." As far as improv goes, the proof is always in the putting. Putting together, putting aside, putting forth. Though persuasive in the cooperation department, the

pair's bugaboo is construction. Swingless, these Shipp tunes create a lumbering music of flash-points that bets the farm on manipulating tension and timbre. In a bizarre way, it's almost formulaic. There are aggressive passages, reflective passages, a solo for each—you know the drill. Action, sure—but, somehow, claustrophobia gets in there, too.

The pas de deux with Parker on *Invisible Weave* has a few more vistas, and a lot more buoyancy. I think it's because the bassist is a better "drummer" than Shipp. Here, Morris' quick jottings in both the upper and lower registers become heartfelt proclamations (in Shipp's company, they sometimes seem self-conscious, rhetorical). Expert at establishing a sense of pulse, Parker mercurially shifts his tempos. The blurred bowing on "Hypnotext" is clever, contrasting with the guitarist's pop and snaps. It gracefully moves from drones to fractured phrases, providing more liftoff with each turn. The pair's combined skittishness is entrancing rather than distancing. When reflection does rear its head—on the aptly titled "Spectral"—it, too, compels.

Parker's also got a superb bass sound, as plush as it is earthy. In cahoots with Morris, its dimension is captivating. On this live date from New York's Knitting Factory, there's an audio verite that contextualizes the details of both musicians' work.

—Jim Macnie

Thesis—*Thesis; Fable; Simple Relations; Particle 1; The Wand; Action And Reaction; Center Of; The Turnpike; Form of "Y"; Broader Orders; Particle 2; The Middle Region; Our Journey.* (63:28)

Personnel—Shipp, piano; Morris, guitar.

Invisible Weave—*Hypnotext; Viewer; Standing Figure; Spectral; To the Sensory; Invisible Weave #1; Invisible Weave #2.* (75:55)

Personnel—Morris, guitar; Parker, bass.



Bernard Purdie

Soul To Jazz II
ACT 9253

★★★★

Like the jacket to Bernard Purdie's *Soul To Jazz II*, you don't get the full exposure of the music until it's stripped to its bare essentials. Put another way, if you have a hankering for jazz stewed and steamed with rhythm & blues, and basted here and there with a succulent spirituality, Pretty Purdie and his galley of cooks—Stanley Turrentine, Vincent Herring and Hank Crawford—will more than whet your appetite.

Two traditional African American spirituals—"Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child" and "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen,"

both arranged by Bob Belden—are rendered slower than a Baptist funeral, and with about the same amount of sorrowful inflection by Turrentine and Crawford, respectively. Crawford bends and extends notes with such a vocalic feeling that the ancient lyrics practically tumble fully shaped form his gorgeous horn. Herring, he with the Bird-like sonorities, evokes a similar passion on "Jubilation," though investing his moment with a much sunnier, optimistic veneer.

While Benny Green and Junior Mance split the chores at the piano—and Mance simply sizzles with invention on "Jubilation" and Green romps and comps magnificently on a spirited "Joshua"—guitarist Cornell Dupree and Purdie are a constantly resourceful duo throughout the CD. Theirs is a catalytic camaraderie that relies on a soul-stirring, call-and-response rapport, and there must have been more than one occasion when they felt they were once again hustling to keep up with their former leader, King Curtis.

When Crawford offers his sermon-like chant on "Amen," the group could not have found a more fitting finale. It exudes such a camp-meeting fervor that it almost makes you want to take up a collection.

—Herb Boyd

Soul To Jazz II—*Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child; New Orleans Strut; La Place Street; Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen; Jubilation; Joshua; Mr. Magic; Theme From "Shaft"; Amen.* (63:04)

Personnel—Purdie, drums; Benny Green (1, 3, 6-8), Junior Mance (2, 4, 5, 9), piano; Cornell Dupree, guitar; Vincent Herring (2, 5, 8, 9), Hank Crawford (3, 4), alto saxophone; Stanley Turrentine, tenor saxophone (1, 3); Stanley Banks, electric bass; Pancho Morales, congas; George Naha, rhythm guitar (2, 5-9); Howard Johnson, baritone saxophone (6, 8); Jack Walrath, trumpet (8); Jack DeJohnette (2), percussion; the Benny Diggs Singers, vocals (1, 4).



Frank Carlberg

The Crazy Woman
Accurate 4401

★★★★

Finnish-born, New York-based pianist Frank Carlberg's sophomore outing on Accurate is quite a revelation. Smart poetry, captivating vocals, tight ensemble interplay and seemingly effortless, anti-gravitational improvisation all add up to make *The Crazy Woman* a rare jewel of a CD.

Odds are you haven't heard anything quite like this. Carlberg has taken 11 quirky, whimsical and poignant short contemporary poems written by such noteworthies as Gwendolyn Brooks, Jack Kerouac, Anselm Hollo and Wallace Stevens and given them the jazz treatment. But instead of jamming the words into convenient musical forms, Carlberg lets the contours of the poems themselves dictate how he reinvents

them. He impeccably captures the mood and emotion in his free and fun interpretations given voice by Christine Correa's horn-like, half-spoken, half-sung vocals. The result is a compelling and delightful, fresh and unpredictable collection of tunes with oddly shaped melodies and soundscapes that are more cinematic in nature than song-like.

In addition to Correa's splendid contributions, Carlberg's musical vision is aided and abetted by a top-notch simpatico band, featuring tenor saxophonist Chris Cheek and rhythm team Ben Street on bass and Kenny Wollesen on drums. Also of note: the leader's stark, oblique, swinging, ponderous, pouncing piano lines that invigorate each piece.

The show begins on a jubilant note as Carlberg and crew frolic through the playful "Godlike." He does a fanciful dance on the keys, then wheels and spins with Cheek in tow during an instrumental interval that serves as a break from Correa's skip through Hollo's lines: "When you suddenly/feel like talking/about the times/in your life when you were/a total idiot asshole you resist/the impulse/& just sit there/at the head of the table/beaming." It's a great beginning to a cool-jets outing that includes a murky, snail's pace take on Anna Akhmatova's muse on the world's brutality, "The Last Toast," the flitting waltz "Fireflies" with Carlberg's light piano touch giving Rabindranath Tagore's haiku-like poem mellifluous drama, bopping vocal liftoffs through Kerouac's "Life Is Sick" with Creek's blue tenor sway in the spotlight, and the ebullient end song, Hollo's "No Way & Now," tinged with tango and klezmer.

Both a romp and a haunt, joyful and gray, *The Crazy Woman* streams with nourishing beauty.

—Dan Ouellette

The Crazy Woman—*Godlike: The Last Toast; The Crazy Woman; We Real Cool; Frog/Man; The Snow Man; Fireflies; Veins; I Clearly Saw; Life Is Sick; No Way & Now.* (61:37 minutes)

Personnel—Carlberg, piano; Christine Correa, voice; Chris Creek, tenor saxophone; Ben Street, bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums.



Virginia Mayhew

Nini Green
Chiaroscuro 351

★★★★

Virginia Mayhew's debut recording is impressive, not only because she is such a fresh, intelligent, polished player on three saxophones (two of which are new to her), but

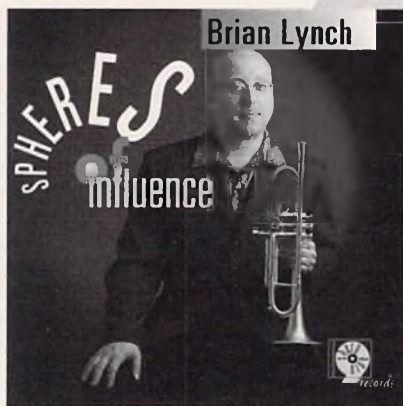
because she has crafted a beautifully paced, balanced album.

Mayhew chose jazz alto saxophone over classical clarinet and moved from San Francisco to New York 10 years ago to study at the New School. She has worked with Al Grey and the all-female big band Diva. One reason why *Nini Green* sounds so finished is that a working band made it. The two percussionists, Adam Cruz and Leon Parker, have played with Mayhew for several years, and seamlessly mesh their complementary energies. Harvie Swartz is an ideal bassist for Mayhew's refined sensibilities. And trumpeter Ingrid Jensen, who also played in Diva and who has been a member of Mayhew's band for four years, is a provocative partner. (Jensen's work here is even stronger than on *Vernal Fields*, her own 1995 debut.)

The single smartest decision Mayhew made for *Nini Green* was to add pianist Kenny Barron to her band. Barron's vast creative resources elevate every project he touches, and his playing here is luminous.

But *Nini Green* is Virginia Mayhew's statement. She wrote five of the tunes. They tell about widely divergent emotional spaces, the composer's articulate saxophones at the center of every tale. The title track is a waltz for her grandmother, and Mayhew's effervescent alto spills joy for a strong spirit. "Blue Green And Brown" is an erotic reverie through which Mayhew's tenor floats—if it is possible to float with such clear purpose and momentum. (Barron scatters small clusters like caresses.)

The best piece is "Maybe Someday." Barron introduces it with as much empathic sensitivity as any composer could wish for her song, then



CD 1007-2

Brian Lynch

Spheres of Influence

Donald Harrison, alto sax David Kikoski, piano
Essiet Okon Essiet, bass Jeff "Tain" Watts, drums
John Benitez, bass Adam Cruz, drums
Conrad Herwig, trombone Milton Cardona, congas

Still underrated after all these years, trumpeter Brian Lynch explores a wide range of musical interests on *Spheres of Influence*; from hard bop to Latin, with some reggae and hip hop stops along the way. Is there a trumpeter on the scene who can cover this vast musical landscape with as much technical command and musical authority?

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Mayhew takes up the message of yearning and melancholy, but not without hope. "Time Alone" shows the range of experience that Mayhew can communicate with the rational language of modern mainstream post-bop. She conveys what loneliness feels like when it starts to get close to the edge. Her opening theme shudders with dread. Her solo never breaks its clear-throated tone, but careens like a bad day's wavering panic. Barron scurries but finds no escape. Jensen renders her own quiet crisis, smearing and keening. Like every piece on this album, it works.

Virginia Mayhew. Remember her name.

—Thomas Conrad

Nini Green—*Yes Or No, Stay Or Go; Good Morning Heartache; Voyage; Nini Green; Maybe Someday; Time Alone; Blue Green And Brown; Invitation; Jazzspeak.* (77:49)

Personnel—Mayhew, tenor (1, 3, 5-8), alto (4), and soprano (2) saxophones; Ingrid Jensen, trumpet, flugelhorn; Kenny Barron, piano; Harvie Swartz, bass; Adam Cruz, drums; Leon Parker, percussion.



Mongo Santamaria

Afro Blue

Concord Picante 4781

★★★★

Poncho Sanchez

Freedom Sound

Concord Picante 4778

★★★★

Consider The Jazz Crusaders—at least two of its most notable members, special guests Wilton Felder (tenor sax) and Wayne Henderson (trombone)—draped in Latin and you have some indication of what conguero Poncho Sanchez and his companeros are putting down on this date. But on "Transdance," Kenny Cox's alluring melody with Miles Davis-like patina, the Latin motif is slightly muted and seeps through only when Sanchez chooses to pop his congas to emphasize the beat, or when pianist David Torres alters the pulse and adopts a cha-cha mode.

The "fat, soulful" Crusader sound, Sanchez titles in the liner notes, erupts once again on the title tune composed by Joe Sample. Felder is the fellow here and he still possesses that Texas sidewinder feeling that made him such a popular soloist more than two decades ago. Check out Alex Henderson's punchy didirido accents

toward the tune's coda. Under a really laid-back tempo, Henderson announces that "You Don't Know What Love Is," and it is evident from his big, assertive tone that he does. "Prestame Tu Corazon" belongs almost exclusively to Sanchez, and his congas resonate a crisp collection of blips and bops, registering intonations somewhere between a balafon and a gamelan. There are no allusions on "Latin Bit"; this unadulterated, straightahead rumba has plenty of pepper in the sauce.

From the first scintillating thump on "Un Dia De Playa," Mongo Santamaria creates a somber samba mood, but beneath this relative calm are occasional hints of the feverish and fresh guajira, charanga and mellow mambo to come. And come it does on "Mayeya," with Piro Rodriguez's trumpet and the late Charlie Palmieri's piano gift-wrapping the ritmo with a harmonic ribbon of blue notes.

Like your Santamaria pure and to the point? Well, that occurs with relentless brilliance on Gillespie's timeless "Manteca." Santamaria knows all the Chano Pozo insinuations and subtleties, that way of getting right in the eye of a rhythm storm and gently coaxing it toward different tonalities and intensities. Most rewarding here is the opportunity to hear Santamaria unadorned. The full majesty of his talented hands is a captivating experience, and he could have extended this solo indefinitely. Sanchez needed a moment like this to showcase his considerable skills. Mitch Frohman's flute is a delightful flutter of punctuation on Santamaria's underrated "Para Ti," a lilting charanga. The flutist is equally dazzling on "Come Candela," weaving almost hypnotically in and around Almendra's timbales and Bernie Minoso's heavy breathing bass lines.

The date would have been incomplete without Santamaria's theme "Afro Blue." And the maestro finds yet another way to turn a predictable beat around, leaving Eddie Rodriguez's batatas and chekere to further transform the "blue" to a deep African black. The two volcanic master drummers are clever guides, inspiring a choir of griots and then making it all appear as though it was just another riveting jam session at the legendary Savoy Ballroom.

—Herb Boyd

Afro Blue—*Un Dia De Playa; Mayeya; Con Mi Ritmo; La Tumba; El Campesino; Manteca; Bonita; Para Ti; Come Candela; Afro Blue.* (60:26)

Personnel—Santamaria, congas; John Andrews (Johnny Andreu Almendra), timbales, traps; Bob Quaranta (except 2), Charlie Palmieri (2), piano; Ray Vega, trumpet, flugelhorn (except 1, 2), percussion (10); Bobby Porcelli, baritone saxophone (except 1, 2, 5), flute (5); Mitch Frohman, tenor saxophone (except 1, 2, 8, 9), flute (5, 8, 9); Bernie Minoso (except 1-3), Ray Martinez (1-3), bass; Marty Sheller, conductor (1-5); Eddie Rodriguez, bongos, percussion (6-10), vocal, chekere (10); Pablo Rosario (1, 2), Humberto "Mengue" Hernandez (3-5), vocals; E.J. Allen (1, 2), Piro Rodriguez (2), trumpet; Sam Furnace, alto (1), baritone (1, 2) saxophones; Tony Hinson, tenor saxophone (1, 2); Valtinho (1), Steve Thornton (1, 2), percussion.

Freedom Sound—*Brown & Blue; Transdance; Aleluia; Freedom Sound; You Don't Know What Love Is; Prestame Tu Corazon; MJ's Funk; (Bella El) Suave Cha; When We Were One; Latin Bit; Scratch.* (57:52)

Personnel—Sanchez, congas, vocals; special guests: Wilton Felder, tenor saxophone; Wayne Henderson, trombone; David Torres, piano; Ramon Banda, timbales, trap drums; Tony Banda, acoustic, electric guitars; Jose "Papo" Rodriguez, percussion, congas, bongos; Sal Cracchiolo, trumpet, flugelhorn; Scott Martin, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones, flute; Alex Henderson, trombone, didirido.



Brian Lynch

Spheres Of Influence

Sharp Nine 1007

★★★★½

Brian Lynch has long been due for a breakthrough recording. This could be it. Lord knows, the 40-year-old trumpeter is ready. He's been a significant member of ensembles led by Art Blakey, Horace Silver, Toshiko Akiyoshi and, currently, Eddie Palmieri and Phil Woods, and his solo albums have always made for substantial listening. And while these recordings have suggested his versatility and many musical interests, none has the breadth of *Spheres*.

Here, always coupled with a driving jazz spirit and groove, we have reggae ("Silver"), Coltrane-type harmony ("Green Is Mean"), samba ("Clairevoyance"), Afro-Cuban and salsa ("Mood," "I've Grown Accustomed"), modal/hip-hop ("Lukeman"), post-bop ("Oriental Folk Song") and a lovely ballad ("You Know"). With this program, Lynch demonstrates that a dedicated, knowledgeable jazzman can play a diversity of styles with telling authenticity, and make the renditions extremely appealing to both musician and neophyte.

Despite the variety, everything swings. The rhythmic babble provided by such stalwarts as Watts, Cardona, Benitez and Kikoski gives the commanding trumpeter a superb platform to work from. And the leader takes advantage, delivering, at various points, juicy bop-based lines, adventurous statements, high Dizzy-like bursts, whizzing doubletrills and more with his vibrant, crackling sound. Lynch is simply first-rate.

A few highlights: the snappy sway between Latin and straightahead on "Accustomed," the delicious hard-bop centers of "Clairevoyance" and "Silver," the drum solos over the montuna at the end of "Mood," Lynch's pure feeling on "You Know," Harrison's sweet Cannonball-ish alto on "Green," Kikoski's brief but memorable parallel octaves on "Accustomed."

All in all, impressive, musical stuff.

—Zan Stewart

Spheres Of Influence—*Jamaica Silver; I've Grown Accustomed To Her Face; Clairevoyance; You Know I Care; Lukeman; Green Is Mean; Palmieri's Mood; Oriental Folk Song.* (66:59)

Personnel—Lynch, Tony Lujan (2, 7), Pete Rodriguez (2, 7), trumpet; Donald Harrison, alto saxophone (1, 3, 5, 6, 8); Conrad Herwig, Luis Bonilla (2, 7), trombones; Chris Washburne, tuba (2, 7); David Kikoski, piano; Essiet Okun Essiet (1, 5, 6, 8), John Benitez (2-4, 7), bass; Jeff "Tain" Watts (1, 5, 6, 8), Adam Cruz (2-4, 7), drums; Milton Cardona, congas (2, 3, 7).



Bob Dorough

Right On My Way Home

Blue Note 57729

★★★★

Mose Allison

Gimcracks And Gewgaws

Blue Note 23211

★★★½

Both of these singer/songwriter/pianists were born in backwater Southern towns over 70 years ago, and both are cult figures. Up to now, Mose Allison's cult has been larger. But *Right On My Way Home*—Bob Dorough's first release on a major label in 41 years—will, if there is any justice, bring him to parity.

Dorough and Allison are what happens to the wine of hipness when it ages to the very edge of vinegar. They've seen it all. Droll and undefeated, they regard the human tragedy with dry-eyed resignation. There is genuine musicianship on these two albums. Allison's trios have always conveyed his subtle, swinging feel for time. Here, he expands his band to a quartet, adding either Mark Shim's light, suave tenor saxophone or Russell Malone's sweetly simmering guitar to the gentle push of bassist Ratzo Harris and drummer Paul Motian. Dorough, on half of his tracks, brings in world-class accompanists like Joe Lovano and Christian McBride and Billy Hart. But the high levels of instrumental discourse on these recordings serve songs that tell stories.

All but two of Allison's 14 pieces are originals. There are no new Allison classics among them, no "Parchman Farm," no "If You Live." The voice, always understated, is even softer and less certain now. But there is more than enough Mose left to present several new, wise Allison worldviews. "What Will It Be" is a tastefully morbid meditation on the multiple options in causes of death, expressed in Allison-esque feminine rhymes ("What will you have that puts you in your casket?/Will you up and blow a gasket?"). "The More You Get" is a wry, withering comment on contemporary acquisitiveness. "Texanna," a questioning message to a grandmother he never knew, is authentic, touching, unsentimental folk poetry. *Gimcracks And Gewgaws* ends with "Old Man Blues" and a circle closes, 40 years after Mose sang "Blues (A Young Man)" on his first Prestige album ("An old man ain't nothin' in the USA ... /A young man is the man of the hour/35 years of purchasing power").

Dorough's interface with the modern world is jauntier and more extroverted than Allison's, but

no less problematic. Most people who know his name think of Dorough as the staff vocalist/composer for the popular Saturday morning educational cartoon show *Schoolhouse Rock*, where he has been music director for 24 years. The few members of the aforementioned cult know him as a unique interpreter of American popular songs. He is the composer of record for only three of the 10 tunes on *Right On My Way Home*, but anything he sings in that endearing quavering quack becomes a Dorough song. There are famous lines of "Moon River" that are utterly transformed because their victories are so hard-won ("there's such a lot of world to see ..."). "Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most" reveals new complexities of forlornness when filtered through Dorough's quirky accents and hold-and-release phrasing.

And when people hear "Whatever Happened To Love Songs" and "I Get The Neck Of The Chicken," when they experience that suck-it-up acceptance of the absurd and the impossible, they will need to hear more. Dorough has the special gift of bringing joy even to the jaded. Perhaps especially to the jaded.

The deepest pleasure of listening to Bob Dorough and Mose Allison is the reassurance that old age need not be bereft of the option to define the terms on which one abides the world.

—Thomas Conrad

Right On My Way Home—*Moon River, Whatever Happened To Love Songs; Right On My Way Home; Walk On: I Get The Neck Of The Chicken; Zacherly; Something For Sidney; Hodges; Up Jumped A Bird; Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most.* (53:15)

Personnel—Dorough, vocals, piano; Joe Lovano, tenor (1, 3, 5) and soprano (7) saxophones; Christian McBride (1, 3-5, 7), bass; Bill Takas (2, 6, 8-10), electric bass; Billy Hart (1, 3-5,

7), Grady Tate (2, 6, 8-10), drums.

Gimcracks And Gewgaws—MJA Jr.; *Gimcracks And Gewgaws; Numbers On Paper; Cruise Control; St. Louis Blues; Mockingbird; The More You Get; Texanna; What Will It Be; So Tired; Somebody Gonna Have To Move; Fires Of Spring; What's With You; Old Man Blues.* (44:45)

Personnel—Allison, vocals, piano; Mark Shim (1, 2, 6, 10, 13), tenor saxophone; Russell Malone (4, 5, 7, 9), guitar; Ratzo Harris, bass; Paul Motian, drums.



Ethnic Heritage Ensemble

The Continuum

Delmark 496

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"All Blues" with African rhythms and instruments. Percussionist Kahil El'Zabar is the remaining founder and principal composer of the newly reconstituted group, whose lineup includes two drummers, trombone and saxophone. The quartet excels at establishing the compelling riffs and deep trance grooves which underlie El'Zabar's "The Continuum" and "Ancestral Song."

El'Zabar and "Atu" Harold Murray, a new recruit, embellish those grooves with thumb piano and bells. Murray gives the group a fuller sound, often supplying a pulse beat and liberating El'Zabar to add more color on drums, percussion devices and wordless vocals. In this band, everyone plays rhythm. Trombonist Joseph Bowie and saxophonist Ernest "Khabeer" Dawkins double on percussion, and,

in turn, join the rhythm section to support the soloist.

Jazz tradition is most evident in the group's treatment of "Well You Needn't," in which Monk's rhythm mutates into an African groove, and "Ornette," which features an insistent, serpentine melody and an energetic solo by Dawkins. Replacing Ed Wilkerson in the ensemble, Dawkins has a tough act to follow, but he succeeds, bringing a lighter, exuberant sound on tenor and alto saxophones. "From Whence We Came" evokes the classic sound of the Art Ensemble of Chicago with fiery percussion and an insinuating central riff. The group's rhythmic strength compensates for some inconsistent soloing.

—Jon Andrews

The Continuum—*The Continuum; Well You Needn't; Ancestral Song; Ornette; From Whence We Came; Chatham Dirge; All Blues.* (64:26)

Personnel—Kahil El'Zabar, drums, percussion, African thumb piano, voice; Joseph Bowie, trombone, percussion; Ernest "Khabeer" Dawkins, tenor and alto saxophones, percussion; "Atu" Harold Murray, percussion, voice (1).

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Tim Hagans/ Marcus Printup

Hubsongs
Blue Note 59509

★★★★½

Test yourself. Check out the specifications for this album.

Tim Hagans and Marcus Printup, two of the meanest trumpets on the street, cover 10 Freddie Hubbard songs—tough, hard stuff like "Hub Cap" and "Backlash" and "Thermo." Hubbard himself is deeply involved in the project, picking tunes, writing arrangements, overseeing the transcriptions, rehearsing the band. Two saxophonists who are also strong leaders, Vincent Herring and Javon Jackson, join for three numbers each. The rhythm section contains one of the most powerful pianists of the new generation, Benny Green, plus unimpeachable choices in two Washingtons, bassist Peter and drummer Kenny. The session is supervised by Bob Belden (who placed first in the TDWR producer category the '97 Down Beat Critics Poll). In the booth is Jim Anderson, arguably the finest engineer now recording jazz in the United States.

Sound like fun? If not, you are reading the wrong magazine.

Stimulated by this ideal recording situation, Hagans and Printup take not a single prisoner. The genre, of course, is a late-'90s spin on the pure Blue Note hard-bop strain. These two trumpets are direct descendants of Hubbard's

lineage. Printup's sound is classically contoured, and his lines have beginnings, middles and ends. Hagans' tone contains more splinters and shards, and he assembles asymmetrical wholes from beautiful fragments.

But when these two truly get it on (e.g., "Happy Times"), their differences are subsumed in the synthesis, as they needle and chase one another and then whirl together. They pass "Byrd Like" back and forth between them, always upping the ante. They soar off the opening fanfare of "Hubcap" and then duel like two fighter jets in the sky. Anderson's recording gets it all: the tongues of white fire and the golden splashes of sound and the brass bites that hurt so nice. This album just revels in trumpetry.

But that's not all. There are dramatic, passionate moments from Herring and Jackson, and there are the startling mood swings of two ballad duets with Benny Green. Printup's "Lament For Booker" is a pure, unadorned statement of loss and admiration, carried by a tone layered with honest emotion. Hagans, muted, patiently elaborates "Up Jumped Spring" with filigrees of fine detail.

The most exciting fact about *Hubsongs* is that it meets expectations. —Thomas Conrad

Hubsongs—*Backlash; Happy Times; Hub Cap; Lament For Booker; On The Que-Tee; Crisis; Byrd Like; Thermo; Up Jumped Spring; Life Flight.* (65:35)

Personnel—Hagans, Printup, trumpet; Vincent Herring (1, 5, 10), alto saxophone; Javon Jackson (2, 6, 8), tenor saxophone; Benny Green, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.



Bobby Previte John Zorn

Euclid's Nightmare
Depth Of Field 1-2

★★★★

What can you accomplish in just one minute? With *Euclid's Nightmare*, Bobby Previte and John Zorn offer a crash course in time management. The premise is simple: The duo has only a minute, maybe two, in which to spontaneously create something new and different using saxophone and drums. Despite the brevity of the tracks, this high-concept project is neither a Zornian hardcore rampage nor a soundtrack collection. These miniatures are often remarkably complete, some offering complex rhythms and multiple themes as well as a discernible beginning, middle and end (no fade-outs are used).

Previte has the most difficult task, laying a

new foundation and keeping things interesting, track after track and minute after minute. The listener's ear latches onto Previte's drum patterns for structure, and he responds with an impressive variety of sounds, including martial beats and polyrhythms, using all available surfaces of his drum set. He's not content to lay down a skeletal beat for 60 seconds. These rhythms frequently change and evolve, even within such tight time constraints. Engineer Joe Ferla recorded Previte's drums beautifully on this session.

Across 27 tracks, Zorn's improvisations momentarily indulge a number of his well-documented passions, including the music of Ornette Coleman, crime-jazz, klezmer, bird calls, hardcore and the jungle exotica of Les Baxter, along with his trademark alto shrieks and squeals. He strives to tell a (very short) story each time out. With Zorn focusing on composition and arrangement in so many recent projects, it's good to hear him draw on a wide range of influences in a purely improvisational role.

As a closing snippet of studio chatter acknowledges, some pieces are beautiful, and others are really weird. *Euclid's Nightmare* manipulates the listener's sense of passing time. Some of these duets end much too quickly. For others, one minute seems too long. Because it sounds startlingly fresh and varied, this CD should stand up to repeated listenings, offering something new with each encounter.

—Jon Andrews

Euclid's Nightmare—untitled tracks numbered 1 through 27. (43:27)

Personnel—Previte, drums; Zorn, alto saxophone.



William Parker & The Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra

Sunrise In The Tone World
AUM Fidelity 002/3

★★★★

Whether it's due to economics or traditional inclinations, there have been incredibly few working free-jazz orchestras in this country that have made daring improvisational statements along the lines of the freewheeling large European ensembles. Bassist William Parker's new Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra has admirably stepped into this void with an inspiring two-disc

set that embraces everything from directed chaos to introspective duets.

In the notes to Parker's *In Order To Survive* (Black Saint) sextet disc from '95, he set forth his guidelines for the essentials in his musical organization. While his orchestra has about 20 more members than that unit, similar methodology applies. Layers of sound direct uproarious call-and-response forays and clearly structured themes give way to harmonically open flights. Sometimes it appears to be aleatory and at times mighty vamps propel the overtones. Throughout the set, figuring out a secret design is an engrossing venture.

Disc one is primarily the more riff-laden of the pair. On the title track, a constant beat ties together a vibrant collage that does not veer into disorganized cacaphony. It's all a great introduction for, and rejoinder to, a searing angular solo from alto saxophonist Rob Brown, who has been a particularly valuable member of Parker's ensembles. The leader's own playing usually takes a generous backseat to the group's interplay, but his few notes on "Voice Dancer Kidd" are delivered as a succinct contrast to the off-kilter extroversion of trombonist Steve Swell. Another Parker regular, pianist Cooper Moore, is prominent in keeping the careening sounds locked together throughout the disc.

No such restraint is apparent in the 40-plus-minute "Huey Sees Light Through A Leaf," which comprises most of the second disc. Described as a "Collective Solo" for "the entire band" in Parker's liner notes, this animated soundscape ebbs and flows through crescendos

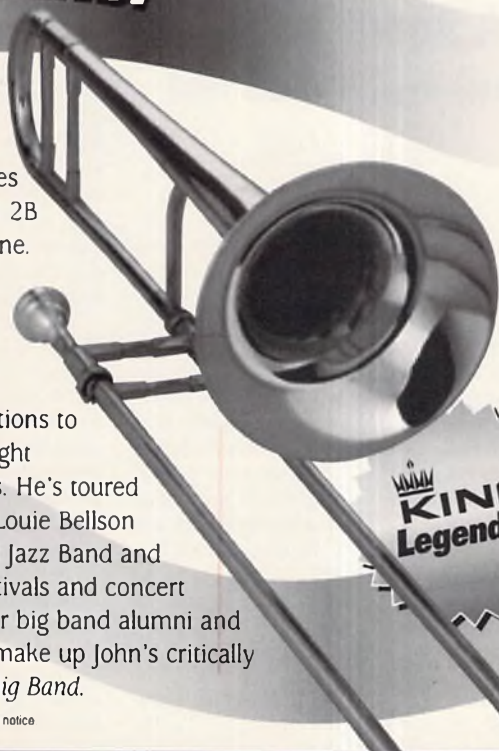
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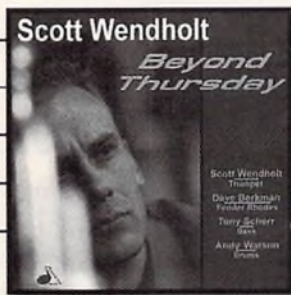
and sudden shifts in the instrumentalists' entrances and exits. This piece conveys more of an optimistic communal mood and less of a burning intensity than its mid-'60s stylistic predecessors, and the patience required in sitting through it is rewarded. For more variance, on "The Painter And The Poet," which closes the disc, Gregg Bendian's vibes are all that accompany a mournfully declarative alto lead from Marco Eneidi.

Along with the group's own dynamics, *Sunrise In The Tone World* also uses fade-ins to introduce a few tracks. Although in this case the producer-as-omniscient-instrumentalist technique works, it'll be interesting to hear if Little Huey's future performances communicate their ideas without studio enhancement.

—Aaron Cohen

Sunrise In The Tone World—*Sunrise In The Tone World; The Bluest J; Voice Dancer Kidd; Mayan Space Station; Huey Sees Light Through A Leaf; Sunship For Dexter; And Again; The Painter And The Poet.* (60:21/61:45)

Personnel—Parker, bass; Roy Campbell, Lewis Barnes, Richard Rodriguez, trumpet; Alex Lodico, Masahiko Kono, Steve Swell, trombone; Chris Jonas, Darryl Foster, soprano saxophone; Rob Brown, Will Connell, Mabo Suzuki, Marco Eneidi, alto saxophone; Connell, bass clarinet, flute; Richard Keene, Assif Tsahar, Ben Koen, tenor saxophone; Dave Sewelson, Joe Ruddick, baritone saxophone; Gregg Bendian, vibes; Cooper Moore, piano; Akira Ando, cello; Hal Onserud, bass; Dave Hofstra, tuba; Susie Ibarra, drums; Keene, oboe; Lisa Sokolov, voice (1,6,7); Vinny Golia, reeds (5); Jason Hwang, violin (5); John King, dobro (4).



Scott Wendholt

Beyond Thursday

Double-Time 128

★★★★

Wendholt, Berkman, Scherr and Watson held down a regular Thursday night gig at Augie's (a Manhattan jazz room for up-and-comers) during the early-to-mid-'90s. This recording reunites that quartet.

Though released under Wendholt's name—he does have the highest profile, having made three albums as a leader for Criss Cross—this is a group effort. Wendholt and Berkman both composed two tunes, and they arranged others, as did the rhythm section (the wildly revamped "Well You Needn't").

Stretching of forms is prevalent here, though as Wendholt says in the liners, nothing gets that far-out and there's plenty of solid rhythmic thrust. The nominal leader cites Miles Davis among his chief influences (others include Woody Shaw, Freddie Hubbard and Kenny Dorham), and there is a Davisian vibe to many of these selections.

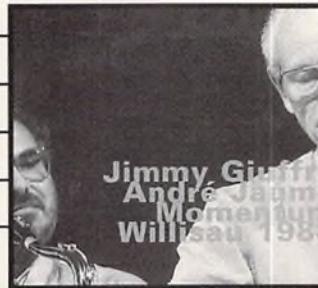
Miles' blues "Pfrancing" is certainly among these. Here, Wendholt, like the master, uses a soft then brazen tone and eschews a heavy blues feeling, instead offering mainly melodic phrases, of which some have a modern, abstract quality. Another is Berkman's "Christmas," where the pianist's efforts—via crisp swirls of notes and smaller groups of tones that have decided rhythmic impact—recall Davis' '60s pianist Herbie Hancock.

Wendholt's title track is of a more straightforward, though still contemporary, nature. One way he makes the music move is to take simple ideas and extrapolate them, creating color. The ballad "Together" is also chock full of choice passages.

Scherr's big sound is spotlighted both in support and in solos that are cleanly articulated and melodically smart. Watson is a crisp, empathic trapezoid. —Zan Stewart

Beyond Thursday—*The Party's Over; Beyond Thursday; Andre's Bossa; We'll Be Together Again; Pfrancing; Not A Christmas Song; Well You Needn't; Fairy Tail; I'll Be Seeing You.* (69:19)

Personnel—Wendholt, trumpet; Dave Berkman, Fender Rhodes piano; Tony Scherr, bass; Adam Watson, drums.



Jimmy Giuffre & Andre Jaume

Momentum, Willisau 1988

hatOLOGY 508

★★★★

Consider *Momentum, Willisau 1988* as a lost chapter in the Jimmy Giuffre story. This concert was recorded during a period in which Giuffre's work was documented only by his underappreciated group LPs for Soul Note. *Momentum* is a rare opportunity to hear Giuffre's compositions and improvisations in solo and duet performances, a few years before his reunion with Paul Bley and Steve Swallow. French reedman Andre Jaume is unfamiliar to U.S. audiences, but he proves to be an avid student of Giuffre's approach to improvisation. In terms of his sensitivity and empathic interaction with Giuffre, Jaume is in a league with Bley and Swallow.

The working relationship within the duo is clearly the center of attention. Where Giuffre takes the lead, as on "Eiffel," his clarinet establishes a wistful melody while Jaume's bass clarinet shadows him, offering harmony and sympathetic, complementary support. "I'll Be There" and "Dialogue" present an airy, conversational interaction, as the two exchange a continuing stream of ideas, as though circling or

goading each other. Both players contribute solo performances, and as Giuffre soars and whirls on "Momentum" and "Once," his inventions sound economical and thoughtful without sacrificing expression. When Jaume takes a tenor sax solo on "Standpoint," he explores the full range of his horn, conveying the same sense of effortless flight as Giuffre.

"Moonlight" and "Sequence" help sustain a blue mood of loneliness and solitary longing. Giuffre quickly establishes a certain comfort zone in terms of emotional range and approach, and he remains there for the duration. (One listen will erase any lingering doubts as to Giuffre's impact on the ECM school of players.) Over the course of the performance, more contrast, and even friction, between the two might have been welcome. —Jon Andrews

Momentum, Willisau 1988—*Eiffel; Momentum; I'll Be There; Standpoint; Sequence; Once; Dialogue; Dotted Line; Mirecourt; Dinky Toys (II); Moonlight; Encore.* (46:19)

Personnel—Giuffre, clarinet, soprano saxophone; Jaume, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone.



Mark Isham

Afterglow
Columbia 67929

★★★½

Based on a movie soundtrack, it's safe to bet that *Afterglow* is all tearjerker. There's little here to offend or challenge us, just tender blossoms that evoke feelings of love and sadness. That may sound like a recipe for New Age fluff, and on the surface, this music does skirt the definition of jazz-lite. But listen closely, and this CD clearly bears the signs of dedicated musicianship.

Mark Isham has been characterized as a Miles Davis disciple, and concerning his use of space, that should be taken as a compliment. His trumpet solos and compositions are testimonies to the lost art of understatement. Take a song like "A Life Suspended," where Isham gently layers voices on top of each other in simple but interesting configurations. After Isham states the melody on trumpet, Sid Page accompanies him lyrically on violin, Geri Allen joins in on piano, the accompanists back off for a brief trumpet solo, then they play the melody behind his solo. Toward the end, Isham and Page trade off on the melody every couple of bars. It's nothing fancy, but tossed arrangements like this offer a refreshing change from the old head/solo/solo/head routine.

The accompaniment of Allen, drummer Billy Higgins and bassist Jeff Littleton help elevate this work beyond the level of aural wallpaper.

All share Isham's tasteful use of space, knowing when to lay out as well as when to get busy. They respond sensitively to the soloists and, like rhythmic storytellers, carry each song through dynamic peaks and valleys. Meanwhile, featured saxophonist Charles Lloyd is in top form, soloing with the quiet authority that only a long spiritual journey can foster. He lends the CD its sharpest teeth on numbers like "The Frenzy," which verges on Coltranesque free-jazz while remaining consistent with the album's dreamy aura.

Granted, Isham indulges in certain luxuries that only a soundtrack composer could afford, and for those who prefer their gin straight from the bottle, some of these cocktails will go down like wine spritzers. "Yeses And Noes," for example, rehashes the rather bland "Yeses, Noes And In-Betweens" with the addition of Gary Burton's vibes. Still, Isham's songwriting, attention to detail and choice of musicians are outstanding.

—John Janowiak

Afterglow—*After The Glow Has Gone; Yeses, Noes And In-Betweens; A Life Suspended; Hope And Charity; For Charles; Yeses And Noes; Undecided; The Frenzy; Afterglow; Afterglow—Reprise.* (60:07)

Personnel—Isham, trumpet; Charles Lloyd, tenor saxophone; Geri Allen, piano; Gary Burton, vibes; Jiff Littleton, bass; Sid Page, violin; Billy Higgins, drums.



Louis Armstrong

Now You Has Jazz

Rhino 7182 7

★★★★

Various Artists

Alive And Kickin':

Big Band Sounds At MGM

Rhino 7272 1

★★★★

When Ted Turner bought the MGM film library some years ago to feed his cable networks, he also acquired a formidable library of jazz and big band performances. They had been shot for MGM productions from the 1939 through the '50s, and he owned the rights along with all the original recording elements and outtakes. Now, through Rhino Records, comes a lively start at getting some of these lost jazz performances onto CD.

The Armstrong CD not only includes a flock of previously unreleased performances that

catch Louis and his horn in their postwar prime with Jack Teagarden and Earl Hines. It also gives us two additions to the canon of Armstrong compositions that even producer George Avakian missed in his presentation of "new" Armstrong titles at last summer's JVC New York Festival.

In new versions of familiar Armstrong staples such as "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Ole Miss" and "Basin Street Blues," all from *The Strip* (1951), there is both a zip in Louis' work and abundant solo time for Teagarden, whose rhythmic fluency and loose, relaxed flow represent something of an apogee in jazz trombone of any period.

Armstrong's ebullience manages to camouflage the deficiencies of even the most inferior schlock tunes, of which there is no shortage here, either. "Ain't It The Truth" is a long production-number outtake (*Cabin In The Sky*, 1943) that Louis manages to redeem as long he can be heard, and "That's What The Man Said" (*Glory Alley*, 1952) nearly sinks with its squimpy choral accompaniment.

But what a treat it is to hear Armstrong in his only performance of the Bix Beiderbecke staple "I'm Comin' Virginia" (an outtake from *The Strip*, 1951), even if it is less than two minutes. There is also the only Armstrong version of Basie's "One O'Clock Jump" (*The Strip*), which swings lightly as Armstrong turns it into a more traditional blues. Another first is the hokey but amusing outtake on "It's A Most Unusual Day" (*Glory Alley*), which catches Louis remarking to himself privately just before the downbeat, "Aw shit, it's getting worse."

There are five pieces from *High Society*

(1956), most of which were on the familiar Capitol soundtrack LP. Will Friedwald's notes refer to two short numbers issued here for the first time. But through some miscommunication, one ("Here Comes The Bride") is not on the CD. There are also two pieces at the end from a mid-'60s beach-blanket picture called *Where The Boys Meet The Girls*, briefly issued at the time on a MGM soundtrack LP. Here, Louis performs an engaging tune penned by himself and Billy Kyle called "Throw It Out Of Your Mind." It's understandably reminiscent of "Hello Dolly." His trumpet on this and a short "I Got Rhythm" is still strong and limber.

A revelation of another kind is *Alive And Kickin'*, which collects a variety of big bands featured between 1939 and 1948, nearly half of which are in vivid stereo. In the original soundstage sessions, mic's recorded bands from several angles so that in a tight shot of the saxophones, for instance, they could be pushed out on the track. With access to all the original session elements, Rhino gives us a rare experience: stereo before high-fidelity.

The music mixes some terrific band performances of the period with light novelties for assorted MGM stars. But there's plenty here to make this worthwhile to any student of big bands, past and present. There's Jimmy Dorsey on a brutally swinging "One O'Clock Jump" (*I Dood It*, 1943). From Tommy Dorsey comes an early "Opus One," an ear-splitting "Hawaiian War Chant" with Ziggy Elman and Buddy Rich trading fire in an incendiary set piece, and a jogging Sy Oliver chart on "Blue Skies" (with Frank Sinatra) that never made the final cut of *Ship Ahoy* in 1942.

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The three Artie Shaw tracks from *Dancing Coed* (1939) in stereo catch the essence of the period at its highest and best and with a sound that outstrips anything ever heard on commercial recordings. A young Buddy Rich drives both Shaw and the band on "At Sundown." And "Donkey Serenade" is a wry blend of swing and satire in Shaw's smart hands. Fewer star turns would have been nice, though Virginia O'Brien does kick up well on "I Fell In Love With The Leader Of The Band" with Tommy Dorsey.

—John McDonough

Now You Has Jazz—*Ain't Misbehavin'*; *One O'Clock Jump*; *Ole Miss*; *Basin Street Blues*; *I'm Comin' Virginia*; *A Kiss To Build A Dream On*; *Shadrack*; *When The Saints Go Marchin' In*; *That's A Plenty*; *Ain't It The Truth*; *Hines' Retreat*; *Fatha's Jive*; *J. T. Jive*; *That's What The Man Said*; *Glory Alley*; *Oh Didn't He Ramble*; *South Rampart Street Parade*; *Flee As A Bird*; *It's A Most Unusual Day*; *High Society Calypso*; *Little*

One; *I Love You*; *Samantha*; *Now You Has Jazz*; *Throw It Out Of Your Mind*; *I Got Rhythm*. (64:10)

Selected personnel—Armstrong, trumpet; Jack Teagarden (1-18), *Trummy Young* (19-23), Tyree Glenn (24, 25), trombone; Barney Bigard (1-18), Edmond Hall (19-23), *Buster Bailey* (24, 25), clarinet; *Earl Hines* (1-18), *Billy Kyle* (19-25), piano; *Arvil Shaw* (1-23), *Buddy Catlett* (24, 25), bass; *Cozy Cole* (1-18), *Barrett Deems* (19-23), *Danny Barcelona* (24, 25), drums.

Alive And Kickin'—*Opus One*; *Irresistible You*; *One O'Clock Jump*; *I Cried For You*; *I Fell In Love With The Leader Of The Band*; *Chatanooga Choo Choo*; *Hawaiian War Chant*; *I'm Yours*; *Love On A Greyhound Bus*; *I Like To Recognize The Tune*; *Song Of India*; *Star Eyes*; *Do I Love You*; *Donkey Serenade*; *In A Little Spanish Town*; *I Should Care*; *Shorter Than Me*; *Blue Skies*; *At Sundown*; *Alive And Kickin'*; *Mississippi Dream Boat*; *Lord And Lady Gate*; *Trumpet Blues And Cabtabile*. (74:57)

Personnel—orchestras featured (no personnel given); *Tommy Dorsey* (1, 2, 5, 7, 11, 13, 16, 18), *Jimmy Dorsey* (3, 12, 17, 22), *Harry James* (4, 20, 23), *Artie Shaw* (8, 14, 19), *Tex Beneke* (6), *Guy Lombardo* (9), *Vaughan Monroe* (10), *Bob Crosby* (15), *Kay Kyser* (21).

ist, always serves the song, and finds spots in each to display a remarkably daring, fluid and percussive fingering style. His acceleration is precise on pop jams "Don't Wanna Cry," "Heaven Is Where The Heart Is," and his one-pass interpretation of "Norwegian Wood." He layers eight bass tracks on the tender "Sometimes I Laugh," and six more on "A Chance," a duet with the raw, slamming drums of co-producer J.D. Blair. No matter the volume of tracks, it's always the clarity of his ideas on bass that comes through.

For those into notes, there's a barnburner take of "Cherokee," a new smooth coat of paint for "Naima," and a grand treat for the ears, "Sojourn Of Arjuna," with a one-two punch of Spillane and McCandless. Musical and lyrical seriousness is balanced by just-plain-funk tunes like "Brother John" and "A Little Buzz," and some hilarious George Duke-esque spoken words segues. Vic's mom even one-ups him in a cameo appearance. This one is certainly all over the map—hip-hop, swing, funk (adelic), rock & roll, fusion, ballads—but Wooten is completely up to the task. Is it out of line to mention *What Did He Say?* in the same breath as *Jaco Pastorias'* debut and *Stanley Clarke's Journey To Love?*

Taking Notes will be exciting to aspiring bass students. Never fazed, Jeff Berlin gobbles up massive amounts of notes like Pac Man heading down a long straightaway. The problem is that from a pure listening standpoint, big band charts like "Johnny Joker" and the album opener seem more like exercises than songs. The album is at its best on "Vicky Samba," where the formidable bassist does some relaxed scampering over the Zawinul-ish chords, or "Chasin' Jason," which has a spry unpredictability, an appealing musical mayhem.

A fertile melodic side emerges on "Sean En La Madrugada," and "Scarecrow Soup" brings to mind his days with Bill Bruford. A slow, hip-hop version of "Tears In Heaven" is a welcome change, too, but "Imagine" needs more ... imagination. Berline doesn't make this one his own. Like other parts of *Taking Notes*, it sounds like he and his cohorts are reading it.

—Robin Tolleson

What Did He Say?—*Yo Victa*; *What Did He Say?*; *What You Won't Do For Love*; *Cherokee*; *Don't Wanna Cry*; *The Loneliest Monk*; *A Chance*; *Radio W-00-10*; *Norwegian Wood*; *Bro' John*; *Naima*; *Sometimes I Laugh*; *My Life*; *The Sojourn Of Arjuna*; *Buzz Intro*; *A Little Buzz*; *Kids Didn't Change*; *Heaven Is Where The Heart Is*. (52:48)

Personnel—Wooten, acoustic bass (11, 16), electric bass (all other tracks), cello (6), guitar (13), vocals (2, 5, 6, 10, 13, 16, 18); J.D. Blair (2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16), *Future Man* (3, 14), *Ramond Massey* (3, 14), drums; *Otell Burbridge*, electric bass (11); *Joseph Wooten*, keyboards (4, 14, 18), vocals (18); *Regi Wooten*, guitar (4, 11), vocals (18); *Rudy Wooten*, alto saxophone (4), vocals (18); *Paul McCandless*, soprano saxophone (14); *Davy Spillane*, *Uilleann Pipes* (14); *Rod McGaha*, trumpet (4, 14); *Jeff Coffin*, tenor saxophone (4); *Bela Fleck*, banjo (14); *Jim Roberts*, percussion (11, 14); *Cherokee* (1, 3), *Elijah "Pete" Wooten* (10), *Royel* (18), *Kurt Storey* (13), *Holly Wooten* (18), vocals.

Taking Notes—*Stung*, *McCartney'd & Bruced*; *Tears In Heaven*; *Johnny Joker*; *Sean En La Madrugada*; *Scarecrow Soup*; *Hello Dali*; *Clinton Country*; *Vicky Samba*; *Imagine*; *Chasin' Jason*. (56:42)

Personnel—Berlin, bass, vocals (2); *Scott Kinsey* (1, 3, 4-6, 8, 10), *Clare Fischer* (9), keyboards; *Cliff Almond*, drums; *Alex Acuna*, percussion; *Captain Billy Lang* (1, 10), *Ron Eschete* (6), guitar; *Howie Shear* (1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10), *Jose Soplar* (1, 3, 8, 10), trumpet; *David Stout* (1, 3, 8, 10), *Roy Wiegand* (3), trombone; *Rob Lockart*, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone (1, 3, 8, 10).

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Joe Lovano & Gonzalo Rubalcaba

Flying Colors
Blue Note 56092

★★★★½

Michael Marcus Meets Jaki Byard

This Happening
Justin Time 98

★★½

Steadily alternating contexts, brokering a kinship between jazz's disparate factions, and bringing a sense of thoughtfulness to all his work, Joe Lovano is the era's most resourceful jazz virtuoso. His latest foray is another inspired move, one that will likely titillate the hardcore improv fans who deemed last winter's nod to Sinatra a bit too polite. As the reed player bounds around with pianist Rubalcaba, the advantages of unity become obvious. Here, with murmurs carrying the same clout as howls, and decorum being redefined to suit whatever unruly etiquette is created, the pair are limitless in their inspiration. The authority of their action is so natural, it presents itself as nonchalance.

As far as Rubalcaba goes, this is a grand forum to hear his vivacious side. The Cuban pianist is underappreciated to a degree; those who have heard him play live know of his whimsy. It's evident here, too. The pieces—personalized takes of standards for the most part—are bent to fit the stylistic tics of each participant, and Rubalcaba's unique sense of tempo consistently provides the more abstract pieces with cunning support. His choice of notes in the head of "Hot House" is wizardry. This provides Lovano with enough backup to shimmy through whatever harmonic neighborhood he chooses—and there are many. Using a variety of reeds and a handful of percussion instruments, he constantly amends the program's tone. The flow of these modifications are part of the disc's triumph. Utterly united—their sympathetic on "Bird Food" is astonishing—Rubalcaba and Lovano have cut a duet for the ages.

The collaboration between Marcus and Byard is much more sedate; there's a chamber slant to the program that elicits a measured approach from both players. That's an effective strategy, because it supplants the notion of the date being merely a random romp. It may have

to do with Marcus' wanting to play against type, another laudable decision. As a leader on his own, and a member of the horns-only Saxemblem, he proved his ability to roar the blues. His hookup with Byard is much more thoughtful. But virtuosity isn't on Marcus' stat sheet, and after a while, his push toward simplicity morphs into a mere examination of the elemental.

What sustains the disc's charm is Marcus' choice of horns. Though he's worked with odd reeds like stritch and saxello for years, the duet context places their timbre in high relief; here, their singularity is unmistakable. Their tone sometimes interrupts the placid moments—hyperactive fantasias appear on "Kelso Tracks South" and "Kelso Tracks North." When they

do, it's a welcome shift. Byard makes the most of these moments as well, but overall, *This Happening* finds his playing on the stiff side. A little bit more animation all around could have made this a stronger date. —Jim Macnie

Flying Colors—*Flying Colors; How Deep Is The Ocean; Boss Town; Bird Food; Spontaneous Color; Phantasm; Ugly Beauty; Hot House; Gloria's Step; Mr. Hyde; I Love Music; Along Came Betty.* (63:52)
Personnel—Lovano, tenor, soprano saxophones; Rubalcaba, piano.

This Happening—*Earth Beings; This Happening; Kelso Tracks South; Giant Steps/Naima; Steppin' Down With Jaki; The Cry For Peace; The Continuum; Kelso Tracks North; Darn That Dream.* (49:40)
Personnel—Marcus, stritch, saxello, bass clarinet; Byard, piano.

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J A Z Z

The Beast Is Back

by Zan Stewart

With the combined demise of the chitlins circuit in the late '60s and the arrival of the synthesizer as the electronic keyboard of choice, the Hammond B-3 organ just about took its final curtain call as a relevant jazz instrument. Sure, some guys like Jimmy Smith and Brother Jack McDuff kept wailing away, but those throbbing tones of the Hammond issued via the rotating Leslie speaker were hard to find.

No more. In the past five years or so, there's happily been a renewed presence of the beastly B-3, namely through recordings by such vets as Lonnie Smith and Melvin Rhyne (Wes Montgomery's organist for years) as well as younger folk like Larry Goldings. Here are five recent releases that spotlight the Lazarus of plugged-in keyboards.

Melvin Rhyne: *Stick To The Kick* (Criss Cross 1137; 62:43; ★★★★★) Of the journeymen organists, Rhyne is outstanding, due mainly to his modern sound—he, like Larry Young, had a forward-leaning, non-Jimmy Smith tone by the early '60s—and his brazen improvisational attitude, which is pianistic in nature. Here, on his fourth Criss Cross album, Rhyne shows his spunk by tackling Bud Powell's demanding "Rhythm" changes opus "Wail" at a fiery uptempo, and delivering three solo choruses that have both grit and invention. Other highlights: a vigorous rendition of "Lady Bird," the ballad "Light, Love, Life" and three blues, among them the title track. Guitarist Peter Bernstein and drummer Kenny Washington help flesh out Rhyne's songs, Bernstein getting in some typically ace solos. Also on board are talented youngsters Ryan Kisor and Eric Alexander: Their efforts are a nice bonus.

Gene Harris/Brother Jack McDuff: *Down Home Blues* (Concord Jazz 4785; 59:48; ★★★) Pianist Harris and organist McDuff have such empathetic sensibilities, they make an ideal pair for run-throughs of such evergreens as "Smack Dab In The Middle," "Soft Winds" and "Stormy Monday." Both are hearty bluesmeisters, and as tasteful accompanists, they stay out of each other's way. They also have pretty much the same message, solo-wise, so that we hear a lot of brief, bluesy lines repeated quickly, funky descending lines, single tagged notes and so on, all of which can be pretty tiresome if not in such expert hands. Guitarist Ron Eschete is a definite plus; his feeling for the blues idiom is powerful. Bassist Luther Hughes and drummer Paul Humphrey are also sparkplugs. The set includes some OK vocals by Niki Harris (Gene's daughter) and Curtis Stigers.



Gene Harris (l) and Jack McDuff: an ideal pair

Lonnie Smith: *Afro Blue* (MusicMasters 65167; 66:25; ★★★½) Smith and his colleagues—guitarist John Abercrombie and drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith—here investigate four Coltrane originals, "Greensleeves," which Trane recorded, Mongo Santamaria's title track and a Smith tribute to the saxophonist. (The booklet only lists six tunes, and flip flops "Lonnie's Lament" and "Bessie's Blues.") The type of, yes, impressionistic playing that Smith and his gang dug into on their two previous discs of material by Jimi Hendrix (made, as this one was, in 1994 for Japan's Venus Records) works better here, given Trane's expansive approach to tunes like "Impressions" and "Lonnie's Lament." The latter finds Smith issuing grand tremolos that contrast neatly with Abercrombie's wiry sound; on the former, the guitarist plays one smart idea after another, and Smith pretty much does the same. Throughout, "Smitty" Smith keeps the heat up.

Eddy Louiss: *Trio* (Dreyfus 36501; 45:16; ★★★★★) This is a long-unavailable session by a fine working band. Initially made in Paris in 1968 with French organ whiz Louiss, the noted Belgian guitarist Rene Thomas and bebop drum innovator Kenny Clarke, it surfaced first in Europe in 1991 and has now just been released in the U.S. Louiss is a remarkable bop-rooted artist who can get the same alternately whiny, fat or muddy

sounds out of an organ as the next guy, but as with Young and Rhyne, he plays lines rich with ideas, and swings hard. The program is brief but meaty—the steaming "Blue Tempo," a medium "Hot House" and the ballad "You've Changed" are included. The musicians exhibit the kind of relaxed concentration that comes from playing together regularly. Clarke, who died in 1985, uses his whole kit to kick his partners, while Thomas, who died in 1975, employs a ringing sound and issues fluid lines at whatever tempo. Louiss is still with us, and is due for another album.

Doug MacDonald: *Organizing* (Resurgent 116; 71:04; ★★★½) MacDonald is an L.A.-based guitarist who has an affinity for the Hammond. When he found out that drummer Johnny Kirkwood had obtained one from Perri Lee, who used to work clubs in the City of the Angels, he formed a trio, employing Art Hillery, a fine pianist who was house organist for some time at the defunct Parisian Room. Creamy-toned tenorman Plas Johnson was added for the recording. MacDonald has a good ear for both choice notes and tunes: There are 11 goodies here, from Sonny Clark's "Blue Minor" and Shorter's "Tell It Like It Is" to Wild Bill Davis' "Azure-té." The mood is straightahead swing, which suits these gents just fine, and Hillery, a particularly fine though unheralded artist, is aces. **DB**

REISSUES

Teddy's Trios

by John McDonough

From 1952 through 1957, pianist Teddy Wilson recorded 96 trio performances for Norman Granz's Clef and Verve labels, including five live tracks from Newport 1957 and six never-issued pieces from Stratford, Ontario, a month later.

The Complete Verve Recordings Of The Teddy Wilson Trio (Mosaic 5-173; 75:25/71:21/73:34/69:35/46:51: ★★★½) This five-CD set gathers all of Granz's recordings together, including the Stratford material. (Evidently, no extra takes from the studio dates survive.) But here's the problem: Left on his own, Wilson found it too easy to retreat into formula and extrude one three-minute set piece after another.

Yes, the piano trio has its limitations. But with few exceptions, Wilson does little in these five CDs to push the form, or himself: an opening melody chorus, followed by a one-chorus piano improvisation, one bass chorus, a chorus of piano-drums fours and an out chorus. The routine becomes too painfully obvious to ignore. Even the rhythm sections play to formula. Bass is two-beat in the first chorus, goes to four in the bridge, then switches to four for the improvisation. Drums are confined to snare triplets with brushes. The format is so rigid, even strong voices like Buddy Rich and Jo Jones, who plays on half the tunes without hardly ever touching his signature cymbal, become commodities.

The saving grace is Wilson's sense of proportion, equilibrium, civility and irreproachable laid-back swing. In case you've forgotten, Wilson's historic breakthrough in the 1930s was to marginalize the left hand to the rhythm section and liberate the right as the primary musical force, thus clearing the path that led straight to modernism. He raised the bar of technique; but, unlike Art Tatum, not so far that others couldn't follow where he led. The fact that yesterday's breakthrough is today's cliché, after all, only posts proof of impact and confirms recognition on the original achievement.

With the exception of "Air Mail Special" and "I Got Rhythm," which are played so ridiculously fast they become mere speed sprints to impress the crowd (significantly, both are from live sets), Wilson's temperate touch and clarity of attack and articulation make you wish he'd reach a little further. There's an uncommonly fiery "Lady Be Good," for example, from his first Granz session, with two high-tension modulations and crackling support from Buddy Rich. Wilson manages to keep in steady ascent through a mounting sequence of choruses. But this is not something we hear often



Teddy Wilson: liberating the pianist's right hand, he cleared the path to modernism

here. His solo lines are rarely spread out across the seams of the tunes; instead, they are meted out in short modules, as if he had to take a breath every two or three bars.

But the repertoire is uniformly superb, mostly pop and a few jazz standards that are a treat to play and play with. The melodic and harmonic largesse that flows from such professionally cut gems as "If I Had You," "Talk Of The Town" and "The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise" makes one wonder why musicians bother with the work of amateurs—though, I must admit, "Sunny Morning" is a neat little Wilson original. There are only two blues. Wilson didn't play them often, which may be why, when he did, he made them stick. "Blues For Daryl" especially takes its place not far below his famous 1936 "Blues In C Sharp Minor" as a thoughtful and absorbing extension of the obvious into the unexpected. Similarly, while his exposition on fast pieces is inclined to be perfunctory, he often has a way of lighting a ballad from within with patterns of chords set off with single-note asides ("How Deep Is The Ocean," "Autumn In New York").

On one cut, "Sweet Georgia Brown" from Newport '57, Wilson is joined by baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan. It seems to jar Wilson of what seems, at best, an implacable composure and, at worst, a stately complacency. It also explains why his most enduring work remains with groups, from the Benny Goodman units in the '30s through the Brunswick and Verve dates to a singular 1976 all-star date Hank O'Neal was wise enough to capture for his Chiaroscuro label. They drew Wilson out of the kind of velvet isolation that apparently made the endless trios so comfortable to him. Confronting Mulligan, Wilson must maneuver and respond. He reassures us that behind the protections of the suave, imperceptible and rather in-bred trio stylings, the sparkle and nerve that made him the most imitated pianist of his generation still lived safely inside. (Mosaic Records: 35 Melrose Pl., Stamford CT 06902) **DB**

Initial Down Beat ratings:

- *The Creative Teddy Wilson*: ★★★ (6/1/55)
- *At Newport, 1957*: reviewed but not rated (2/6/58)

BEYOND

Twisted Roots

by Jon Andrews

For some, the preservation of tradition is an end in itself. For the artists reviewed here, traditional musics serve as a common reference point for further explorations, a source of inspiration, or a springboard into the unknown.

John Fahey & Cul de Sac: *The Epiphany Of Glenn Jones* (Thirsty Ear 57037; 73:48; ★★★½) Fahey's solo acoustic guitar work holds iconic significance to both folk and alternative-rock audiences. A preservationist of blues and folk styles, he also ventures into tape collages, explorations of world music and spoken-word experiments, all represented in this uneven, intriguing CD. "Tuff" establishes his uneasy alliance with Cul de Sac, as Fahey's spare, down-home guitar melodies are subverted by the group's unsettling drones and electronics. "Gamelan Collage" is an extraordinary tape assemblage, on which Fahey plays gamelan scales against a backdrop of jungle sounds and the gentle clang of tuned percussion. This piece continues the fascinating explorations of Fahey's "A Raga Called Pat" series. Fahey delivers clean, expressive readings of traditional blues, but most listeners will skip the unfathomable spoken-word tracks.

Moondog & The London Saxophonic: *Sax Pax For A Sax* (Atlantic 83069; 54:05; ★★★½) Composer Louis Hardin (a.k.a. Moondog) started his long career as an N.Y.C. busker, earning notoriety for eclectic works reflecting jazz and classical themes. For his first U.S. release in a quarter-century, he's arranged these thoroughly eccentric miniatures for an ensemble of up to nine saxophones, with the octogenarian composer providing a bass-drum pulse. Hardin's love of counterpoint, repetition and jazz saxophone becomes evident on tracks like "Present For Prez," a buoyant Lester Young tribute, and a new version of "Bird's Lament," which pits soloists against the ensemble's wall of sound. With tunes that are, by turns, mesmerizing, swinging, campy and odd, Moondog still provides a uniquely entertaining experience.

Wayne Horvitz: *Monologue* (Cavity Search 33; 55:10; ★★★½) *Monologue* compiles Horvitz's compositions for samplers and keyboards, as commissioned by dance companies. For this function, snappy rhythms and attractive, repeated riffs are obviously high priorities. Horvitz builds pieces like "Link Wray" and "Monologue" up from sampled and looped rhythms, using organ to shape the central riffs and finally adding off-beat sampled effects such as steel drums, handclaps and calliopes. Horvitz taps into various dance styles, and evokes jazz with the Ellingtonian riffs of "Duke." These bright, upbeat miniatures are best



John Fahey (l) and Cul de Sac: an uneasy alliance appreciated in small doses, rather than as an entire CD.

Adam Rudolph's Moving Pictures: *Contemplations* (Meta 2; 63:43; ★★★) Percussionist Adam Rudolph's ensemble owes allegiance to no single cul-

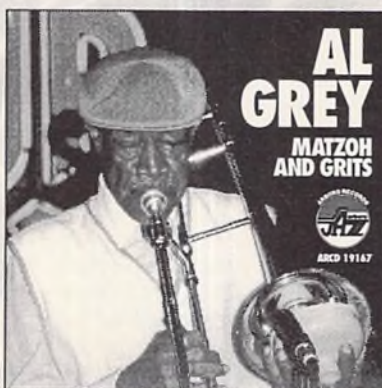
ture. They successfully meld influences from across the globe through cogent, vibrant performances. Interplay between Adam Rudolph's hand drums and percussion instruments and Hamid Drake's traps creates the focal point for this music, with Ralph Jones alternating flutes and soprano sax to articulate exotic melodies over the drummers' shifting grooves. "Black Cherry Lotus," a tribute to Don Cherry, combines Rudolph's thumb pianos with Drake's drums to establish percolating rhythms, while Jones' soprano converses with Federico Ramos' flute. Drake's "Light Upon Light" is a standout track, featuring a hypnotic groove underlying Drake's vocal and Jones' mysterious flute solo.

Pachora: *Pachora* (Knitting Factory Works 207; 55:05; ★★★) This quartet derives source material from the indigenous musics of Bulgaria, Turkey and the Balkan region. With Chris Speed featuring his clarinet and acting as principal composer and arranger, Pachora assays a hybrid of jazz and traditional forms reminiscent of the ecstatic wedding music of Ivo Papasov. Pachora's blend is more often reflective and poignant, with Speed's moody clarinet solos augmented by Brad Shepik's tart accompaniment on Portugese guitar and electric sax. Solos aren't as important here as the tight unison with which Pachora hurtles through the whirling frenzy of tunes like "Dever Oro" and "Ramitsa." One might wish for them to stretch out a little more and adapt their sources more freely. **DB**

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BLINDFOLD TEST

MARCH 1998

Tim Hagans

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.

With a liquid-fire tone that belies his unassuming appearance, Tim Hagans has emerged as a trumpeter's trumpeter—a fixture on the big-band scene in both the U.S. and Europe and a top-drawer accompanist to the likes of Joe Lovano, Gary Peacock and Bob Belden. His first two albums as a leader, *No Words* and *Audible Architecture* (both on Blue Note), took a left-of-center post-bop approach, establishing Hagans as a cutting-edge '90s improviser. On his latest Blue Note release, *Hubsongs* (see p. 56), he shares top billing with trumpet comer Marcus Printup on a set of Freddie Hubbard tunes, produced by Hubbard himself.

A Dayton, Ohio, native, Hagans, 43, played in the Stan Kenton and Woody Herman bands before moving to Malmo, Sweden, in 1977, where he worked with Thad Jones, Dexter Gordon and Horace Parlan, among others. Returning to the U.S. in 1983, he taught at Berklee College for three years, then settled in New Jersey and gigged with the Mel Lewis, Gil Evans, Bob Mintzer and Maria Schneider big bands, as well as Steps Ahead, the Yellowjackets, John Hart, Rick Margitza and more. Lately, Hagans has been spending most of his time in Europe, where he directs the Norrbotten Big Band, a government-sponsored group in northern Sweden.

This was his first Blindfold Test

Roy Hargrove's Crisol

"Alrodisia" (from *Habana*, Verve, 1997) Hargrove, trumpet; Chucho Valdez, piano; David Sanchez, tenor saxophone; Frank Lacy, trombone; Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez, drums; Jose Luis "Changuito" Quintana, timbales; Miguel "Anga" Diaz, congas; John Benitez, bass; Gary Bartz, alto saxophone; Russell Malone, guitar.

The trumpet player sounds like Roy Hargrove, and that's the Crisol band. I've heard some things on the radio that I think are on that record, like a good version of "Una Mas" that I enjoyed a lot, but I haven't heard this one. But it's very lively, high-spirited music, always a lot of fun to listen to. I would have liked to have heard the solos a lot longer; in person, this is the kind of music where you want to get the rhythm section just pumping until they can't play any more energy and then go some on top of that. So I'll have to hear them live. But Roy's an amazing player. He plays very melodically, always makes the changes rhythmically very interesting. I was trying to figure out who the tenor player was; he sounded very familiar, but I can't put a name on the sound. I'd say 4 stars.

Dave Douglas

"Who Knows" (from *Five*, Soul Note, 1996) Douglas, trumpet; Mark Feldman, violin; Erik Friedlander, cello; Drew Gress, bass; Michael Sarin, drums.

It sounds like Dave Douglas, and I'd venture to say Erik Friedlander and Mark Feldman, the crazy string players. I can't say enough good things about Dave Douglas. He's one of the guys out there that's really trying to do something different without being pretentious. I've heard him play several times, but you can hear in this cut that he uses all the different sounds of the trumpet. He's not afraid to refer back to early historical styles. There's lots of humor, which I think is missing in today's



music quite a bit—not making-fun humor but hip humor. So it's always a pleasure to hear him. I'd like to see the music to that piece—pretty amazing. It sounded like "[I've Got] Rhythm" changes with maybe a "Honeysuckle Rose" bridge or something. Very impressive, definitely 5 stars.

Don Sickler

"On The Real Side" (from *Night Watch*, Uptown, 1995) Sickler, trumpet; Carl Fontana, trombone; Ralph Moore, tenor saxophone; Bobby Porcelli, alto saxophone; Gary Smulyan, baritone saxophone; Richard Wyands, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

I have no idea who that is, but I hear a strong Kenny Dorham influence—although I know it isn't Kenny—in the way this guy attacked the long tones and the overall phrasing. It reminded me a lot of Kenny Dorham, very melodic and playing some of the interesting harmonic notes in a very melodic way. I liked the arrangement a lot. It sounded a little bit like some of the Blue Note multi-horn arrangements that you'd hear Kenny Dorham in. I'd say 4 stars for the playing and 5 on the arrangement, because it really captured the tune. The head was arranged a couple of different ways.

Nicholas Payton

"Wild Man Blues" (from *Gumbo Nouveau*, Verve, 1996) Payton, trumpet; Jesse Davis, alto saxophone; Tim Warfield, tenor saxophone; Anthony Wonsey, piano; Reuben Rogers, bass; Adonis Rose, drums.

I think that's Nicholas Payton, and it's from that record called *Gumbo* something. I have that record at home, actually. Yeah, I'm a fan of Nicholas'. Out of all the players that have come out in the last 10 years, I think he's my favorite, first of all because of the big, huge sound. I'd like to hear a recording of Louis Armstrong with today's digital recording techniques, because I'm sure his tone was as big as Nicholas'. But he's just got a great sound, and then he can turn around and play modern post-bop and create that same energy that Freddie Hubbard does—smooth, legato eighth notes and a huge sound. Yeah, I'm a fan, and I have to give that 5 stars. It was swinging all the way.

DB