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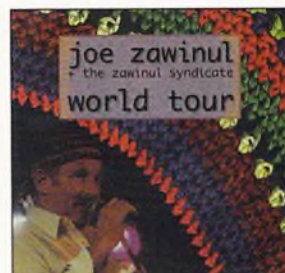
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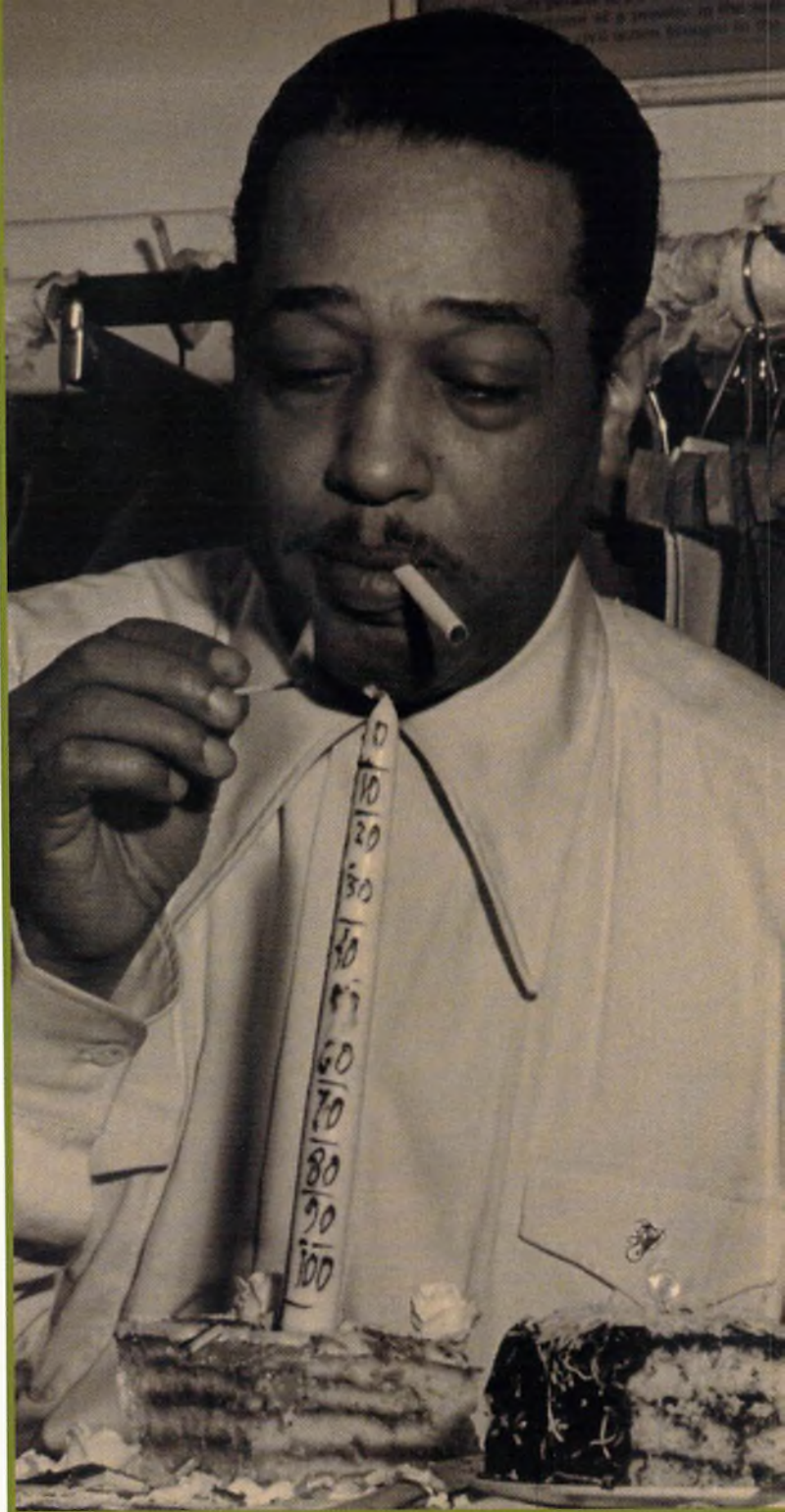
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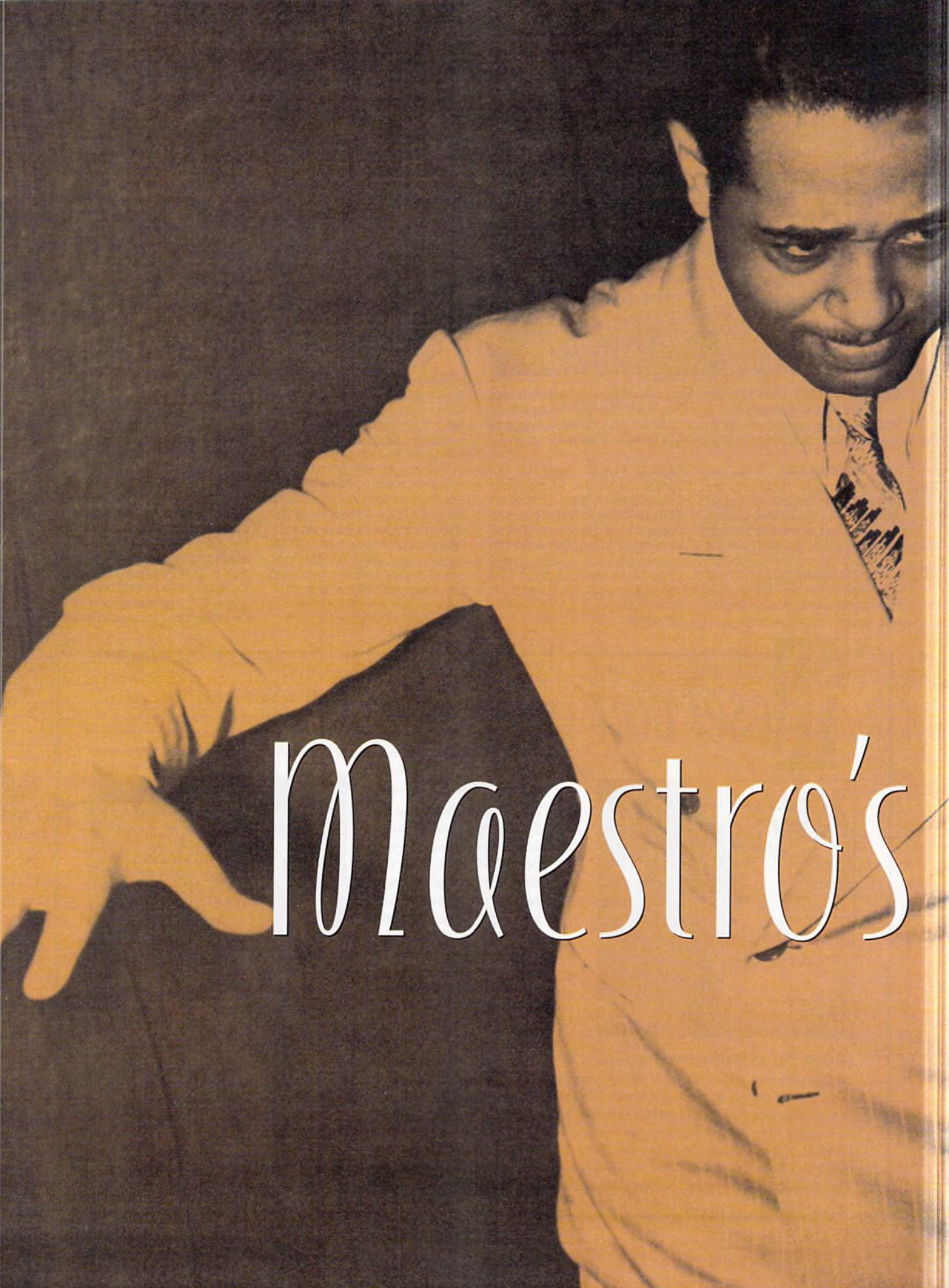
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20 Ellington at 100

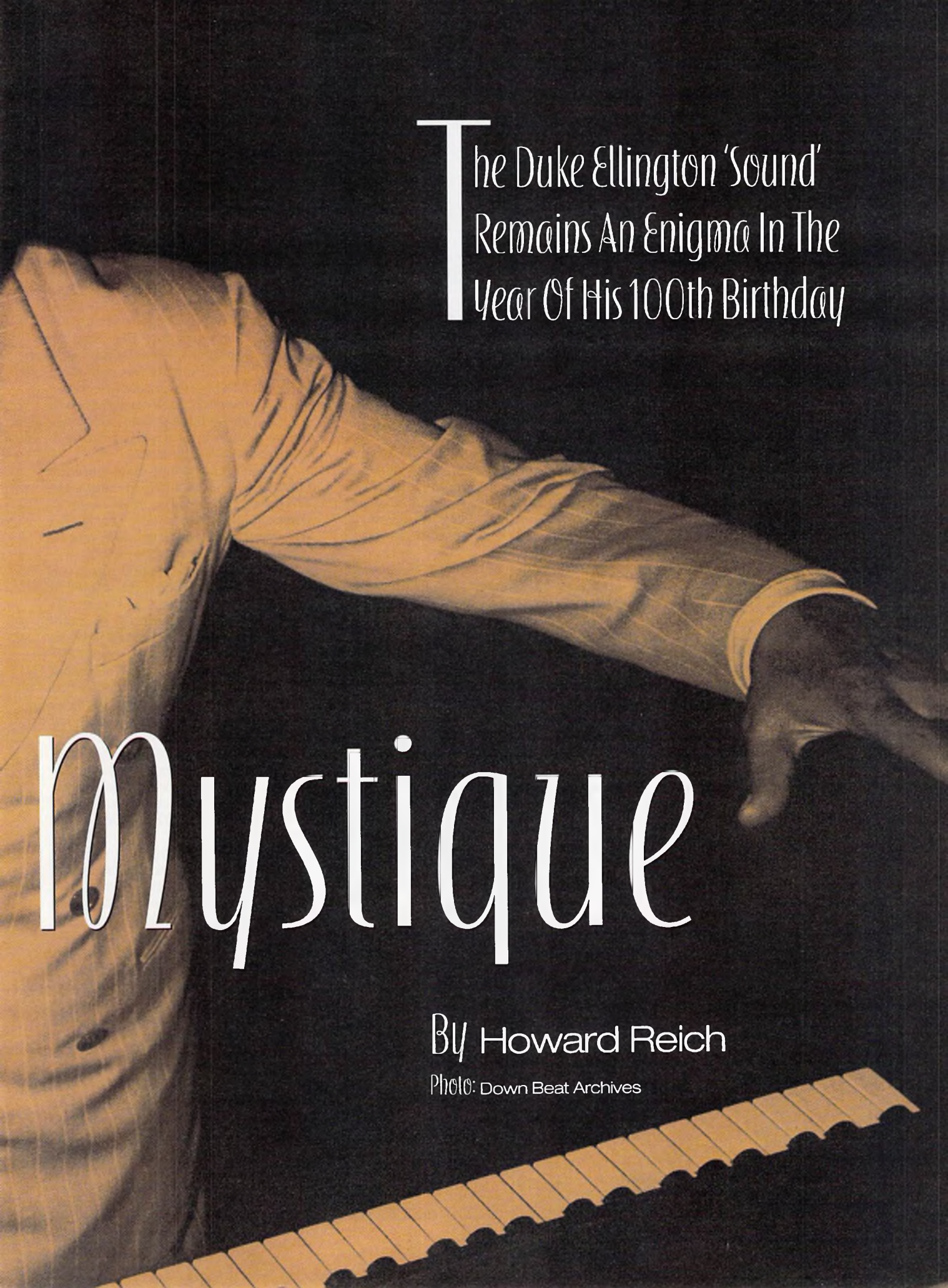
BILL MARK





Maestro's





The Duke Ellington 'Sound'  
Remains An Enigma In The  
Year Of His 100th Birthday

# mystique

By Howard Reich

Photo: Down Beat Archives



The message may have been sacred or carnal, cocky or cool, viscerally exciting or languorously relaxed. But, somehow, Duke Ellington's orchestra perpetually transformed itself to suit the score at hand.

For more than five decades, despite continuous changes in personnel, musical tastes and economic fortunes, Ellington's band endured as perhaps the most chameleonic in jazz.

Yet even as we celebrate Edward Kennedy Ellington's 100th birthday on April 29 (see sidebar on Page 26 for a guide to surviving the Ellington centennial), it still remains something of a mystery precisely how he and partner Billy Strayhorn achieved this enormous expressive range. They guarded their techniques jealously and left very little clear, written evidence for subsequent generations to study.

As Leonard Feather complained in a 1962 *Down Beat* article, "Voicings were heard that no other writer has ever quite succeeded in duplicating. And because Ellington has refused to publish the band's arrangements, probably nobody ever will."

Though the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., overflows with thousands of pages of Ellington band manu-



The Duke Ellington Orchestra in 1934: a formidable, cohesive ensemble

scripts, much of it is in frayed condition and little of it is widely available to the public in authoritatively edited, pristinely published form. One hundred years after the composer's birth, listeners still lack fundamental information on how Ellington achieved his sometimes shimmering, sometimes crisp orchestral effects.

Performing musicians, meanwhile, remain at the mercy of transcribers who heroically attempt to decode sounds from

old and often poorly mixed recordings. Worse, the myths that have sprung up to fill the information void have tended to diminish the importance of Ellington's achievements. Strip away these common misconceptions, however, and you'll find a composer who went to great lengths to create detailed, autobiographical sounds unlike those of any other large jazz ensemble, past or present.

"To this day, I still hear people say, 'Duke didn't really write all that music out,'" laments Clark Terry, the trumpeter who put the flugelhorn on the map in Ellington's band, beginning in 1957. "He wrote out everything except solos. There's no way in the world that 18 musicians could get up there at once and harmonize and balance in the way that Duke wanted to without the scores.

"People are just confused because the band knew that music by memory, and because over the years the scores were tattered or water-soaked or torn. That doesn't mean that Duke didn't know exactly what he wanted and didn't originally write it down."

In fact, Ellington did more than just pen the notes and the voicings he wanted to hear. From the beginning of his career as bandleader, in the late 1920s, he established a practice of hiring fiercely individualistic instrumentalists and writing specifically for their strengths. The surviving Ellington scores in his own hand show that the composer generally didn't list the name of the instrument alongside the staff but, instead, the name of the player (as in "Rabbit" for Johnny Hodges), a sure indication of how he built his orchestral sound.

Ellington, in other words, wasn't writing for saxophones in general but for Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney and others in particular.

"He knew that [baritone saxophonist] Harry Carney had this unusually iconoclastic sound in that nobody else on earth would ever produce," adds Terry, imitating it by making a rumbling vocal sound roughly akin to a loudly buzzing bee. "It didn't sound like a lead alto, it didn't sound like a typical baritone, it didn't sound like nothin' but Harry Carney.

"Or take [trumpeter] Rex Stewart. Duke found out that Rex could use his third valve to produce a trumpet E, which is a concert D, that had this incredible, ringing sound. So almost anytime there was a concert D in Duke's music, Rex would get that note, because Duke so loved the sound of it. Duke studied his band and his personnel like we study our instruments."

In this way, Ellington formed an early band in which there was no mistaking Barney Bigard's fluid clarinet, Cootie Williams' plunger-muted trumpet, "Tricky" Sam Nanton's growling trombone, Juan



Tizol's fleet valve trombone or Hodges' inflexibly expressive, bent-note alto saxophone.

Though the myth persists that Ellington's distinctive orchestral sound owed mostly to this collection of unusual musical characters, the casting was in fact merely the starting point for the composer's easily identifiable but virtually inimitable orchestral writing style.

For starters, Ellington savored peculiarities of voicing. In many instances, Carney is asked to play his baritone in its highest register, while Gonsalves must dip to the lowest notes of his tenor. Such part writing defies convention, often feels uncomfortable to the players and tests any band-leader's ability to balance the ensemble, yet it also creates bracing new colors.

"'Mood Indigo' is a great example," says David Berger, whose elegant transcriptions have been used by Wynton Marsalis' Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and William Russo's Chicago Jazz Ensemble, among other repertory bands. "In the original arrangement, Duke has the trumpet in his middle register, the trombone in his higher register and the clarinet in his low register, and it all creates this magical sound that you just wouldn't expect.

"He loves using the extreme ranges of instruments," adds Berger. "For instance, there are some pieces that he wrote in the key of D, which some people might think is an unusual key to use for jazz. Why did he do it? Often the reason is simply that when he gets to the tonic, he wants to hear it on the lowest note of the clarinet.

"Probably the most interesting thing I've learned from transcribing his writing is that it's player-generated. Duke once even said in an interview: 'You know what I do? I make [musical] settings for these wonderful soloists.'"

But a band of soloists became a more formidable, cohesive and ambitious ensemble in the '30s, with expanded brass and reed sections.

And by 1940-'42, a period featuring what many listeners consider Ellington's best band, the composer was working with a dramatically expanded tonal palette. In part, this owed to the recent addition of brawny tenor saxophonist Ben Webster, groundbreaking bassist Jimmy Blanton, versatile trumpeter/violinist/vocalist Ray Nance and, above all, composer/arranger Strayhorn (who joined the band as lyricist in 1939 and began arranging a year later).

If Ellington brought to their partnership a deep jazz knowledge attained through long years on the road, Strayhorn offered expertise on classical forms and textures (an area that Ellington apparently had not studied in depth). The hand-in-glove collaboration, which former Ellington drummer Louie Bellson still calls "something that the Lord meant to be," gave rise not only to 1943's controversial "Black, Brown And Beige" but also to the extended orchestral suites of the '50s and thereafter.

This fusion of jazz elements and quasi-symphonic colors radically altered the definition of the working jazz band and what it could achieve in sound. And this evolution only could have occurred as a result of the Ellington/Strayhorn partnership. Each composer learned from the other, and though listeners probably will argue for all time the importance of Ellington's contribution versus Strayhorn's, the two clearly enhanced what either might have achieved alone.

"They arrived at a lot of the same ideas through opposite means," says Berger, perhaps best summing up the strengths of the union.

Together, Ellington and Strayhorn redefined the band's sound, creating a prototype that would feature five saxophones, four trumpets and Ellington's signature three trombones. "Automatically, each section had to have a different sound," if only because of the differing sizes of each unit, says Berger. "Each would be automatically different in its texture.

"With five saxophones you get this sensual kind of sound. With four trumpets you get tremendous power. And with three trombones there's a great feeling of nobility, since Ellington can write basic triadic sounds for this section."

She is beautiful and gentle.

She is ten thousand years old.

She is as modern as tomorrow,

And as endless as time mathematics.

Music is my mistress,

And she plays second fiddle to no-one.

—DUKE ELLINGTON



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Equally remarkable is Ellington's audacious use of dissonance, with minor seconds and other seemingly harsh clashes of neighboring pitches producing startling harmonic effects.

By placing seemingly errant pitches into otherwise familiar chords, and by shrewdly tucking them deep into the orchestral fabric, Ellington achieves a deep-blue exoticism that remains one of the most appealing facets of his orchestral sound.

"In an Ellington blues, you'll find a passage where three trumpets and a trombone are playing what's supposed to be a C7 chord in close, four-part harmony, and one of the trombones has an F," Berger says. "That F doesn't belong there, it's totally foreign, and yet there it is, plain as day. It's important to realize that these strange notes did not come out of nowhere. He knew harmony so well that he could do these unusual things.

"When Ellington was in his early 20s, [bandleader] Will Marion Cook told him, 'Find out the normal way of doing things, how everyone does it, then do it your way.' I think he took that advice."

Ellington, in other words, perpetually was seeking and inventing new expressive tools, often ignoring convention. In pas-



Ellington in rehearsal with saxophonists Johnny Hodges (left) and Otto Hardwick: drawing on his bandmembers' individual strengths

sages of the "Queen's Suite," the tenor and baritone saxes alternate the octave doubling of the melody; in certain blues passages, the bass line traces the standard, 12-bar blues chord progression, but the chords above do not; in portions of the "Jungle Triangle" overture from the musical *My People*, chords frequently move in parallel fashion, though this violates one of the most basic rules of orchestration.

"He didn't 'routine-ize' himself," says Russo, who has spent a lifetime studying

and performing Ellington's works.

Or, as Berger puts it, "With Duke, we're dealing with such a broad palette that there's no way of making a formula of all this. With Ellington, every chart or two you hear a whole new world of sound, a whole new set of techniques that he has discovered for himself."

Virtually every major composition, in fact, has its own innovations. The multiple, antiphonal sections within the orchestra that play off one another in "Rockin' In Rhythm," the compositional techniques of Debussy and Ravel in "Anatomy Of A Murder" and the provocative high-trumpet passages of Cat Anderson all stem from a composer intent on not repeating himself.

Strayhorn, for his part, nudged Ellington toward increasingly ambitious, classically tinged works that led, inexorably, to the oft-sublime, translucent orchestrations of the Sacred Concerts of the '60s. Even in his senior years, Ellington obviously hadn't lost his appetite for new musical forms: He was pushing toward an abstract, creative concert music.

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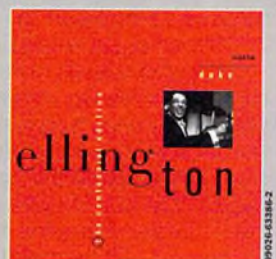


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effects had gone on to become a formidable vehicle for documenting American swing and blues culture. Just as George Gershwin, Roy Harris, Aaron Copland and others had expressed the American experience through the European symphony orchestra, Ellington had done so by transforming an American dance band into a profound concert ensemble.

You can hear as much in the ebullient street rhythms of the "New Orleans Suite," the lush orchestral tone painting of the "Deep South Suite" and the sheer scope and ambition of Ellington's other large-scaled works. Yet for all their grandeur, these pieces have at their heart Ellington's propulsive rhythm section.

"Duke was the vital force—a lot of people forget that he was a great piano player, very percussive, very dynamic in the rhythm section," recalls Louie Bellson, who helped revitalize that rhythm section when he joined the band in 1951. "And boy, when he started playing, and the drummer and

sonal playing that Duke's was. He got the players to do things they might not have done otherwise."

Indeed, Bellson takes pride in noting that "there was no drum book at all, nothing. I had to feel my way through, and that's what Duke wanted.

"He said to me, 'I want you to keep your eyes and ears open, and you'll hear it,' and that's true, because sometimes a drummer can be too involved in reading a part and not using his ears enough. He allowed you plenty of time to think it out yourself."

Or, as Terry puts it, "Duke taught us who we were."

Yet for all the variety and fluidity of Ellington's orchestral music through the decades, it maintains surprising continuity. Instrumentation and players may change, but the band always sounds, well, kinda Dukish.

"When you listen to 'Black And Tan Fantasy' [1927] and then you put on something from the '60s, you're hearing different music that nevertheless is very closely allied



the bass jumped in, man, with that three-some, look out, it swung. Duke had the right times, and the fire and the ability to really move that band."

If you doubt it, just listen to Ellington's solo introduction to Strayhorn's "Take the 'A' Train," a curtain-raiser that sets the orchestra flying practically from the first note. Berger goes so far as to call it "the best introduction in all of jazz."

Beyond Ellington's abilities as pianist, composer and orchestrator, he had one more gift that helped produce a distinctive sound: his effect on the players themselves.

"Duke was always aware of the need for the player to pour himself into the music, and most players just don't do that," says Russo. "Even the best bands, black and white, are not noted for the attention to per-

music," says Orrin Keepnews, who with Steven Lasker has produced a 24-CD boxed set, *The Duke Ellington Centennial Edition: The Complete RCA Victor Recordings, 1927-1973*. "There's a clear consistency there."

Though the deaths of Strayhorn and Hodges, plus the departures of Jimmy Hamilton and others meant that the '70s band never approached the virtuosity of earlier incarnations, Ellington's band to the very end sounded like none other in the business.

"I was at this symposium for Ellington alumni at Lincoln Center recently, and one of the guys said something great," says Berger. "He said, 'A lot of people can play this music, but they don't understand their notes. We loved our notes, so we made them sound right. Even though some people might say, that's a funny note or a wrong note, we believed in those notes.'" **DB**

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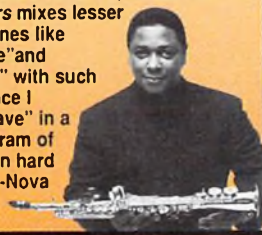
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## Surviving The Ellington Centennial

Duke Ellington's oeuvre may be too large, and his scores in too much disarray, for all his works to be performed in this centennial year. Yet the amount of attention his music will be given in coming months should go a long way toward deepening the public's understanding of his art. Following is a chronological, annotated guide to surviving the avalanche of tributes ahead:

■ Throughout 1999, Jazz at Lincoln Center, "The Ellington Centennial." No institution in the United States will offer as much Ellington programming as Jazz at Lincoln Center, which is focusing every concert, tour, lecture and film presentation on Duke. In New York's Alice Tully Hall, the concert schedule will include "Rockin' In Rhythm—The Small Band Music of Duke Ellington," Sept. 16-18; "Blues in Orbit—Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra Small Bands Play Ellington," Oct. 21 and 23; "In His Solitude—The Sacred Music of Duke Ellington," Dec. 9-12.

On the road, LCJO will tour in April and May, the itinerary including stops in Chicago (April 16), Kansas City (April 17), Cleveland (April 24), Washington, D.C. (April 26), Boston (April 28), Baltimore (May 11) and Newark (May 12).

For students, the Fourth Annual Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition and Festival will run April 29–May 1 in Lincoln Center and will feature ensembles from across the country.

In addition, Jazz at Lincoln Center has published *Jump For Joy*, a lavishly illustrated, 160-page book surveying Ellington's career. Phone (212) 875-5599 or visit the web site: [www.jazzatlincolncenter.org](http://www.jazzatlincolncenter.org).

■ April. *The Duke Ellington Centennial Edition: The Complete RCA Victor Recordings, 1927–1973*. This mammoth, 24-CD boxed set will include every Ellington RCA recording known to exist, including alternate takes and live performances never before released. Veteran record producer Orrin Keepnews, who has produced the set with Steven Lasker, has divided the package into six distinct subsets: "The Early Recordings" (1927–'34), with seven CDs including newly restored cuts; "The Early Forties Recordings" (1940–'42), on six CDs, including the entire





Webster-Blanton band discography and small-group cuts; "The Complete Mid-Forties Recordings," three CDs, including rare alternate takes; "The All-Star Sessions and the Seattle Concert" (1952), one CD, including a live performance featuring Clark Terry; "The Three Sacred Concerts" (1965, 1968, 1973), three CDs, bringing all this music together for the first time; and "The Last Recordings," (1966-'73), including newly discovered material recorded at Tanglewood.

■ April. *Jean-Yves Thibaudet: Reflections on Duke Ellington* (Decca). The exceptional French pianist offers a followup to his noteworthy release of 1997, *Conversations With Bill Evans*. As in that recording, Thibaudet revisits familiar jazz repertory through the exquisite lens of French Impressionism.

■ April 3. Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra on tour, "Duke Ellington: A Centennial Tribute." David N. Baker, musical and artistic director of SJMO, will take the band on the road with an all-Ellington program. The itinerary will include Fairbanks, Alaska (April 3), Chicago (April 11), Indianapolis (April 17), Detroit (April 18) and Lincoln, Neb. (April 23-24). Phone (202) 357-1000 or visit the web site: [www.si.edu](http://www.si.edu).

■ April 5. John F. Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., "Duke Ellington Special Tribute." Pianist Billy Taylor will perform and author John Edward Hasse will discuss Ellington's music. Phone (800) 444-1324 or visit the web site: [www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org).

■ April 11. Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago, "A Tribute to Duke Ellington." The Jazz Members Big Band of Chicago will feature violinist Johnny Frigo in a tribute to

Ray Nance and tenor saxophonist Eddie Johnson, who recorded with Ellington. Phone (312) 409-3947.

■ April 11-23. The Tri-C JazzFest in Cleveland is the centerpiece of a year-long series of local events under the banner "Everything Ellington." The festival will present Ellington's Sacred Music with the Jazz Heritage Orchestra (April 11), Ellington's "Jungle Book" featuring new arrangements of Duke's 1929-'36 small band music by James Newton (April 22) and a performance of Ellington-Strayhorn tunes by Ernie Krivda's Fat Tuesday Big Band (April 23). Phone (216) 987-4400.

■ April 28-May 2. Washington Marriott Hotel, Washington, D.C., "Ellington '99." The 17th Annual International Duke Ellington Conference carries the subtitle "Edward, You Are Blessed" and will include performances, lectures and discussions. Phone (202) 872-1500 or send e-mail to [bhpubols@compuserve.com](mailto:bhpubols@compuserve.com).

■ April 29. Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center of Mercyhurst College, Erie, Pa., "Ellington By Ellington." Paul Ellington, grandson of Duke Ellington, will lead the Duke Ellington Orchestra in a centennial concert celebration. Phone (814) 824-3000.

■ May 2. Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, "21st Annual Tribute to Duke Ellington." Pianist Billy Taylor and others headline an event organized by Jazz Unites. Phone (773) 734-2000.

■ May 12. PBS Television, *Swingin' With The Duke*. The "Great Performances" series will feature Wynton Marsalis leading the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra in a concert taped at New York's Supper Club. Check local television listings. —H.R.

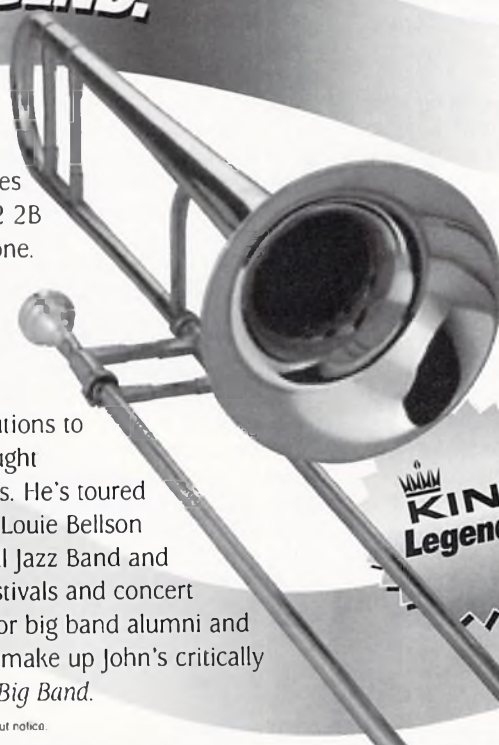
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# The Art Is In The Cooking

June 7, 1962, Down Beat

Duke Ellington's frequently expressed impatience with categorization in jazz is justified, or made understandable, by both his band and music. Neither belongs to any of the flags of convenience flown on the angry seas of criticism. Dixieland, traditional, Chicago style, hot, swing, Kansas City, bop, progressive, modern, cool, West Coast, East Coast, mainstream, hard-bop, funky, soul and Third Stream are some of the terms critics have employed through the years, in communicating with the public, as labor-saving reference tags. Sometimes too, these tags have served as rallying cries, or as slogans in calculated and systematic promotions. But to Duke and many other musicians, they represent divisions, ill-defined and indefensible, that tend to restrict the artist's prerogative of freedom. —Stanley Dance

People are told that they must never drink anything but a white wine with fish or a red wine with beef. The people who don't know and have never been educated along these lines drink anything. I suspect they get as much joy out of their eating and drinking as the other people.

It's just like people who listen to music. They don't necessarily know what they're listening to. They don't have to know that a guy is blowing a flatted fifth or a minor third, but they enjoy it. I consider this healthy and normal listening. A listener who must first decide whether this is proper form when a musician plays or writes something—that's not good. It's a matter of "how does it sound?" and, of course, the sound is modified by the taste of the listener.

Some listeners may like things that we consider pretty or schmaltzy. Others may like a graceful melodic line, with agreeable harmony under it and probably a little romantic element. One may like subtle dissonance, while another may go for out-and-out dissonance. What is really involved here is personal taste rather than categories.

Music itself is a category of sound, but everything that goes into the ear is not music. Music is music, and that's it. If it sounds good, it's good music. How good? It depends on who's listening.

Music can sound good to somebody who likes nothing but cacophony, but it doesn't necessarily have to sound good to the man sitting next to him. There are quite a few people who really dig distortion. Everybody in the world doesn't like pretty. Everybody in the world doesn't like sweet. There are some people who don't like either one ever, but they are all entitled to their likes and dislikes.

Some people don't even like to get along with others. They're not happy unless they're fighting all the time. I've often suspected that when people have said something about others, they've said it deliberately, expecting them to come back with something ugly, so that they could get their kicks.

Consider a customer at a restaurant. He looks at the menu and finds the dishes classified under such headings as fish, fowl and meat. That's a convenience for him. He orders steak, but, after a few minutes, here comes the wait-

er with a plate of fish. When he complains, the chef comes out of the kitchen with a big carving knife in his hand. The chef tells him to eat because if he were starving, he wouldn't care if it were fish or steak.

If a man has hungry ears for what he considers jazz, then almost anything would suffice. If he were starving he would tolerate it for one take. But if he wasn't starving, and was now like a gourmet who ordered fish in a gourmet restaurant and upon tasting it said, "This is not the way I like it," what then?

This is not a matter of categories. This is personal. He wants his fish cooked a particular way, just as some people want their trumpet played by Louis Armstrong, some by Dizzy Gillespie and some by Miles Davis.

Some people have been raised on nothing but fish. There's been nothing else available where they live. Some people have been raised on nothing but beef, because sheep aren't allowed in their territory. Some people have been raised on fowl, because it's the only thing they can get, and they have to shoot it down.

Each of these people may develop a taste for the food they've been accustomed to, and when they experience one of the others they may find it strange and distasteful. They may possibly decide that beef hasn't the delicacy of fish, but maybe they don't put it down. Maybe they say, "This is something new. This is something I never tasted before, and I like it." And they acquire a taste for it.

I don't really regard these three—fish, fowl and meat—as three different categories of food. Maybe I'm too basic, too primitive. They're all prey. Maybe I still think in terms of killing the animal and eating it half an hour later.

You could divide up the meat section of that menu under beef, lamb, pork and so on, under hot and cold, or according to the way they were cooked—grilled, roasted, baked or boiled—and maybe that's a service to the customer. But to multiply divisions that way in music merely multiplies confusion. Fish, fowl and meat may provide us with a parallel, but never forget that the art is in the cooking. And what is convenient for the listener or the critic is not necessarily helpful to the musician. **DB**

By Duke Ellington

In Collaboration With Stanley Dance





JACK BRADLEY









Such Sweet

# Thunder

Above: The mighty hands of Ellington

Right: Dr. Billy Taylor

COLLECTION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR



# Billy Taylor Reflects On Ellington The Pianist



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

**B**ack in the spring of 1974, the day after Duke Ellington's funeral, Billy Taylor played a solo-piano medley of the maestro's tunes. The occasion was a concert originally billed as the Duke Ellington Orchestra with Ella Fitzgerald, a gig Taylor had agreed to play weeks in advance as a guest pianist, at Duke's request.

"Ellington had heard me play my little tribute to him on many occasions, and he realized it was similar to what he did when *he* played," Taylor remembers, noting that he knew his longtime friend was sick, but didn't realize Ellington was going to die. "He would play his little piano vignette in order to get through all the requests that he always had: 'Solitude,' 'Mood Indigo' and so many others. He would play them all at once to get them over with quickly."

The band played on, and Taylor's medley incarnated Ellington's spirit at the orchestra's first Dukeless engagement. Taylor knew Duke's music—especially his pianism—backward and forward; Ellington was a major influence on Taylor, not only in the way he played, but in the way he thought about music. When Taylor started his career as a TV host on *The Subject Is Jazz* in 1958—a calling that he heeds to this day as jazz anchor for *CBS Sunday Morning*—his first guest was Duke himself.

At 77, Taylor still plays this tribute to his mentor, which he calls "Echoes Of Ellington" (he acknowledges that it's as much a tribute to Billy Strayhorn as it is to Duke). And in this, the year of Ellington's 100th birthday, he plans numerous tributes to Duke, including an April 5 concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., his and Ellington's hometown.

After hearing his latest CD, *Billy Taylor: 10 Fingers, One Voice* (Arkadia Jazz), which includes a sweetly thundering solo version of Ellington's "In A Sentimental Mood," we asked Taylor to reflect on Ellington the pianist. We caught up with him the afternoon of his trio's performance with the Turtle Island String Quartet at the Edman Chapel in Wheaton, Ill.

**ED ENRIGHT:** *What do you remember most about Ellington the pianist?*

**BILLY TAYLOR:** Duke was always a stride pianist. That was how he heard the instrument. Coming up with the generation of pianists that included Willie "the Lion" Smith, Stephen "the Beetle" Henderson and James P. Johnson. Those were the jazz pianists who were a generation above him, who helped him form the merit with which he approached the instrument. But he also studied.

When I was growing up in Washington, D.C., I studied with a man named Henry Grant, one of the few people with whom Duke actually studied. He was a confidante and someone Duke turned to when he had specific musical questions. He respected him. He was the first one to point out to me that Ellington had this interest in Debussy, Ravel and others. He said, "You can hear that," and pointed out some of the things in some of his Harlem days: "Prelude To A Kiss," or even before that in "Sophisticated Lady." He said, "Look at the manner in which he goes from A-flat to G and then gets back." It's very melodic, but it's not a place you would normally go.

So I would be taking piano lessons and the phone would ring. Mr. Grant would be gone for 10 minutes or so. He'd come back and say, "I'm very sorry, that was Duke Ellington." Obviously, I knew they were friends, but I have no idea what they were talking about. My assumption is that Ellington would call him and ask musical things. That was the one thing that he would pass on to us as students—he helped him as a teacher. When Ellington would ask him certain questions, he realized that was what I and some of those other students who were playing jazz were trying to do, but at a much lower level. So it really helped him help us solve a problem. In an indirect way it helped me put together a broader picture of Ellington. Like a lot of people, I thought Ellington was just a genius who came out of nowhere. That wasn't true.

**BY ED ENRIGHT**



Will Marion Cook was another who Ellington admired. He did all that stuff for Broadway around the first World War. He was such a good arranger. He's a legendary guy and there are a lot of stories about him, one of which is that he would write his scores in ink. So it was Will Marion Cook's influence, along with James Reese Europe—both of whom were from Washington, D.C.—that Ellington used as a model in terms of the manner in which they organized their music, the way they presented it. So when he came up with his compositions and began to emerge as a composer and arranger, he had a lot going for him. His piano playing reflected all of this.

Much of his time that he would have otherwise devoted to playing piano, was spent working with the band. You'll notice in his later years, he played much more piano, like on the *Money Jungle* session with Charles Mingus and Max Roach. He was always updating himself. He updated himself so that what he did with Mingus and Max worked! It was Ellington, but it worked!

He was a big influence on me. I developed my whole style of comping starting with his introduction to "In A Mellow Tone." It was a ninth chord in the left hand, an octave with a fifth in the right hand. It was a different sound. I interpolated that and I did it in other places.

**EE:** Let's talk about some of Ellington's sig-

nature pianisms, especially his introductions to tunes like "The Star Crossed Lovers." What do you hear him doing there?

**BT:** He had a mental picture. He was a painter all his life. Those little things had meaning for him. It wasn't just some changes or some pretty flurries. It usually set up a mood: "When I'm finished doing this, Hodges is gonna go," or "the band is going to come in with this kind of chord." He would set it up and normally it was a lot of movement before something really dramatic ... like a flower opening.

**EE:** What did you like best about Ellington's piano-playing?

**BT:** He could do what I could never do. He could make stride work. He could play something, then go into a real definite stride for about two or three bars, then he'd go into something else. He could marry that style that he felt so deeply that was really pushing the envelope.

**EE:** What comes to mind is the beginning of "Rockin' In Rhythm" where he played that long solo, "Kinda Dukish."

**BT:** And he does back-bass things where it's really off center, while he's doing this other thing in the right hand. The whole idea is that the right hand is swinging and the left hand is saying, "No you don't, no you don't!"

**EE:** How much time did you spend with Ellington in person?

**BT:** I worked at the Hickory House in

New York for a very long time after Marian McPartland. Prior to my working at the Hickory House, he would come and sit at a corner table, listen to the music, talk with his friends, visit with me, and he was very comfortable. I would say the several years I worked there he would come in several times a week, if he was in town. But at least once, twice a month. So I got to see him a lot. The reason that was important to me was that I got to sit and talk with him. It was usually late at night (because he was a night person), there wouldn't be a lot of people in there, and I could ask him a lot of questions. He was very generous.

I asked him about harmony one time. I can't remember the particular piece, but I said, "What started you thinking so you could go off to some really unexpected place and it would sound so logical?" He didn't answer me. He was eating some ice cream and so forth, so I asked him again: "I guess what I'm really asking is, in 'Sophisticated Lady,' (that's not the tune, but we'll just say that) what made you go from A-flat to G as opposed to up a fourth or some other logical way?" He said, "Well, I found I like D-flat more than C-sharp." [laughs]

**EE:** Certainly an interesting answer.

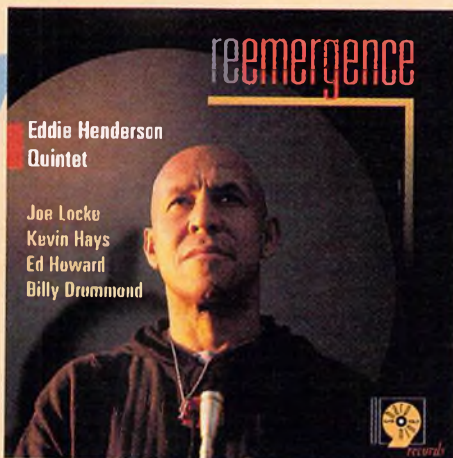
**BT:** But he always had some answer like that. That's the one that really stuck with me. I was like, "Shit. Yeah."

**EE:** Talk about some of the pieces you've

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records



written that are Ellington-esque.

**BT:** A couple of them I actually recorded with Johnny Hodges. There's a record I did called *Purely Piano*, originally for Ovule Cadet Records. Each one of those pieces was written with a particular band in mind that Ellington had at the time. Clark Terry was in that band, Hodges ... Willie Cook was in the band. These were the pieces. Originally the title was *Billy's Beat*. There were about six or eight tunes on there. I would say all but maybe one was Ellington-inspired.

**EE:** Talk about what it was like for you to see Ellington play live.

**BT:** I used to go to the Howard Theater in Washington, D.C. I grew up right down the road. Every week they changed the band, so every week I'd go to see Jimmie Lunceford, Count Basie, Tiny Bradshaw, Cab Calloway or whoever. The thing that grabbed me immediately was with all these wonderful bands, everybody had something different, but all of them had a certain presentation, a certain way they came out and played. But normally, the band would open up really swinging. There would be that anticipation. The curtain would burst open and the band would be there, swinging.

Ellington was totally different. An off-stage voice would say: "Ladies and gentleman, the Howard Theater is proud to present the internationally famous Duke Ellington Orchestra." There would be something very quiet starting. The curtain would open and it would be a screen. You couldn't see anything. Still, the music would be playing. There would be some solo, there would be a pit spotlight and very dramatically, "And now ..." Everything I heard was amplified by what I saw. He had even a vision of how he wanted to look from the audience's point of view. I have never seen anyone present music like that, before or since.

**EE:** Do you think Ellington was underrated as a pianist?

**BT:** Oh, very. One thing that impressed me about Ellington was his sense of time. This is one of the swiftest guys. When he set a tempo, it was really locked in the rhythm. It had its own momentum.

I talked George Wein into doing what we call piano workshops at Newport. George liked the idea, so when he did a festival in Pittsburgh, he had Ellington and Willie "the Lion" and five pianists on the bill. He got them all together on a Sunday afternoon, and we all played together. At one point in the afternoon, for the first time ever, Duke Ellington and Earl Hines played together. If you can get a hold of this record, it's the funniest record I've ever heard in my life. These are two very stubborn musicians, and very egotistical in terms of what they're doing. I don't recall who started it, but whoever started it started it here [*he taps the rhythm on his leg*] and the other guy came in, turning the beat around. They

never moved. Hines played his time, Ellington played his time. I was rolling, man! I was like, "One of them has got to give up. It's not working, man!" They just went on. You had to see 'em. It was like "Yeah, yeah!" Everything was cool!

**EE:** What's your fondest personal memory of Duke?

**BT:** One night I was scheduled to play at Birdland after the Ellington band, and the promoter told me I'd have to play solo. The last tune Ellington did was "Skin Deep," a big, raucous closer featuring Louie Bellson on drums. The crowd was going crazy, and as the band left the stage, Ellington stayed up there. While

the crowd roared, he said very slowly, "We love you madly. Johnny Hodges loves you madly, Harry Carney loves you madly ..." and let the noise simmer down to the point where it was calm again. Then he said, "I'd like to introduce my friend from Washington, D.C., a young man named Billy Taylor. I want you to listen to him very closely." Duke didn't have to do that: He was a superstar who could have just as easily gone off stage and let the crowd scream like gang-busters, leaving me to deal with a solo piano performance after a real house-raiser. I was grateful for that, and I'll never forget it. **DB**

## Royal Essence An Evening of Ellington



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# An Evening With Ellington

When Jack Towers and Dick Burris got together on Nov. 7, 1940, they didn't plan on making history. The two radio broadcasters thought it would be fun to make a live recording of their favorite band, the Duke Ellington Orchestra, which was playing a dance that night at the Crystal Ballroom in Fargo, N.D. So they set up their mics and let the recorders roll as the band played, pausing only to change acetates.

Towers and Burris ended up with a recording of amazingly good quality that captures Duke and his band in rare soloing form. Eventually issued on record, it remains a classic to this day and is available as the two-CD set *Duke Ellington And His Famous Orchestra/Fargo, North Dakota, November 7, 1940* on the VJC label.

Towers also took photos of the orchestra that night as they played. His words and pictures tell the story of one unforgettable evening with Duke Ellington.

When we arrived at the Crystal Ballroom early that night, Nov. 7, 1940, some of the guys in the band were already there. Up on the stage, five or six of them sat in a circle playing cards. We didn't want to set up our recording equipment until we had Duke's permission, and he wasn't around yet. So we waited.

While we were standing there, this young, small fellow dressed in a band uniform came walking along. It was Ray Nance. I didn't recognize him at the time, so I asked, "What do you play?" He said he played trumpet. And I asked, "Whose place are you taking?" He said Cootie Williams'. Man, hearing that was just like getting hit over the head with a club. But Cootie's absence wasn't going to stop us from recording that night.

Finally, Duke arrived from the dressing room. We asked him if we could record, and he said, "Yeah, go ahead. But I don't know why you want to, because our trumpets are in bad shape tonight."

We set up and started recording just after the band started the first song of the night, "It's Glory." We placed the recorder on the floor by the piano because our microphone cables weren't long enough to stretch back into the wings of the floor at the ballroom. We were actually right in the band, with our heroes all around us.

As we recorded, we wore ear-phones. You can imagine the difficulty of trying to hear what we were recording, with Sonny Greer right behind us beating on the drums. So at intermission, we'd take the disks and play them to see what kind of quality material we were getting. And, of course, the guys in the band were interested, so they came around and put their ears up to our speakers.

I remember Johnny Hodges listening to numbers that featured Ben Webster, and Ben listened to the Hodges stuff. I remember Barney Bigard said, "Hey, you're getting the drums too loud." The drums didn't show up much on the commercial recordings they did back then, but I think we were pretty in tune with how bands were recorded in later years. Ben was interested in what we were doing, and he was roommates with Jimmy Blanton, the young bass player who had spent a year with Duke by this time. Webster and Blanton had worked something up between the tenor sax and the bass, and they wanted us to record it. It turned out to be "Stardust," and even though we'd set aside a special disk for it (all of our recordings were on 16-inch disks, recording 15 minutes on a side), I didn't get the first few notes, but it turned out to be one of the best numbers on the recording.

When the whole thing was over, a lot of the musicians wanted to hear certain numbers. By that time we had six big disks, and it was hard to know just where to find the numbers. So we'd just put a disk down and play it until they heard what they wanted to hear. Duke wanted to hear the Johnny Hodges performance of "Whispering Grass," a tune the Ink Spots had made popular at that time.

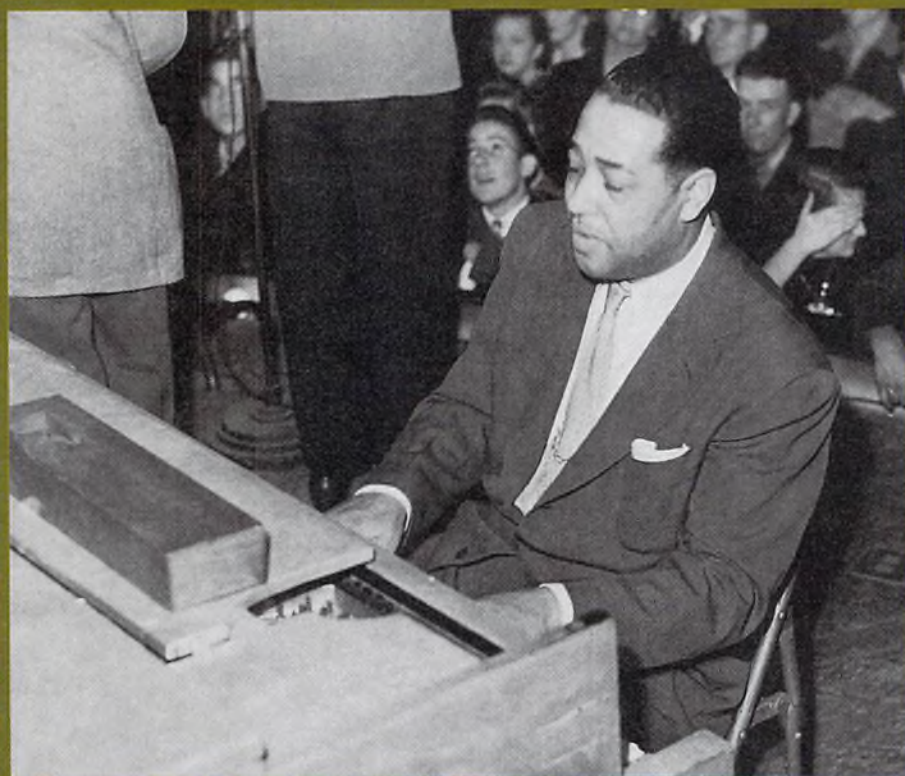
Dick and I were thrilled to get this documentation of the Duke Ellington band so we could play it for ourselves and our friends. We had no idea we'd be setting it up for worldwide listening 58 years later. **DB**

The maestro and his men at Fargo (clockwise from upper left): Ellington at the piano; Ben Webster; (front row, from left) Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, Otto Hardwick, Ben Webster, Harry Carney, (back row, from left) Rex Stewart, Ray Nance, Wallace Jones, Tricky Sam Nanton, Juan Tizol and Lawrence Brown; Ellington signing autographs; Sonny Greer; Stewart.

Dick and I were thrilled to get this documentation of the Duke Ellington band so we could play it for ourselves and our friends. We had no idea we'd be setting it up for worldwide listening 58 years later.

Story & Photos By Jack Towers











# Hoagy's

# 100th

Hoagy Carmichael, who died in 1981, would be celebrating his 100th birthday this year. But he hasn't been missed. I don't say that to brush him off, only to point out that one composer's copyright can be worth any 10 singers' hit records.

This is because in the music business, at least the music business that Carmichael knew, the performers were only the front men, the sales agents, the shills—here today, gone tomorrow. They received the adulation, the fame and the perks of stardom. But in the end, all that even the greatest of them could ever leave us were facsimiles of their presence in the form of recordings—much honored, to be sure, but, alas, infrequently sought out by younger ears. Every generation, after all, sings to its own.

The songs they sing are another matter, though, because a song is beyond the reach of mortality. It exists in the realm of literature, not stardom or personal charisma, which is why the performers got the moment of fame, but the writers got the immortality and an endless stream of performance royalties. Hoagy Carmichael hasn't been missed because we've never been without him in the principal way we knew him, which was as a composer.

Crosby, Sinatra, Armstrong and Ella may be gone, but today k. d. lang is here to give us "Skylark" from 1943 and Natalie Cole to sing us "Stardust" from 1931, along with others almost too vast to put a number to. This is the impression one gets looking over *Music By Hoagy Carmichael* from Peermusic, a CD and CD-ROM combination that, among other things, lists alphabetically many of the artists who have recorded "Stardust." I started counting but stopped at 100 when I noticed I hadn't even got through the C's.

Just as every generation seems to produce its own versions of *Les Misérables*, *Hamlet* and the nine symphonies of Beethoven, so it has been with "Stardust." This is why if performances by Crosby or Coltrane or Tony Bennett or Melissa Manchester or Spanky and Our Gang one day grow dated, composer Carmichael will always be with us in another version, sounding fresh as the day he first recorded his in 1927 as a fast instrumental tune. Because all those salespersons will be out there interpreting and embodying the song, never giving it the chance to acquire the kind of tell-tale signs that come to even the most sublime recorded performances as they drift from the comfort of their own time.

Duke  
Gets  
the Royal  
Treatment  
This Year,  
But We'll  
Always  
Have  
'Stardust,'  
Too

BY JOHN MCDONOUGH • PHOTO COURTESY OF HOAGY B. CARMICHAEL



To "cover" a song these days—that is, to do your own version of someone else's record—is made to seem almost like stealing in a business that has come to be dominated by vernacular knock-offs of folk, blues, rock and rap. How many singers rushed to cover "Man In The Mirror," "Material Girl," "Born In The U.S.A." or the last Nine Inch Nails single? The answer will tell you why relatively few "standards" have been added to the American song book since the '60s.

When Carmichael wrote, though, his songs were expected to be covered. If they weren't performed by everyone, they were considered less than successful. So each of the hundreds of performers who have recorded Carmichael's "Georgia On My Mind" or "Skylark" over the years has taken those songs to a different audience. Result: Everyone knows them by now, and that's what a standard is.

Of all the major popular song writers, none was more deeply shaped by jazz than Carmichael, whose first published song was recorded by the Wolverines with Bix Beiderbecke ("Riverboat Shuffle"). The next year Red Nichols introduced "Boneyard Shuffle," and Carmichael himself first recorded "Washboard Blues" with Paul Whiteman. In fact, he enjoyed a very lively secondary career as a performer, recording extensively in the late '20s and early '30s with top jazz musicians and appearing as



a pianist in at least two screen classics of the '40s (*To Have And Have Not* and *The Best Years Of Our Lives*).

Beyond jazz, though, Carmichael had a special "persona" all his own, reflected not only in his early songs but in his performances as well. He was a Southerner by temperament and played the country boy as if to the manner born. Yet, he had come out of precisely the same small-town, central Indiana territory that produced that quintessential sultan of swank, Cole Porter. When Carmichael

finally joined forces with lyricist Johnny Mercer, he found a perfect partner in temperament. Together they fashioned such affectionate little odes to the country life as "Lazybones" and "Moon Country," as well as a flock of contemporary novelities that singers today delight in rediscovering from time to time ("Ooo What You Said," "The Rhumba Jumps").

Carmichael may have played the country boy, but he was no hick, certainly not musically. "Stardust" is among the most sophisticated melodies ever to capture a mass audience. Clearly conceived in instrumental terms, the melody rides up and down the staff lines like a slow wave, moving between major and minor chords without any apparent wish to become a song capable of being sung. Mitchell Parish nevertheless added lyrics in 1931. But in the first memorable vocal recording, Louis Armstrong simply ignores the melody's finer points and sings the first four measures as a single note.

It's worth noting that Carmichael shares his centennial with the big enclada of American music, Duke Ellington. The New York Times Sunday Arts section recently devoted its entire front page and several inside stories to Ellington, and Lincoln Center will be working overtime on his further canonization in the year ahead. I would be surprised to see similar ceremony invested in Carmichael. This takes nothing from Ellington, who, in addition to being jazz's greatest songwriter, lives on in a vast body of orchestration, composition and recordings.

But even the greatest songwriter in jazz is a freshman among the greatest songwriters, period. In the book *The American Popular Song*, Alec Wilder grants both men the status of "great craftsmen." But he devotes only four pages to Ellington, whom he regards as an accidental songwriter whose music was conceived in instrumental terms only to acquire song status as an afterthought. He spends 18 pages on Carmichael, whom he considers the greatest of the great craftsmen.

So the centennial has now come. Maybe Ellington does get a four-color spread in the Times. And maybe there is no Lincoln Center Popular Song Orchestra to celebrate the Carmichael song book. But is that really necessary? When Ellington music is performed, it is often considered an event in which we pay him honor, because much of his music is performed infrequently.

When we hear a Carmichael song like "Georgia On My Mind," though, it is so commonplace we hardly think of *him* at all. Nor should we. Without realizing it, we pay him the ultimate honor any songwriter can be paid. We simply hum or whistle or sing along.

So Duke gets the royal treatment this year. But we'll always have "Stardust," too.

DB

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# RECONFIGURING THE PUBLIC RADIO PUZZLE

**S**imple logic explains why commercial radio stations turn to market testing to determine play lists: Listener numbers drive advertising sales. As noted in Part 1 of this story (March '99), many commercial smooth jazz stations on the air today use market testing to generate the listener ratings required to make money.

Carry the same logic over to public radio. Although they don't survive on high Arbitron ratings, they have to sell themselves to their listeners just as fervently as commercial stations. A lean bunch, they survive on listener pledges, an almost truer test of the market than advertising sales.

In February, public radio jazz titans KLON in Long Beach, Calif., and WBGO in Newark, N.J., embarked on an historic \$1 million pledge drive challenge, with each station trying to raise \$1 million before the other. The stations' initial head-to-head challenge in 1997 was for \$500,000; they aren't trying to raise the extra money out of luxury, but rather necessity.

Public radio has provided a home for improvisation-heavy bebop, avant garde and less commercial brands of jazz. These stations—most of them NPR affiliates—have given airtime to musicians who otherwise would be left out in the cold. However, through market testing of their own, public radio program directors have learned that challenging music and free-thinking play lists do not attract the audiences they need to garner pledges. As a result, programming is being altered, and many of jazz's greatest musicians are losing perhaps their last radio broadcast outlet.

**BY CHARLES LEVIN**







A tight, difficult fit (clockwise from upper left): Charlie Parker, Kenny Garrett, Woody Shaw, Kyle Eastwood, Johnny Hartman, Paul Desmond, Tommy Flanagan, Anthony Braxton, Wes Montgomery, Miles Davis, Marian McPartland and Ornette Coleman



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Kenny Garrett's alto saxophone spills from the speakers inside the Sacramento, Calif., studios of KXJZ. Over a soothing Latin groove, Garrett caresses the Frank Sinatra classic "It Was A Very Good Year." Meanwhile, DJ Paul Conley, his right hand on a volume fader, keeps his eyes glued to a compact disc player's clock. At exactly 3 minutes and 15 seconds, Conley slides the fader down, slowly taking Garrett to a whisper and then to nothing.

The ending is premature. Garrett and his General Music Project II still had another 2 minutes and 13 seconds of blowing. Conley has left the sound of Garrett up in my headphones, while he brings up the next cut, Art Pepper's 1956 ballad, "Diane." As Pepper now booms out to thousands of listeners in the Sacramento Valley and Lake Tahoe, Garrett takes a sharp left from poetic tonality into more dissonant territory.

"It becomes a little edgier," says Conley, an occasional producer of National Public Radio's "Jazz Profiles." The fade was no accident. KXJZ Music Director Gary Vercelli designed it in advance, believing that a more frenetic solo might scare off listeners. In fact, Vercelli has marked the CD's jewel box with a small yellow post-it, noting the DJ should fade by exactly 3:42—the point at which Garrett takes his solo "out."

Welcome to the world of Modal Research, public radio's foray into so-called market testing. Driven by decreases in funding, pledges and listenership, non-profit public radio is slowly dropping the mantle of elite educational forum. Instead, it is changing its focus from the artists to the sound, hoping to win new listeners and keep old ones from turning the dial.

Vercelli didn't make his decision in a vacuum. He relied on market research tests conducted by Joey Cohn, program director at Seattle's KPLU.

Cohn's approach to research isn't too different from commercial smooth jazz stations. Both are driven by money. With smooth jazz, it's advertising dollars; with mainstream jazz, it's subscription pledges.

Both conclude what attracts or repels listeners by using auditorium tests in which preselected groups of people rate 10- to 15-second musical sound bytes. For

public radio, this is virgin territory.

And, in the ferociously competitive world of media choices, both turned to testing when they realized their listeners were turning the dial elsewhere.

"I thought we had a great sounding station, cutting edge to some degree," says Vercelli, a radio veteran of nearly 20 years. "We played a lot of straightahead bop, but our listeners were making other choices. And you can't have an attitude of, 'Take your medicine. This is good for you.' They don't have to take it."

Vercelli was a reluctant convert to testing—especially when he saw the initial results. Cohn's research breaks down jazz into six modes: lyrical, instrumental, driving improvisation, contemporary rhythms,

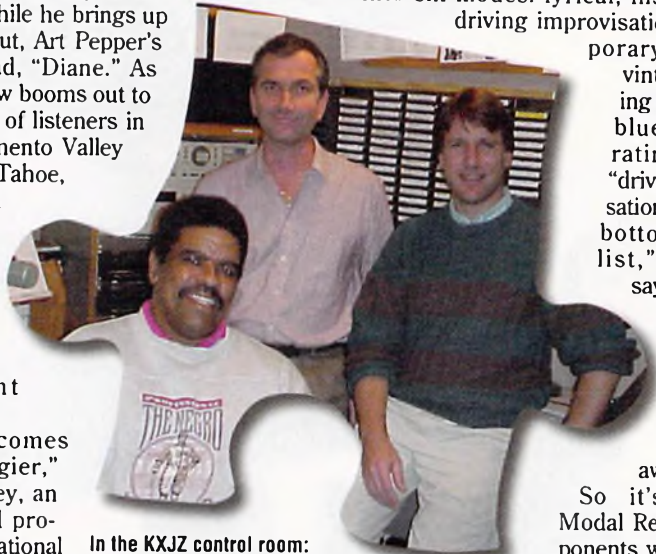
vintage, swinging singers and blues. On the ratings scale, "driving improvisation" was at the bottom of the list," Vercelli says. "Driving improvisation" was driving a lot of our audience away."

So it's unlikely Modal Research proponents will program Anthony Braxton, Cecil Taylor, Ornette Coleman, Charles

Mingus or Henry Threadgill. Other nonos include big bands, aggressive scat vocals and unaccompanied drum or bass solos. Even alto giant Charlie Parker, with some exception, is fading from this radio soundscape.

"When any kind of music becomes strident and extremely challenging, when it's very dense improvisationally, the appeal drops off considerably," Cohn says. "If the music is too simple, the appeal drops off. If the music is lyric, melodic, calming, and it's moderately challenging, then there's much higher appeal."

Vercelli, Cohn and other proponents of Modal Research, however, are not wed to their rule book. Vercelli listens to every cut on every album of every artist. Then he decides what tunes get airplay, if fades are required or if DJs must play the songs late at night. Occasional big band outings, such as cuts from Kyle Eastwood's *From There To Here*, or the recent *Count Basie Plays Duke Ellington*, make it through. So do some scat singers. "The brassiness of a big band does not test well, but when a big band has more of a small ensemble feel, it's more appealing," Vercelli says, suggesting that the Eastwood album is reminiscent of the Gil Evans-Miles Davis



In the KXJZ control room: jazz announcer Carver Barney, jazz music director Gary Vercelli and jazz announcer Paul Conley



collaborations and there are no screaming horns on the Basie album.

So Vercelli plays Hancock's *Speak Like A Child* and *Maiden Voyage*. John Coltrane? Anything from the *Ballads* album or his legendary collaboration with singer Johnny Hartman. Even "Giant Steps" gets an occasional spin on some stations. But you're not likely to hear *A Love Supreme* or *Expression*.

Besides screening new releases, Vercelli's DJs choose their tunes from an inch-thick looseleaf binder of "core" selections. Among the 2,200 songs, there's plenty of Red Garland, Wynton Kelly, Tommy Flanagan, Kenny Burrell, Wes Montgomery, Modern Jazz Quartet and early Miles Davis. Paul Desmond is a staple. "He's one of the quintessential modal jazz artists," Vercelli says. "There's something about his sound that says, 'Welcome to my station.'"

"In a nutshell, the modal parameters tell us that melody is important," he continues. "Now our sound is more warm and relaxing. Some would say more conservative. That's probably accurate. We're certainly playing more George Shearing and less Woody Shaw than we used to. But we're still playing Woody Shaw."

Cohn doesn't believe that public radio is playing it safe by turning to Modal Research. "Public radio is known for being creative and taking chances," Cohn says. "What we're playing here at KPLU is Thelonious Monk, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Wynton Marsalis, Joshua Redman, Kurt Elling, Kevin Mahogany. This is jazz. We're not playing Kenny G."

**W**hy the sudden interest in research? Listenership and subscription pledges are dropping for many stations. Even the most successful stations, such as Newark's WBGO, report flat ratings of late. Also, government funding to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting under the Republican-controlled Congress has dropped steadily—from \$285 million in 1995 to \$250 million in 1999 (though it appears that Congress has restored this to \$300 million for fiscal year 2000).

Some 15 stations, National Public Radio and Public Radio International helped pay for KPLU's research, Cohn says. NPR has shared the research with the producers of its six syndicated jazz radio news shows: *Jazz Set* with Branford Marsalis, Marian McPartland's *Piano Jazz*, *Jazz From Lincoln Center*, *Jazz Profiles* and Billy Taylor's *Jazz At The Kennedy Center*.

NPR also hopes the research will help its stations boost subscription pledges, as roughly 84 percent of NPR's 600 affiliates carry some jazz, says Jackie Nixon, director of strategic planning and research.

But the greater majority of stations who've turned to Modal Research did so to boost mid-day listenership. They carry NPR's popular news magazines, *Morning*

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*Edition and All Things Considered.* In public radio parlance, these shows are called the tentpoles, meaning they support a roughly six-hour gap between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. for mid-day jazz. Keeping the news audience from changing stations is critical, and listener surveys at many stations showed that mid-day jazz between the tentpoles was sagging big time.

WDUQ in Pittsburgh faced that reality about three years ago, says program director Dave Becker. After a local smooth jazz station began broadcasting in the summer of 1996, "we lost about 20 percent of our audience overnight," Becker says. Some NPR stations, he says, have folded the tent and filled their day with other programs, such as *Fresh Air* and *Talk of the Nation*. "We decided to stand and fight, but we couldn't do it by playing the same old stuff."

For stations using Modal Research, the news is mostly good. Arbitrons are rising. Before turning to research, WDUQ posted a 0.6 Arbitron rating, the radio equivalent of brain dead and breathing through a ventilator. In a post-research era, the station's mid-day jazz numbers have roughly doubled, Becker says.

At KPLU, Cohn reports mid-day pledges during fundraising drives increased 39 percent, from \$67,013 in fall 1995 to \$92,934 in fall 1996. Pledges increased in '97 and '98 as well, when the station changed their method of collecting money to general direct mail, not focused on specific programming. Vercelli boasts increased listenership and pledges but more importantly, KXJZ found a 31 percent increase in "overall loyalty."

Apparently, few listeners are complaining. But Modal Research has generated a stir in the radio world. Some veteran jocks believe it's a move in the wrong direction.

Bob Parlocha, the San Francisco Bay Area DJ whose "Jazz With Bob Parlocha" goes out to 130 cities via satellite, argues that Modal Research won't keep listeners or grow an audience. He also believes it sends the message to artists that the key to airplay is a more conservative sounding product. "You have the right to program your station the way you want to. That worked at (Alameda, Calif.-based) KJAZ," says Parlocha, referring to the country's last full-time commercial jazz station, which went off the air in 1994. "But we didn't care about that. It was the art form

that mattered. We wanted listeners and we went and got them."

Thurston Briscoe, WBGO's program director, objects to the edits and fades. "It's kind of like showering with a raincoat," he argues, refusing to use them. "What's the value of playing the song? I would just as soon not."

But Vercelli defends the edits as musically sensitive. "To give the artist some exposure is better than to not play the artist at all," he says.

Even some of the stations that paid KPLU for the research have balked on using it. Having the staff buy into it would be a big hurdle, says Judi Jankowski, KLON's general manager. Briscoe wants to see more testing done in a greater variety of cities. Tests conducted in Seattle and Philadelphia may not accurately reflect New York City's racial diversity and listening tastes, he says.

Briscoe isn't completely turned off to testing, however. The Jazz Radio Consortium, 14 stations that include WBGO, KPLU, WDUQ, KLON and San

Francisco's KCSM, may pool their resources to do more tests.

The interests now range from listener reactions to musical content to the DJ's on-air delivery, said Scott Handley, WDUQ's general manager and consortium spokesman. "There are lots of different questions we want to answer and we don't

have unlimited resources," Handley says. Consortium members have yet to adopt a formal plan.

What effect Modal Research is having on artists remains to be seen. One could argue that it excludes the avant garde and other musicians pushing expressive boundaries. And don't forget the huge number of artists—easily "accessible" or not—who simply fall through the cracks of set "modes." But stations who champion these artists don't appear to play them during peak listening hours anyway.

"Traditionally the avant garde is played at three or four in the morning," Briscoe says. "That music should be played at three or four in the afternoon with its energy, but if I played it then, I would be deafened by the sounds of radios being turned off." **DB**

*Part III of this story will address the question, Where do these artists turn?*



Getting listeners at KPLU: music director Nick Morrison, jazz host Kat, program director Joey Cohn





Vincent Herring

# Out Of The Woods

Vincent Herring came up in the first wave of “young lions” in the 1980s. And, while others of his generation fell away, he’s lasted.

“Music is the kind of thing you have to study your whole life,” says the saxophonist. And lately, when he’s not gigging with Nat Adderley, Cedar Walton, the Mingus Big Band, or fronting a group himself, he’s been helping others study and working on a book to help students absorb and apply all that they’re learning more easily and systematically.

“What I’ve noticed is that a lot of students already have a ton of information, but they have no idea what to do with it. I’ve always had students from Europe or the major schools around town come over for lessons, and I’ve found that many of the students have the same problems. They know about harmony. They have good technique on the horn. But they feel lost. There’s so much stuff to know, and a lot of students get overwhelmed because they don’t know where to start, how to be consistent, how to develop all that stuff.

“Right down the street from my house is the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. They asked me to be an artist-in-residence. I’m there a couple days a week, I teach ensemble classes and do what I can to share knowledge. I’m working on a book, and being there enables me to apply some of the things I’ve been writing about. The working title of my book is *Philosophy And Logic In Jazz Improvisation*.

“I started working on this with Enos Payne and Dave Rivel at the Brooklyn Conservatory. It’s about systematically learning how to simplify things, how to set short-term and long-term goals and then make them happen. It’s really just how to get organized and assimilate all this information, and then turn it into something.”

Herring knows exactly what the students are going through. He’s been there, in those very same woods. He came to New York as an alto player just as the young lions were rearing—though some of them were only toothless pups. Herring is much more realistic about himself and the music.

“It took me a while to get my stuff together. I came about ’82-’83, but didn’t start playing places until around ’86. I played in the street. I played with big bands, like Lionel Hampton. And the whole time, I was studying, transcribing, trying to develop my musicianship. That’s why I came to New York in the first place. I

**By Michael Bourne**

**Photos By Alan Nahigian**



thought that the most important thing was to get seasoning and experience."

Herring matriculated for a minute with Horace Silver before settling into a long gig with Adderley. "Nat is such a good-spirited guy to be around," Herring says of the trumpeter/cornetist, brother of his hero, Cannonball Adderley. "Nat has a depth of maturity as a person that also contributes to my musicianship."

Since then, he's worked most often with Cedar Walton. "When you play with a guy who's a great composer and who has such depth about the music, you have to work hard to

**"A lot of students already have a ton of information, but they have no idea what to do with it. They know about harmony. They have good technique on the horn. But they feel lost."**

develop your skills fully. And when you get those creative juices flowing, there's nothing else like it."

One new element in Herring's musical life is the tenor sax, which he plays on one track of his new CD, *Jobim For Lovers*, a tribute to the great Brazilian romantic. And Herring plays all tenor as a sideman on *Mirrors*, a new album with drummer Joe Chambers. "I've always loved the tenor, and I've gotten more and more serious about playing it. I started bringing it to rehearsals, and then people started calling me to play tenor. The alto and tenor each have a slightly different vocabulary, and the phrasing is different. I find that when you play one or the other, you pull from different sources and a different voice comes out."

"Wave" is the one tenor tune on *Jobim For Lovers*. Otherwise, it's his alto breezing through Jobim classics like "Once I Loved" or not-so-familiar but just as beautiful songs like "Eu Sei Que You Te Amar." Herring was at first hesitant about the repertoire. "Music Masters wanted an album of standards. I wanted to do an album of originals. But it's hard to argue, because when you look at record sales, my standards records have sold quadruple what my originals records sold."

He's certainly happy that he was practical. "It turned out to be a great experience. It came about when I was sitting around with my friends listening to Stan Getz and to some Brazilian tapes my wife brought back from Thailand. I produced a couple Brazilian records for Lee Konitz, and the whole time I was in the booth, I was thinking that I want to make this record myself."

Herring is joined by pianist Gary Fisher and the Trio da Paz of guitarist Romero Lubambo, bassist

Nilson Matta and drummer Duduka Da Fonseca. "Gary Fisher is a childhood friend of mine from the Napa Valley area, and he just arrived in New York recently. He's very versatile, and he plays Brazilian music very well. I wanted the best Brazilian cats possible, and I figured that I should get a unit that's already playing this music, so that I could become part of them. Romero Lubambo helped me pick out the best songs, especially some obscure Jobim songs, and to get the original harmonies and not just play someone else's versions of the songs."

Rather than write liner notes, Herring uses photos of his young son and a neighbor girl on a Brooklyn beach that fills for Ipanema. "I asked my friends to pick a photo each and then write a caption that has to do with Jobim or romance or love." Among other musings is a thought from Herring's au pair, Anna Seitz: "Catch and live your dreams before they float away."

Herring is catching, living, learning more and more, teaching what he's learned and dreaming of what's next. "I'm always trying to diversify, trying to keep it floating." **DB**

#### EQUIPMENT

Vincent Herring plays Yanagisawa alto, tenor and soprano saxophones with Vandoren Classic #3 reeds. He also uses a Vandoren V16 #3 1/2 reed on the alto. His mouthpieces are a New York Meyer 5M for alto, a Yamaha #7 for soprano and a Yanagisawa #7 for tenor. He also plays a Yamaha 521 flute and a Buffet R13 clarinet.

#### SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

*JOBIM FOR LOVERS*—Music Masters 01612  
*EARLY ON*—32 Jazz 32086  
*CHANGE THE WORLD*—Music Masters 65163  
*THE DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES*—Music Masters 65152  
*SCENE ONE*—Evidence 22170  
*SECRET LOVE*—Music Masters 65092  
*DAWNBIRD*—Landmark 1533  
*FOLKLORE*—MusicMasters 65109  
**with Nat Adderley**  
*AUTUMN LEAVES*—Evidence 22102  
*THE OLD COUNTRY*—enja 7027  
*TALKIN' ABOUT YOU*—Landmark 1528  
*WE REMEMBER CANNON*—In&Out 7012  
*WORKIN'*—Timeless 387

**with Joe Chambers**  
*MIRRORS*—Blue Note 96685

**with Cedar Walton**  
*COMPOSER*—Astor Place 4001

**with Marcus Roberts**  
*PORTRAITS IN BLUE*—Sony 68488

**with Mingus Big Band**  
*QUE VIVA MINGUS*—Dreyfus 36593-2

**with Tim Hagans & Marcus Printup**  
*HUBSONGS*—Blue Note 5950926

## GIMME 5



## Vincent Herring

by Michael Bourne

**"Gimme 5" asks a simple but often difficult-to-answer question: What are your five favorite records, albums you'd want to have if stranded on the proverbial desert island?**

**VINCENT HERRING:** I'd have to start with box sets. I'd pick a John Coltrane box, the new one that focuses on the Impulse! years [*The Classic Quartet—Complete Impulse! Studio Recordings*, see "CD Reviews" March '99]. The music is very innovative, very spiritual—a series of inspirational recordings to me. I'm also a huge fan of McCoy [Tyner]. I'd take my box set that has [Coltrane's] "Crescent" and "Love Supreme," or if I could have just one album, I'd pick *Crescent*.

I'd pick a Miles box. I loved when Coltrane was with Miles, and the band with Wayne [Shorter] and Herbie [Hancock] is hard to top. If I didn't get a box, I'd have to pick two albums. I'll pick *Kind Of Blue*. There's some great Cannonball [Adderley] on that and on *Milestones*. That was one of the first records I got.

My mom was always playing jazz around the house, and when I started playing saxophone, I asked her who was a great saxophone player. She said Charlie Parker. I went to check out Bird and the only records I could find were low-fidelity, like [Herring starts emitting throat-rasping, scratchy sounds]. I asked her who else, and she said Cannonball Adderley. I picked up a Cannonball record that was nice and clean. It was only later that I got Bird records on Verve that were nice and clean. I'd want that Charlie Parker box set on Verve, *The Complete Charlie Parker On Verve*.

If I'd have to pick a particular Cannonball record, it would be *Portrait Of Cannonball*.

I'm pulling my hair out over this one. I'm picking these records, but this doesn't represent all of my musical diet.





## Steve Turre

Lotus Flower  
Verve 559 787

★★★½

For *Lotus Flower*, trombonist Steve Turre offers a musical combination that refreshes even as it entertains and enlightens. With cellist Akua Dixon and violinist Regina Carter, Turre may have found his mates, musically speaking. Their well-articulated and contrasting sonorities on upbeat bebop fare like Turre's J.J. Johnson tribute "Chairman Of The Board," the playful waltz "Sposin," the lovely "Inflated Tear" or the delightful, perky closer, "Shorty," place the sound of jazz in a new light. (Dixon and Carter, by the way, make up half of the celebrated Indigo Quartet.)

*Lotus Flower* is the first real "trombone" album this reviewer has heard from the typically multi-instrumental Turre, who picks up his well-known conch shells for just "Shorty" (one of only a few that hint at Turre's strong Latin jazz connections). And for many, it may come as a surprise that the crack band he sports here has been together since 1991.

Drummer Lewis Nash, pianist Mulgrew Miller and bassist Buster Williams guide and drive Turre, who can also be heard playing a fair amount of mute (a highlight: his Ellingtonia-mixed-with-Mingus ballad "The Fragrance Of Love," a delicate yet humorous tribute to trombonist Lawrence Brown).

Special mention should be made of two beautiful renditions of ballads from different eras. The magisterial, haunting Raheem Roland Kirk signature piece "The Inflated Tear" hearkens back to the early '70s, when Turre shared the bandstand with his former boss. Then there's the Gordon Jenkins lament of Benny Goodman's "Goodbye," which features evocative (and unconventional) theme and solo work from Dixon and Turre's straight open horn mixed with some wry mute.

*Lotus Flower* documents Turre's "sextet with strings" (with percussion accompaniment on two tracks), and, by and large, is a sunny testimonial to one of jazz's current leading lights.

—John Ephland

**Lotus Flower:** Lotus Flower; Chairman Of The Board; The Inflated Tear; The Organ Grinder; Passion For Peace; Sposin;

The Fragrance Of Love; Blackfoot; Goodbye; Shorty. (61:16)  
**Personnel:** Steve Turre, trombone, shells (10); Regina Carter, violin; Akua Dixon, cello; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Buster Williams, bass; Lewis Nash, drums; Kimati Dinizulu, djembe (1), percussion (10); Don Conreux, gong (3, 5).



## Cassandra Wilson

Traveling Miles  
Blue Note 54123

★★★

With so many superb titles in the Miles Davis song book that could serve a singer so well, Cassandra Wilson has patched together her Miles project the hard way, eschewing the many masters he played in favor of three new songs of her own and a selection of titles (to which she has added words) that touch equally on his '50s, '60s and '70s albums. It's a measure of her chutzpah that she feels she can take on such material and still bring to it enough to make it worthwhile. Though her skills as a musician and actress pretty much bring it off, the overall atmosphere she chooses to create has an almost unrelentingly grim, yogi-like introspection about it. Was this Miles or the Miles image?

Only three of the pieces are actually based on Davis compositions, which is not to admonish the set, since only one of them holds together with any kind of melodic integrity. That is the short, lively "Seven Steps," to which Wilson has added a lyric. "Blue In Green" also acquires a Wilson lyric and a new title, "Sky And Sea." Coming from one of the most famous of all jazz albums, *Kind Of Blue*, her words and tempo are careful not to tamper with the meditative character of the original. "Run The Voodoo Down" springs from the weakest source material (*Bitches Brew*), but her words bring to it a remarkable sense of form.

The weakness of the melodic material is strikingly evident when we hit track seven, "Somebody My Prince Will Come." It makes you wonder if it wouldn't be better if singers left the writing to the pros. Case in point is the title track, "Traveling Miles," a direct homage to the trumpeter. But alas, performers make poor subjects for other performers to sing about. The result is typically a slice of failed seriousness

KEY

Excellent  
Very Good  
Good  
Fair  
Poor

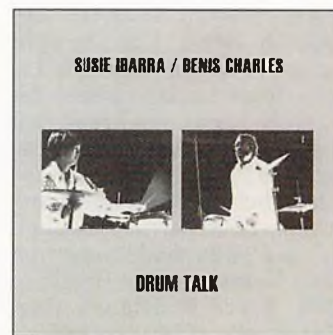
★★★★★  
★★★★  
★★★  
★★  
★

that comes off as camp unless relieved by a wink of self-awareness of the silliness of it all, which here it is not.

Wilson gives us nine lyrics in all. "Right Here, Right Now" has a '70s folk quality, with a cycle of observations keyed to the recurring phrases "everybody seems ..." and "I got a feeling ... ." Wilson demonstrates solid sense of structure in her lyrics, and Marvin Sewell and Doug Wamble's acoustic guitar work has lovely presence. Pat Metheny also contributes a fine cameo on "Sky And Sea."  
—John McDonough

**Traveling Miles:** Run The Voodoo Down; Traveling Miles; Right Here, Right Now; Goes Down; Seven Steps; Someday My Prince Will Come; Never Broken; Resurrection Blues; Sky And Sea; Piper; Voodoo Reprise. (62:37)

**Personnel:** Cassandra Wilson, vocals; Olu Dara, cornet (1); Vincent Henry, harmonica (5); Regina Carter, violin (6, 7, 8); Stefan Harris, vibraphone (6); Cecelia Smith, marimba (3, 9); Eric Lewis, piano; Marvin Sewell, Kevin Breit, guitar; Lonnie Plaxico, Dave Holland (1), bass; Jeffrey Haynes, Doug Wamble (3, 9), percussion; Marcus Taylor (1, 6, 7, 12), Perry Smith (2, 3, 9), drums; Angelique Kidjo (12), vocals.



## Susie Ibarra Denis Charles

Drum Talk  
Wobbly Rail 005

★★★★

The challenge of making meaningful music out of drums alone used to be a staple of creative music. There were foreshadows in lone drum expeditions by Baby Dodds, Kenny Clarke and others, but in the '60s folks like Andrew Cyrille and Milford Graves treated the format as a given and made it a full-fledged part of the jazz tradition. Sad fact is, it's a setting that is rarely heard these days, which makes a lovely record like this all the more welcome.

*Drum Talk* draws on two generational poles of the new jazz continuum. Susie Ibarra is one of the best and brightest young drummers to come out of New York (or anywhere) in the last few years; she's been a major spark in the renowned David S. Ware Quartet and can be heard in various settings with bassist William Parker and in duets and trios with reed player Assif Tsahar. The late Denis Charles (known for years as Dennis), whose passing last year



was particularly sad because he'd been much more active of late, is a founding figure of free music whose recorded legacy dates back to the late '50s; his light swing, Caribbean influences and gorgeous sense of space were inspirational aspects of his work in groups led by Cecil Taylor, Steve Lacy and Sonny Rollins.

In this live concert recording from early in '98, the combination of musical personalities paradoxically reveals that Charles had the energy and verve of youth right up to his death and that Ibarra is wise beyond her years. Devoid of showboating or ego flapping, it's a record that revels in interplay and emanates respect. Convening on triangle (his) and djembe (hers) consecrates the proceedings (intro and outro), and in between over the course of 50 warm minutes the twosome investigate a wide variety of combinations and approaches. Charles' "Stand Back" starts with the most overtly bop-pish unison rhythms stated on kits, leading into an excitingly buoyant, flowing exchange; his "Drum Talk" uses waves of press-rolls as a communal juncture before crashing ashore in an energetic duet. Ibarra arranged two traditional Philippine pieces for "Kulintang Medley," on which she plays the pot gongs that give the composition its name; the very different time feel and color of this track breaks up the program nicely. "For Arcah" features powerful tom 'n' mallets, while the delicate, intimate free piece "Sunshowers" includes exquisite brush-work and direct interactivity.

One note on the appropriateness of this release on the super Chapel Hill, N.C.-based Wobbly Rail outlet: That label takes its name from "Excursions On A Wobbly Rail" off Cecil Taylor's groundbreaking 1958 LP *Looking Ahead!*, which featured Denis Charles on drums. Traditions, dreams, drummers—old and new. —*John Corbett*

**Drum Talk:** Welcome; Drum Talk; For Arcah; Kulintang Medley; Sunshowers; Stand Back; Good Night! (51:08)  
**Personnel:** Susie Ibarra, drums, djembe, kulintang, percussion; Denis Charles, drums, triangle.



## Stan Getz Quartet with Chet Baker

Quintessence, Vol. 1  
Concord 4807

★★★

No grand statements, no whirlwind flourishes—not even an italicized exclamation point. Yet this 1983 document of Stan and Chet on stage in Norway ranks anyway. The

late-in-life tour that united the faded avatar of West Coast cool and his East Coast counterpart didn't exactly make waves, but it sure was responsible for some wonderful ripples. Sometimes simple pleasures can be the most heartening.

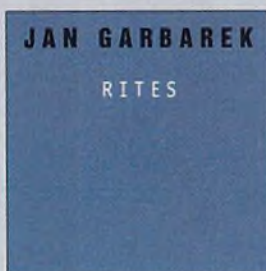
Refinement is expected as masters mature, and the poise that defines *Quintessence* has an obvious grace. Getz was 56 when he recorded these tracks; his authority could be heard in one note. Distilling every passage to its essence, he captivated his listeners by wrapping them in billowing ribbons of sound—call him the Christo of the tenor. Check the duet opening of "I'm Old Fashioned," a passage I must have played 30 times this week. Pianist Jim McNeely keeps the chordal info spartan—he

knows the boss's tenor lines have their own voluptuousness. The symmetry of their exchange is gorgeous.

It would be silly to claim that Baker had a similar level of expertise at this point, but he certainly has a flair for suave note placement. On "Star Eyes," where the pair momentarily glide around each other before going their own way, he holds his own. And when his time comes to walk alone, his withered technique (teeth or no teeth?) manages to yield a string of licks that have an apt cohesion.

This level of sharing between the bosses is somewhat of a shock. If you can believe anecdotal accounts of this tour, the headliners were on each other's nerves. Getz had recently left a dry-out spa in Colorado; he was valiantly trying to

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# THE HOT BOX

CDs	CRITICS	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	John Ephland
<b>STEVE TURRE</b> <i>Lotus Flower</i>		★★★★	★★★	★★1/2	★★★1/2
<b>CASSANDRA WILSON</b> <i>Traveling Miles</i>		★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
<b>SUSIE IBARRA/DENIS CHARLES</b> <i>Drum Talk</i>		★★1/2	★★★★	★★★	★★★1/2
<b>STAN GETZ QUARTET WITH CHET BAKER</b> <i>Quintessence, Vol. 1</i>		★★★★	★★★1/2	★★★	★★★1/2

## CRITICS' COMMENTS

### STEVE TURRE, *Lotus Flower*

Another superior piece of work from Turre, who fashions a number of arresting blends and combinations with his co-stars, Carter and Dixon. Dixon's sound matches the melancholy of "Goodbye," and Carter's work on pieces like "Sposin'" nearly makes this album her own. But Turre makes fine use of his own versatility, crafting needle-sharp work on "Fragrance." —JMD

Moments of excitement and intrigue flash by (Akua Dixon's rich cello on "Goodbye," f'rinstance), Turre is characteristically in command and the composite musicianship is impeccable, but over-arrangement saps some of the creative juice. Notable exceptions: reworked Kirk on "The Inflated Tear," bone sings with strings on "The Fragrance Of Love." —JC

Putting a personal spin on the hard-bop lingo that most mainstreamers live by, Turre attempts to orchestrate the ordinary. But there's a flatness to the record I can't figure out—its elements blend into each other in a prosaic swirl of sound. —JM

### CASSANDRA WILSON, *Traveling Miles*

Wilson's smoky voice continues to enchant. I prefer her more pop-oriented records, like this one, to her open-ended, jazzier things, and Craig Street's highly produced atmospheres here are especially transporting (check out the killer guitar combo of tremolo and slide on "Right Here, Right Now"). Don't know about the Miles connection—seems more like a launching-pad idea than a fawning tribute. —JC

Another feather in her cap. The pre-eminent vocalist of the day turns to Miles and sees him everywhere: sunsets, folk tunes, '80s radio and her own soul. That's why the music has depth. Adamantly sidestepping slavishness, she doesn't tell us about Miles, she tells us what she knows about Miles. —JM

Tributes come and tributes go, but this one is suitable for framing. Instead of being the occasion to put on a new face, this CD actually takes its inspiration and folds it into what already is Cassandra Wilson. Her own material, including great lyrics, and her very imaginative reworkings of music of Miles Davis, both light and heavy, musky and peppy, just plain work. And yet, every once in a while that husky voice seems to cry out for a certain Harmon mute. —JE

### SUSIE IBARRA/DENIS CHARLES, *Drum Talk*

This is like listening to a record of Fred Astaire tap dancing. Good drumming is half music, half choreography. Here we get only the first part, and even that falls asleep on "Sunshowers." If Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa couldn't lift the drum duet out of the realm of novelty, don't expect Ibarra and Charles to do it here. —JMD

Baby Dodds would be proud. Along with Milford Graves' solo disc on Tzadik, this percussion exchange revives the drums-only legacy that flourished during the loft era. It falters when it disregards dynamics and triumphs when it uses color as an impetus for motion. —JM

One of the nice things about a strictly drums album is the way drummers dispense with their usual timekeeping roles. This live recording conveys the melodic and musical qualities both drummers are known for. Best heard with lights low; better yet, with memories of seeing them play together. —JE

### STAN GETZ QUARTET WITH CHET BAKER, *Quintessence, Vol. 1*

My complete lack of interest in Chet Baker's singing, which is the business of five of the eight tunes here, tempts me to kiss this off with three stars. But with Getz as his usual superlative self and Baker playing well on "Star Eyes" and "Dizzy," I'll give the benefit of the doubt. —JMD

I could understand someone not finding Chet Baker's voice spiced to their taste—he's off pitch a fair amount, especially late in the game like this, and his timbre was always very peculiar, indeed. But I love it terribly, and Baker's phrasing is completely original, swings like mad, an absolute delight. As Anthony Braxton said of late-Sinatra, this is Mr. Baker entering his "old and senile period," and I'm with him all the way. —JC

It's always been a mystery to hear the old, withered one sing and scat with a delicacy that could swing as well as croon. This live recording finds everybody playing up to snuff, if not more. Nothing all that special, except for the onstage chemistry between two old guards of the sound of cool. —JE

win his ongoing bout with alcohol. Baker saw nothing wrong with sustaining the sportin' life. His drug intake was steady through this month-long collaboration. The saxophonist bristled at the trumpeter's general dissipation, in specific his singing (videos of some dates allegedly depict Getz grimacing during Baker's vocals).

As far as Baker's vocals go, well, he sounds a bit like Blossom Dearie recorded at 78 and played at 33—a tone that provides historic precedent for "Popsicle Toes" among other things. That said, charm overrules chops. Though anemic on "My Ideal," he's sufficiently sentimental on "Just Friends" and "I'm Old Fashioned." Don't expect too much and you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Records from this general time frame now dot the retail racks. A couple of years ago, Dreyfus released a nice 1982 Paris gig by the Getz quartet. And Verve recently came up with a three-disc package called *The Stockholm Concerts* that was recorded one night before *Quintessence*. Offering a bit more pizzazz—for better or worse Victor Lewis and George Mraz are the epitome of smooth in Norway—it contains a pair of hip takes of "Sippin' At Bells," a tune that doesn't show up on the Concord disc. That might be rectified in Vol. II, which is on the label's future release schedule. Until then we have made do with two jazz characters demonstrating the advantages of finesse.

—Jim Macnie

*Quintessence, Volume 1:* I'm Old Fashioned; Just Friends; Star Eyes; My Ideal; But Not For Me; Dizzy Atmosphere; Stablemates. (53:29)

**Personnel:** Stan Getz, tenor sax; Chet Baker, trumpet, vocal; Jim McNeely, piano; George Mraz, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.



## Joe Locke

### Slander

(And Other Love Songs)

Milestone 9284

★★★★

Joe Locke, a highly regarded modern-minded vibist, has made a nice move with his third CD for Milestone, an association that follows a lengthy stay at the Danish Steeplechase line.

His first two Milestone releases, *Moment To Moment* (1996) and *Sound Tracks* (1997), were A-1 concept albums: the music of Hank Mancini and themes from films, respectively. *Slander*, instead, explores spirited, sometimes edgy originals and distinctive pop tunes—all played with



élan by an ace crew.

Pianist Billy Childs, bassist Rufus Reid and drummer Gene Jackson return from previous Milestone efforts; guitarist Vic Juris is a welcome addition. This group has the flavors you'd expect from a Bobby Hutcherson-influenced leader who obviously enjoys a variety of modern moods, from Pat Metheny to McCoy Tyner and Cecil Taylor—with whom Locke recently performed at Yoshi's in Oakland.

The originals make up the spine of the album, and they are persuasive. The title track has a Tyner-esque vibe. It's moody but optimistic, and Childs, Reid and Jackson bash, both on the vamp sections, and those with a fluid swing.

Here Locke takes short ideas—fast, four-note scalar ascents; similar descents; bebop-based II-V statements; brisk, trilled thoughts—and weaves them into compelling whole cloth. He also unleashes some longer, convoluted yet ear-friendly phrases. His improv approach is similar on the complex, decidedly appealing "Song For Cables."

"Saturn's Child" is slower, and electronics (both in Juris' ringing tone and Childs' keyboards) enhance the sensuous, evocative feeling. After the guitarist's alluringly tuneful solo, Locke offers sweet notes delivered in an unhurried, then intensified way. The zippy "Second Story Man" is a chance for the rhythm team, and Locke, to shine at uptempo.

Other stuff: Lalo Schifrin's famed blues in 5, "Mission Impossible," is given a nice ride by Locke and company, as is Stevie Wonder's "Tuesday Heartbreak," where Childs' solo offers some tasty locked-hands work, then smoothly constructed lines. Joni Mitchell's "Blue" is played in a song-like manner, sans solos. —Zan Stewart

**Slander (And Other Love Songs):** Song For Cables; Saturn's Child; Tuesday Heartbreak; Mission Impossible; Blue; Cecil B. DeBop; Slander; Can't Help Falling In Love; Second Story Man. (55:37)

**Personnel:** Joe Locke, vibes; Billy Childs, piano, keyboards; Vic Juris, guitar; Rufus Reid, bass; Gene Jackson, drums.



## Dino Saluzzi Rosamunde Quartett

**Kultrum**  
ECM New Series 1638

★★★½

Neither jazz, classical nor tango, Dino Saluzzi's new music for bandoneon and string quartet utilizes strings for a logical extension of the ideas he brings to solo performance. Saluzzi and the Rosamunde Quartett

have achieved a musical symbiosis through his bittersweet, episodic compositions. The integration of bandoneon and string quartet is seamless and natural, as Saluzzi shifts from the forefront to the background, his part interwoven with those of the string players. The harmonies created by bandoneon and strings can be eerie and evocative. Anja Lechner's cello helps to provide a rhythmic foundation.

The liner notes remind you that Saluzzi's compositions draw from pre-tango folk music of Argentina, and are the product of a storytelling tradition. In "El Apriete" and "Milonga De Los Morenos," the players express the strong emotions of heartbreak, loss and longing associated with tango, but in a less structured setting. Just as Saluzzi's solo performances tell stories with

shifting settings and wandering narratives, his compositions for the ensemble change course to encompass a variety of motives and moods. At times, the listener may wish for more structure to latch onto. "Salón De Tango" and "Miserere" are the most dynamic tracks, with the string quartet delivering strong rhythmic momentum. The Rosamunde Quartett's performances here just hint at the kinetic energy generated in the performance of Shostakovich's String Quartet #8 on their ECM debut. —Jon Andrews

**Kultrum:** Cruz Del Sur; Salón De Tango; Milonga De Los Morenos; Y Solos Bajo Una Luna Amarilla. Discuten Sobre El Pasado; Miserere; El Apriete; Y Se Encaminó Hacia El Destierro; Recitativo Final. (60:15)

**Personnel:** Dino Saluzzi, bandoneon; Andreas Reiner, Simon Fordham, violin; Helmut Nicolai, viola; Anja Lechner, cello.

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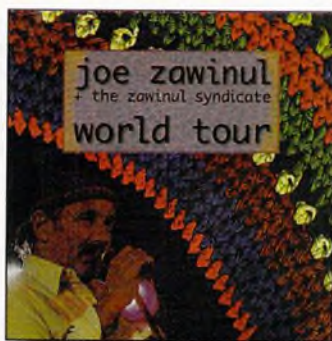
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## Joe Zawinul & the Zawinul Syndicate

World Tour  
Zebra 44010

★★★

**R**ecorded at three German concerts during the Zawinul Syndicate's 1997 world tour, this double CD recaps material that the Syndicate, with its shifting personnel roster, has recorded over the past decade—from Weather Report-style fusion to eclectic world music. For Joe Zawinul fans, the formula is a familiar one: dense, jazzy synthesizer textures dappled with multicultural hues and propelled by driving Afro-funk rhythms.

On the opening "Patriots," Victor Bailey's

throbbing bass, Paco Sery's pounding drums and Manolo Badrena's crackling percussion set a frantic pace; between African-style choruses, guitarist Gary Poulson takes a winding psychedelic solo, while Zawinul's vamping keyboards hold it all together. After Badrena sings the elegiac "Sunday Morning/Sunday Evening," Bailey pumps up the rain-forest funk of "Indiscretions." Using a vocoder, Zawinul sings "Bimoya," a song he wrote with Salif Keita, but its African flavor is submerged in funky fusion, as is the Crescent City soul of "N'awlins," where Cameroonian bassist Richard Bona replaces Bailey.

Zawinul shows his European side on "Lost Tribes" and "Slivovitz Trail," then revisits to his straight-ahead jazz roots on the Monk-ish "When There Was Royalty," an acoustic piano solo. Following the intricate but stylistically nondescript fusion of "Two Lines," the album closes on an ethnic note with "Caribbean Anecdotes" and "Carnavalito."

These live performances have a galvanic intensity, but the extended tunes often go on too long for home listening, and the similar-sounding grooves tend to run together, an effect compounded by the inexplicably muddy sound. In the end, a more tightly focused presentation, edited down to a single CD, would have been more effective. —Larry Birnbaum

**World Tour:** Patriots; Sunday Morning/Sunday Evening; Indiscretions; Asi Trabajamos; Bimoya; Zansa II; Bona Fortuna; N'awlins; Lost Tribes; Three Postcards; Slivovitz Trail; When There Was Royalty; Success; Two Lines; Caribbean Anecdotes; Carnavalito. (58:23/44:54)

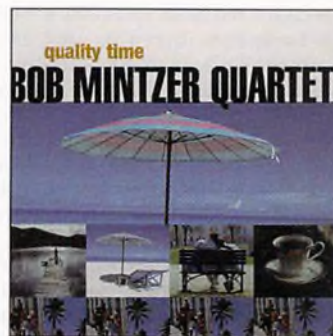
**Personnel:** Joe Zawinul, keyboards, vocoder, keyboard

bass, acoustic piano; Victor Bailey, Richard Bona, bass; Gary Poulson, guitar; Manolo Badrena, percussion, vocals, nolog-  
ipe; Paco Sery, drums, kalimba, vocals; Frank Hoffmann,  
spoken word (13); Pape Abdou Seck, vocals (5).

## Yellowjackets

Club Nocturne  
Warner Bros. 47031

★★★



## Bob Mintzer

Quality Time  
TVT Jazz 3230

★★★ 1/2

**H**aving played roles ranging from funky fusioners to world-beat acoustistas as well as a stint as Bobby McFerrin's back up band, with well over a million units sold in almost two decades of musicmaking, the Yellowjackets are looking to break through to gold-disc status with their radio-friendly, Grammy-nominated *Club Nocturne*. Thus the centerpiece of this disc is two back-to-back unexceptional Quiet Storm ballads, "Even The Plain" and "Love And Paris Rain," sung respectively by Jonathan Butler and Brenda Russell, on which the quartet becomes back up musicians on their own release. Good luck!

The true fans of this long-popular but never mega-hit band will find bright, airy tracks like "Spirit Of The West" with Bob Mintzer's sweet soprano singing the melody, "Stick-To-It-iveness" or the jaunty "The Country Church" more to their liking. The most pleasing ballad on the disc is the lightly swinging "Twilight For Nancy" featuring Russell Ferrante's wistful piano solo. Mintzer's novelty "Up From New Orleans" is a paean to jazz with an all-purpose funk arrangement such that when Kurt Elling sings, "Hear the big brass bands," you don't. More interesting is the Mintzer-Elling collaboration "All Is Quiet," a moody meditation on love. Elling gives a powerful reading of his lyric by sounding like he is straining to break out of his voice, while Mintzer and Ferrante provide a romantically wistful backdrop.

*Quality Time* is Mintzer's latest effort as a combo leader, a calling he's continued to pursue in the few years since he joined the Yellowjackets collective (he is also a noted big-band arranger). The tunes here are denser, more propulsive, jazzier—even the two with his

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Yellowjacket comrades—than his contributions to *Club Nocturne*. Mintzer's playing is more assertive, as is the rhythm section's.

"A Few Good Notes" is a swinging little tune with a charming melody played on soprano sax. On "Emit A1" Mintzer blows funky bass clarinet licks over a percolating, percussive rhythm supplied by the 'jackets. "All Is Quiet" has Mintzer's horn singing the melody instead of a vocalist. "Bop Boy" is a spirited romp over the changes, while "Groovetown" shows Mintzer at ease in the role of tough tenor, though I'd have liked to have heard the former with a trumpeter and the later with a B-3 organist added to the band.

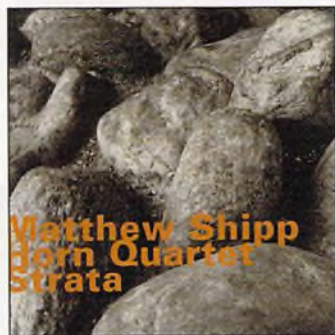
—Dave Holland

**Club Nocturne:** Spirit Of The West; Stick-To-It-ive-ness; Up From New Orleans; The Evening New; Even The Pain; Love And Paris Rain; The Village Church; Twilight For Nancy; Automat; All Is Quiet. (54:12)

**Personnel:** Russell Ferrante, piano, keyboards; Jimmy Haslip, bass; William Kennedy, drums; Bob Mintzer, tenor and soprano saxes; James Harrah, guitar (6); Kurt Eling (3, 10); Jonathan Butler (5); Brenda Russell (6), vocals; Richard Page, background vocals (5); Munyungo Jackson, percussion (5).

**Quality Time:** Quality Time; Overlap; A Few Good Notes; Emit A1; All Is Quiet; Bop Boy; Groovetown; Gather The Spirit; Bossa; Family. (59:52)

**Personnel:** Bob Mintzer, tenor and soprano saxes, bass clarinet (4, 10); Peter Erskine, drums (1-3, 5-9); Jay Anderson, bass (1-3, 5-9); Phil Markowitz, piano (1-3, 5-9); Russell Ferrante, keyboards (4, 10); Jimmy Haslip, bass guitar (4, 10); William Kennedy, drums (4, 10).



## Matthew Shipp Horn Quartet

Strata  
hatOLOGY 522

★★★★½

## Roy Campbell Pyramid Trio

Ancestral Homeland  
No More 7

★★★½

**M**atthew Shipp impresses me more with each new recording. *Strata* pulls together several characteristics of his recent CDs. The lineup is unconventional, featuring Roy Campbell and Daniel Carter on horns, but

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omitting a drummer. With Shipp's longtime collaborator William Parker playing bass, the listener quickly adjusts to the absence of percussion. Shipp assembles the 14 pieces that make up *Strata* in a logical, exceptionally thoughtful fashion. He arranges sub-groupings and solos, utilizes recurring themes and brings it all together with a symmetrical presentation.

The pianist's performances are consistently intriguing, especially on two lyrical, searching solo tracks, "Strata 4" and "Strata 11." He's less inclined than before to fire salvos of notes, and seems increasingly mindful of the silences between. "Strata 3" and "Strata 12" allow Shipp to work in a slightly more conventional jazz vein, with walking bass from Parker. The bassist consistently anchors these performances, leading the way through the more turbulent passages. Campbell's trumpet sounds sharp and caustic, and his evolving solo performance on "Strata 9" is full of tension. Carter's reeds offer an effective, somewhat relaxed contrast. Each player has considerable space to solo or interact with the others, but within an overarching structure. I'd be curious to hear what Shipp would do with a larger ensemble.

Campbell and Parker are two-thirds of the trumpeter's Pyramid Trio. *Ancestral Homeland* frequently brings Don Cherry's work to mind. Campbell's tart, somewhat terse playing on trumpet and pocket trumpet suggests Cherry, as do the world-music influences that color the trio's performances. Campbell's "Brother Yusef" (for Yusef Lateef) features Campbell's muted trumpet over a hypnotic, Middle Eastern vamp forged by Parker. The title track uses percussion and wood flutes for atmosphere before giving way to a powerful bassline from Parker, topped by cryptic soloing from Campbell. The bassist's "Oglala Eclipse" and "Bean Dance" are among the strongest tracks, each driven by Parker and drummer Zen Matsuura, with the latter presenting a distinctly African sound. *Ancestral Homeland* would have benefited from better sequencing, as it gains momentum primarily in its second half. —Jon Andrews

**Strata:** Strata 1 through Strata 14. (58:51)  
**Personnel:** Matthew Shipp, piano; Roy Campbell, trumpet; Daniel Carter, alto and tenor saxophones, flute, trumpet; William Parker, double bass.

**Ancestral Homeland:** Song For Alan; Ancestral Homeland; The Positive Path; Ogala Eclipse; Bean Dance; Brother Yusef (intro); Brother Yusef; Camel Caravan. (73:29)  
**Personnel:** Roy Campbell, trumpet, flugelhorn, pocket trumpet, argol, recorder, wood flute, percussion; William Parker, bass, percussion; Zen Matsuura, drums, gong, percussion.



## Jimmy Scott

### Holding Back The Years

Artists Only 11

★★★½

If you thought Mick Hucknall of Simply Red had wrung all the sadness from his composition "Holding Back The Years," think again. The baleful cadence and the deep regret that permeates the song fits snugly into Jimmy Scott's mournful style, and he squeezes the last drop of despair from it.

And like a single-minded merchant of remorse, Scott gives each of the songs the same unrelieved grief. Those forsaken lovers on the verge of tears will either cry along with Scott or feel better knowing somebody is hurt-

ing worse than they are.

In short, the mood here is somber to the point of depression, and the ageless vocalist has accompanists who are more than willing to plumb the dark corridors of human emotion. On "The Crying Game," which is Scott's cup of tea, Pamela Fleming's trumpet obbligato is a perfect complement, if you can stand any more lament. Things get slower yet on Clyde Otis' immortal "How Can I Go On Without You," and Scott's dirge-like croon is garnished by a tasteful solo from pianist Michael Kanan. Guitarist Matt Muniser strikes a bluesy pose on John Lennon's "Jealous Guy," and saxophonist Bruce Kirby does a similar job of applying funeral licks on Bryan Ferry's "Slave To Love." His lines are almost as sharp and mordant as Mark Kostabi's cover portrait of Scott.

After a string of slow, unhappy moments, Scott picks up the tempo at the end—a bit—and Gregorie Maret's harmonica takes us right to the basement of St. James Infirmary on "Don't Cry Baby." A couple of more hopeful interpretations such as this might have provided some relief from the aching heartbreak that is grist for Scott's distinctive, quavering vibrato. Even so, sadness has never sounded so good.

Rather than three-and-a-half stars, make that three-and-a-half hankies. —Herb Boyd

**Holding Back The Years:** What Wouldn't I Give; The Crying Game; Jealous Guy; Holding Back The Years; How Can I Go On Without You; Almost Blue; Slave to Love; Nothing Compares 2 U; Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word; Don't Cry Baby. (45:55)

**Personnel:** Jimmy Scott, vocals; Matt Muniser, guitars; Hilliard Green, bass; Victor Jones, drums; Bruce Kirby, saxophones; Michael Kanan, piano; Pamela Fleming, trumpet; Gregorie Maret, harmonica. String arrangements by Charles Coleman; String Quartet: Susan Aquila, Hye Kyung Seo, Wayne Graham and David Kotay.



## Greg Osby

### Banned In New York

Blue Note 96860

★★★★

There's nothing like live jazz where anything can happen—good or bad, depending on the improvisational spirit of the evening. While most dates documented on tape are staged affairs (with the leader even begging the patrons' pardon for stopping a tune and running through it again because of a flaw), Greg Osby's latest release finds him and his quartet playing it raw and acoustic before a small club audience in New York City (venue specifics are not supplied in the sketchy liner notes).

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It's a "stylized low-fi" affair, according to Osby, who opted to use a one-mic mini-disc recorder placed on a table in front of the bandstand in lieu of taping the show through the soundboard. So instead of pristine sound, you get something more authentic. Especially evident is the inobtrusive background chatter and hoots from the crowd, which has not been silenced for the evening. Think the Miles Davis Plugged Nickel shows, minus the tinkling wine glasses and cash register.

With the recording industry driven by high-tech standards, Osby's decision to low-ball the sonics is indeed courageous. But it would be all for naught if the alto saxophonist and his band—pianist Jason Moran, bassist Atsushi Osada and drummer Rodney Green—weren't top-notching the gig.

While I liked—and miss—Osby's intrepid mid '90s explorations of hip-hop-charged jazz (unlike most other fusioners, he found the organic link in the groove), he's a splendid straightahead saxophonist who doesn't resort to cliché or hop onto a pedestal for showy overblowing. As demonstrated here in this segueing set, give him a fine tune and he'll deeply engage with it. He zips through Sonny Rollins' "Pent Up House," slows the tempo into the ballad zone for a blue-hued take on Duke Ellington's "I Didn't Know About You," then speeds with full gusto into Bird's "Big Foot." Criticized early in his career for composing subpar tunes, Osby sets the record straight with his first-rate original "13th Floor," which opens the show.

*Banned In New York* scores big points for its solid jazz delivered without hype. One only hopes this kind of invigorating live show still exists in the dark rooms where jazz is served.

—Dan Ouellette

**Banned In New York:** 13th Floor; Pent Up House; I Didn't Know About You; Big Foot; Big Foot (excerpt); 52nd Street Theme. (58:11)

**Personnel:** Greg Osby, alto saxophone; Jason Moran, piano; Atsushi Osada, bass; Rodney Green, drums.



## J.J. Johnson

**Heroes**

Verve 528 864

★★★½

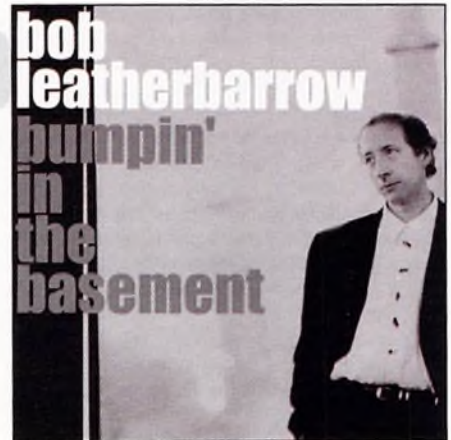
There's a spot in the second track when he smears up to a high, high E-flat, answers himself with a quiet little riff, then hurls the same blinding bolt of lightning, and I say to myself, Stop the presses! J.J. Johnson lives, and there will never be another trombonist like him.

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After all these years, Johnson is still sharpening his craft. His sound oozes confidence. His tone is burly, perhaps fuller than ever. His phrases are crisply articulated, adding up to well-developed solos that lead to interesting conclusions. Whether or not he can be called the Bird of 'bone, his contributions to the horn are invaluable. And the fact is, when he's not stepping aside to showcase his sidemen, he still blows his ass off.

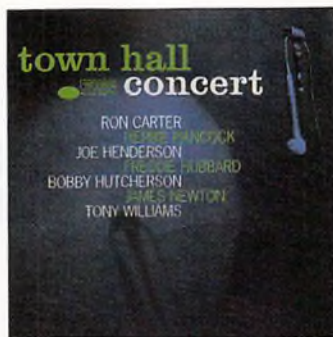
As for his charts, they're all serviceable, and some are even memorable. "Thelonious The Onliest" stands out for its angular piano motif and freewheeling horn dashes. I'm not sure it evokes Monk so much as Johnson's scores for TV's *Mod Squad*, but in either case, it's a wild ride. The two takes of "Carolyn," which serve as intro and outro, offer an engaging melody, tasty harmonies, whispery hi-hat acrobatics by Victor Lewis, and heartfelt solos by saxophonist Dan Faulk and pianist Renee Rosnes. The ball-busting "Ten-85" also jumps out. It features the dream 'bone section of Johnson & Johnson (or is it Jay & Jay?), as he apparently overdubs additional parts.

It doesn't take a jet-propulsion scientist to figure out that *Heroes* pays homage to some of Johnson's enemies ... I mean heroes. One happens to be Wayne Shorter, who walks in on "In Walked Wayne." He stretches out at length, though the song's stop-again start-again form constricts his breathing room a bit. Rounded off by versions of "Blue Train" and "Blue In Green," *Heroes* leaves a general impression of solid craftsmanship, if not breathtaking artistic significance. The main news is that J.J. Johnson can always assemble a sturdy ensemble, and he's still a hero to trombonists everywhere.

—John Janowiak

**Heroes:** Carolyn (In the Morning); Ten-85; Thelonious The Onliest; Vista; In Walked Wayne; Better Days; Blue in Green; Blue Train; Carolyn (In The Evening). (52:41)

**Personnel:** J.J. Johnson, trombone; Wayne Shorter, tenor saxophone (5); Don Sickler, flugelhorn (7); Dan Faulk, soprano and tenor saxophone; Renee Rosnes, piano; Rufus Reid, bass; Victor Lewis, drums.



**Ron Carter  
Herbie Hancock  
Joe Henderson  
Freddie Hubbard  
Bobby Hutcherson  
James Newton  
Tony Williams**

**Town Hall Concert**  
Blue Note 97811

★★★½

**T**his reissue of concert material recorded Feb. 22, 1985, at the relaunch of the Blue Note label, an event honoring its founder, Alfred Lion, is more than another 4-H (Hancock, Henderson, Hubbard, Hutcherson) project but less than what was probably envisioned.

These five tracks made up the first LP of the four-record boxed set *One Night With Blue Note Preserved*, which also included recorded efforts featuring McCoy Tyner, Jackie McLean, Woody Shaw, Cecil Taylor, Art Blakey, Johnny Griffin, Curtis Fuller, Jimmy Smith, Stanley Turrentine,

Lou Donaldson, Kenny Burrell and others.

While the music on this CD has its moments, it never reaches the creative level of the '60s sessions these players—with the exception of Newton, who acted as a surrogate here for the late Eric Dolphy—made in various combinations for Blue Note. The major disappointment is, of course, Hancock, who then as now seems not to have recovered from his shift to electric keyboards and the world of funk and fusion. When you compare his playing on this CD to his earlier Blue Note work or mid '60s efforts with Miles Davis, you realize the qualities that were lost.

Hubbard and Henderson acquit themselves very nicely, indeed, on the opening "Cantaloupe Island," the funky Hancock hit that finds him playing adequately. Hubbard shouts, bends notes and thrusts his way through his solo, while Henderson lays back, slowly adding heat as he builds his contribution.

Henderson's "Recorda Me" has further creditable outings by the composer and Hubbard; it also adds some solid Hutcherson to the mix. Hancock is again merely OK in support and solo moments.

The tenorist and trumpeter drop out as Newton comes aboard for Hutcherson's "Little B's Poem." The vibist is particularly inspired, and Tony Williams seems to find some additional fire that was lacking in his work on the first two tracks. Newton, of course, swoops and soars through his solo, while Hancock sputters along.

Certainly the most intimate moments of this CD are provided on the vibist's "Bouquet," with Hutcherson, Hancock and Carter weaving sensitively through its contours. Hutcherson has the spotlight, creating beautiful, shimmering textures.

The closing "Hat And Beard," a recreation of Dolphy's composition from the classic *Out To Lunch*, has Newton taking the flute role in perhaps the most creatively satisfying work on this CD. Williams seems to be at his most comfortable on this one.

So this is nice enough stuff, but going back to the '60s is a better idea. —Will Smith

**Town Hall Concert:** Cantaloupe Island; Recorda Me; Little B's Poem; Bouquet; Hat And Beard. (45:04)

**Personnel:** Freddie Hubbard, trumpet (1, 2); Joe Henderson, tenor saxophone (1, 2); Herbie Hancock, piano (1-4); Bobby Hutcherson, vibraphone (2-5); James Newton, flute (3, 5); Ron Carter, bass; Tony Williams, drums (1-3, 5).

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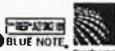
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# JAZZ

## Ensembles Living Large

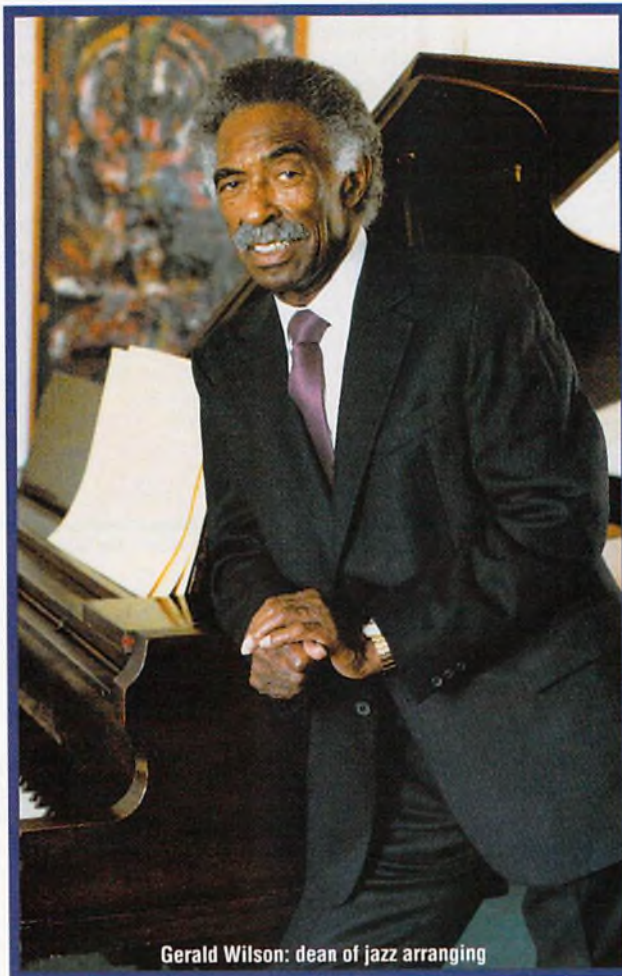
by Dave Holland

Here's a selection of recent releases—from both the United States and northern Europe—that demonstrate the vitality and variety, if not the profitability, of the big band format.

**NDR Big Band: *Bravissimo II* (ACT 9259; 70:11) ★★★★★** The NDR is a case study in the difference between a swinging big band and a jazz orchestra—it's both. Founded in the late '40s to play dance music on the radio for war-ravaged Germans, the NDR Big Band started adding jazz charts 30 years ago and has since become a major showcase for the work of both soloists and arrangers. They are equally adept at the Basie-like "This Old Fairy Tale" featuring organist Barbara Dennerlein (arranged by Jiggs Whigham) or John Surman's eerie Nordic "Carpet Ride" featuring vocalist Karin Krog. Sometimes the soloists dominate, as on "Blues For Alice" featuring trumpeter Benny Bailey or "Love For Sale" featuring guitarist Joe Pass, and sometimes the ensemble is the star, as on the atmospheric introduction to "Round About Midnight."

**Norrbotten Big Band: *Future North* (Double Time 140; 69:10) ★★★★★** Like the NDR, the Norrbotten Big Band, which calls Lulea, Sweden, home, hosts the likes of Clark Terry, Bob Berg, Carmen Lundy and Maria Schneider in this city just south of the Arctic Circle. Trumpeter Tim Hagans, a veteran of both the Stan Kenton and Woody Herman bands here and big bands led by Thad Jones and Ernie Wilkins in Sweden, directs the orchestra. The three-part title suite, lush and colorful, celebrates his 20-year union with the Swedes. "Anticipating Sweden" stacks jabbing horn riffs over low, electronic rumblings, then opens into Haken Brostrom's soprano solo. "Discovering Norrbotten" combines airy flute, tedious arco bass and dynamic changes in horn ensemble textures. "Future North" is a rushing, blaring horn extravaganza that highlights Hagans the trumpeter. But charts like "Noogaloo," recorded as a combo piece on his Blue Note debut, show his adeptness at playing soloist off ensemble, while "Twist And Out" demonstrate the possibilities in three-chord rock 'n' roll.

**Ansgar Stripens/Ed Partyka: *Tunnel Vision* (Mons 874-822; 73:43)★★★** Trombonists Ansgar Stripens and Ed Partyka were students in Bob Brookmeyer's Cologne Composers Workshop. They've written rich, textured, cinematic charts for this 19-piece orchestra. "Wait!" opens with fleetly moving horn passages and a dash of bubbling electronics to introduce extended solo space. "Sometimes" is beautifully suspended from a looping, bird-call flute riff, opening into tenor saxist Nils van Haften's solo. The rhythm section is adept at shifting from the opening boogaloo of "Maybe Later Tonight" to a light Latin feel, though throughout the disc they never swing really hard. The horns execute shifts in tempo and dynamics cleanly and precisely, whether they're tiptoeing through the introduction of "Two Three 4 One" or squawking like birds in "Tunnel Vision." But too frequently, the band acts as a frame or backdrop and not as an actor on stage with the soloists.



Gerald Wilson: dean of jazz arranging

**Frank Reinshagen: *Bitter Wine* (Valve Hearts 397; 59:15)★★★** Frank Reinshagen is another alum of Brookmeyer's German workshop. The forceful opening cut, "Straight Up & Down," as well as "Used To Be A Lovesong" demonstrate his skill as a straightforward, big-band swinger. Trumpeter John Marshall on the former and bari-saxist Marcus Bartle on the latter stand out as soloists. But the band he's assembled is equally adept at moody, delicate, slowly developed pieces like

"In The Best Tradition" and "Bitter Wine." Like the best modern arrangers, Reinshagen is skilled at writing dialogues between soloist and ensemble, at building musical structures that are supportive, not merely serial.

**Ken Schaphorst: *Purple* (Naxos 86030; 72:38) ★★½** Ken Schaphorst left that hot bed of edgy improv music, Boston, for an academic career in Wisconsin but keeps connected with concerts and recordings that feature a variety of Beantown players including B-3 organist John Medeski. These are episodic pieces with sharp edges, jagged turns and discordant sounds. "Uprising" begins with a series of stately steps up the scale by the ensemble each time leading to an increasingly abstract solo by tenor saxist Donny McCaslin. "Blues Almighty" is a showcase for the rocky chops of Medeski and guitarist Brad Shepik. Bass trombonist Dave Taylor and bass clarinetist Doug Yates positively wallow in low tones on the aptly titled "Subterranean." Again, too often the ensemble is the stage for the soloist to stand on, not a cast member.

**Barrett Deems: *Groovin' Hard* (Lydia 505; 59:21) ★★★★★** Satchmo's sideman, Dinah Washington's producer, one-time "fastest drummer in the world," the late Barrett Deems (see "Final Bar" December '98) led a band in the Basie mold. After several years of weekly gigs at clubs around Chicago, soloists like tenor saxist Frank Catalona (on "Best Cost"), alto saxist Andy Farber ("It Might As Well Be Spring") and vibist Ed Harrison ("Moten Swing") were captured at their peaks on disc. At the head of it all, propelling the band, was Deems, whose sure-fire timing and in-your-face humor is sorely missed.

**Gerald Wilson: *Theme For Monterey* (Mama 1021; 63:25) ★★★★★** The Dean of jazz orchestra arrangers, Gerald Wilson has a career stretching back to Jimmie Lunceford's band before WWII. Composer laureate of the Monterey Jazz Festival, this is Wilson's third paean to the annual event, written for its 40th anniversary. *Theme For Monterey* is a five-part, 44-minute extravaganza, highlighted by "Lyon's Roar" in honor of the festival's founder, Jimmy Lyons. It's a sweeping piece

with a beautiful introduction by guitarist Anthony Wilson, crisp ensemble work and deft trading of eights by tenor saxophonists Carl Randall and Randall Willis. Other highlights in the suite include George Bohanon's trombone solo on "On Cannery Row" and Oscar Brashear's solos throughout. The disc also includes two commissions for the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Foundation, arrangements of "Summertime" and the bop standard "Anthropology." **DB**



# BEYOND

## Working Class Heroes

by Dan Ouellette

**W**ith the release of new boxed sets by three of the best songsmiths of the last 30 years—Bob Dylan, John Lennon and Bruce Springsteen—and a double-CD retrospective by the superb band U2, there's a wealth of music ripe for the picking.

**John Lennon: *The John Lennon Anthology* (Capitol 30614; 65:51/65:12/63:37/73:07) ★★★★★** Compiled by Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, this four-CD collection of previously unreleased songs, alternate takes, home recordings, snippets of studio chit-chat, vignettes and parodies (especially of Bob Dylan) reveals the complex artistic personality and musical brilliance of the ex-Beatle. Several of his melodic gems such as "Imagine," "Jealous Guy," "Watching The Wheels" and "Beautiful Boy" stand the test of time just as well as his Beatles tunes. The first and fourth CDs are particularly noteworthy because they focus on periods of Lennon's career when he was playing at the top of his game: with his first post-Beatles group the Plastic Ono Band and when he came out of retirement shortly before his death to record *Double Fantasy*.

**Bob Dylan: *Live 1966: The "Royal Albert Hall" Concert* (Columbia/Legacy 65759; 48:15/47:03) ★★★★★** The Miles Davis of pop, Bob Dylan has spent his entire career recreating himself and his songs. The most dramatic of his many transformations came in the mid '60s when he dropped out of the acoustic folk circuit and plugged into the role of storyteller/poet/rocker. Not everyone was happy with the change, especially his protest-folk followers who voiced both betrayal and anger. The historical document *Live 1966*, a double-CD of Dylan's folk-meets-rock concert

in Manchester, England, serves as a fascinating snapshot of this era. His performance (set one, solo acoustic; set two, rocking with fire) stands as one of the finest of his career. Strumming his acoustic guitar, plaintively blowing his harmonica and singing in that off-key, droning voice, Dylan delivers his poignant poetry to the hushed crowd, giving inspired reads of the melancholic epic "Desolation Row" and the jingle-jangling "Mr. Tambourine Man." The house is anything but quiet when the feisty Dylan re-emerges after intermission with his group featuring Robbie Robertson, Rick Danko and Garth Hudson. It's a near-perfect performance, with energetic takes on such classics as "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat" and "Ballad Of A Thin Man." But the best is left to the finale, when Dylan and crew silence the rowdy detractors with a spine-tingling take on "Like A Rolling Stone."

**Bruce Springsteen: *Tracks* (Columbia 69475; 67:43/62:52/67:35/55:20) ★★★★★½** Touted early in his career as the next Dylan, Springsteen quickly laid those comparisons to rest by stamping his distinctive mark on the pop world. On this mammoth four-CD box, the blue-collar rock hero unveils for the first time tunes he calls "some of the ones that got away." The collection opens with four ardent solo acoustic tunes from Springsteen's raw, passionate studio audition in 1972 and then bursts into E Street exclamations. The Boss delivers what amounts to a full-blown double album's worth of muscular rockers recorded in the late '70s through the mid '80s. There are numerous pleasant surprises along the way, including the lyrical gem "Wages Of Sin," the gripping acoustic version of "Born In The U.S.A.," a double-header of full-tilt rockers "TV Movie" and "Stand On It" and the pensive "The Honeymooners." Disc four showcases the '90s Springsteen, highlighted by his newest

tune "Gave It A Name" and the solemn end-song "Brothers Under The Bridge."

**U2: *The Best Of 1980-1990* (Island 314 524 612; 65:36/59:55) ★★½** The babes of this roundup no doubt learned important lessons from all of the above in carving themselves a place in pop history. In this two-CD retrospective, the first disc (titled "The Best") chronicles U2's rise from an obscure Irish band to supergroup. It opens with the gripping yet spirited "Pride (In The Name Of Love)," which despite its decidedly non-mainstream subject matter (spirituality and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.) proved to be the band's commercial turning point. Other highlights include such pop gems as "Sunday Bloody Sunday," "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" and



John Lennon: post-Beatle brilliance

"Desire." The second CD is a collection of 15 B-sides. Its appeal is twofold: The songs rarely received radio play and were recorded with a minimum of studio manipulation. As a result, you get fresh U2. However, with a few exceptions (such as the celebrative "Hallelujah, Here She Comes," the bright ditty "Trash, Trampoline And The Party Girl" and a couple covers), this is lower-grade material best suited for U2 buffs only. **DB**



Lauren Newton Filigree

Recorded in the early eighties here is already everything which seems to be idiosyncratic about Lauren Newton's singing: the wide range of tones, timbres and emotions, the ability to build up atmospheres, in which others can find themselves taking part, as well as the talent to integrate the voice within a framework of instrumentalists.



Matthew Shipp  
Born Quartet  
Strata

M. Shipp, facing the shady forms, plays curves as though the light defines the shadow, but the shadow regenerates the light's absence. Psalm—soft, buoyant, round and tempestuous, like round, perfect, beautiful black walnuts bouncing in an atmosphere of milk. Rain on the mint leaves, cool, sun behind; mint leaves aloft, divine sleep casts the mint leaves across the sea, against the prow of our Ship(p) like hermetic devices.



Rajesh Mehta Solos  
& Duos Featuring  
Paul Lovens Orka

The Indian-born, currently Amsterdam-based American Mehta has expanded the timbral and textural palette of the trumpet dramatically, by opening up a whole cosmos of unheard-of tone colours, microtonal possibilities and subtly shaded noises. Mehta achieves this not only by unorthodox playing techniques and by incorporating the neglected bass trumpet, but also by making use of the "hybrid trumpet".



## REISSUES

# Savoy Done Right

by Thomas Conrad

**S**avoy was present at the creation, one of the seminal independent jazz labels of the bebop era. Denon, one of Japan's most respected audio electronics companies, now owns the Savoy catalog and plans to reissue 15 titles per year over the next three years in the "Savoy Jazz Originals" series. Here is Denon's opening salvo:

**Dexter Gordon: *Settin' The Pace* (Savoy Jazz 17027; 72:54) ★★★★★** Producer Orrin Keepnews, who researched and assembled this material, states: "On the Dexter Gordon compilation I found myself listening to previously unreleased solos by him, Bud Powell and Fats Navarro that nobody had heard since the day they were recorded." Today, we remember Gordon as a titan of modern mainstream tenor saxophone, the expatriate who made all those strong Blue Note albums in the '60s. On *Settin' The Pace*, we peer as if through a keyhole into a dimly lit room where a 22-year-old Gordon is literally in the process of developing the first major bop-derived tenor saxophone language, and we share in the awe of Orrin Keepnews' discovery.

There are four sessions recorded in New York between 1945 and 1947. At the first, Gordon is still dependent on his sources (Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins). But on "Dexter's Minor Mad," he hints at the driving, charismatic presence he would become. The second session features the era's pre-eminent rhythm section—Powell, Curly Russell and Max Roach. Gordon's solos on the two takes of "Long Tall Dexter" and the three versions of "Dexter Digs In" show his evolution toward modernity in the harmonic atmospheres and rhythmic surprises. Powell's solos on these sub-three-minute tracks are exquisite miniatures. The final session, with Navarro and Tadd Dameron on piano, feels like a seance. From 50 years away, these voices call to us and live again.

**Kenny Dorham: *Blues In Bebop* (Savoy Jazz 17028; 72:54) ★★½** This Kenny Dorham compilation feels even further removed in time than Gordon's. One reason

is the rougher sonic quality, but there is also a quaintness inherent in the music. Dorham developed into a trumpet player and composer of special distinction, but he bloomed later than Gordon (not to mention Charlie Parker). He is in his early 20s on all but one of the sessions here, and his playing is full of stock bop licks. There are 10 tracks from 1946 by a quintet called the Bebop Boys with Sonny Stitt and Powell. There are three tracks from 1949 with Parker where Dorham's crisp, workmanlike solos, following Bird's sublime eruptions, sound like newspaper reportage on the heels of high poetry.

It is not until the last four tracks of this collection, featuring a 1956 quintet led by baritone saxophonist Cecil Payne, that we hear the mature voice of Dorham, with its wistful harmonies, precise articulation and lines of fluid triplets. Because of the quantum



Kenny Dorham: tart timbre

FRANCIS WOLFF

leap in recording technology that took place in 1956, we are able to truly experience the tart timbre of Dorham's instrument.

**Charlie Parker: *The Complete Live Performances On Savoy* (Savoy Jazz 17021; 71:07/71:10/69:18/58:59) ★★★★★** The birth of two-channel recording in 1956 makes the date of Parker's premature death—March 1955—all the more bitterly ironic. There are no recordings of Parker that approach high fidelity. These air checks and jam session bootlegs from 1947–1950 are certainly no exception. But for many end-of-the-century jazz fans who have not yet made their way back to Bird, this collection is an excellent

place to discover him.

The "Jazz Originals" series represents the first relook at the Savoy catalog in the digital age. Steven Lasker, a Grammy-winning specialist in the art of engineering digital transfers from old 78s and acetates, consulted on this project with Paul Reid of Denon Digital Industries. Lasker and Reid, through the judicious application of such technologies as the CEDAR NoNoise system, Sonic Solutions digital editing and late re-equalization, are able to give us Parker's alto saxophone, as well as the trumpets of Miles Davis, Dorham and Dizzy Gillespie, with reasonable presence.

The first three discs contain live performances from the Royal Roost in Manhattan ("the metropolitan bopera house"), transcribed off-air by the most important broadcast pirate in the history of jazz, Boris Rose. The fourth disc contains a rare amateur recording of a jam session in Chicago in October 1950, and a concert with Gillespie at Carnegie Hall in September 1947.

If you take this music in large doses, you can get dizzy from the strident audio, the repetitive repertoire (five versions of "Groovin' High," four of "Scrapple From The Apple"), the similarities of harmonic structures and keys and fast-medium tempos. If you don't listen attentively, you can miss the many passages when Parker's "intuitive impulse of the moment" (Martin Williams' phrase) leads to devastating revelations. On "Cheryl" from Jan. 1, 1949, Parker transcends time, his outpourings of the spirit connected only by implication to the steady momentum of Al Haig, Tommy Potter and Joe Harris. On "Hot House" from Jan. 15, 1949, Parker and Haig both invent melodies for the ages, throwing them out into the noisy, smoky air of the Royal Roost as though their capacity for song were effortless, as though art were an infinitely renewable resource.

If you somehow make it through the first three-and-a-half discs of this collection without getting the point about Bird, "Confirmation" and "Koko" from the 1947 Carnegie Hall concert with Gillespie will close the case. Parker creates on such a high level that passion is given voice with flawless order.

Our encounter with this music in its time and place is enhanced by Paul Bacon's reminiscence of the post-war New York scene. Bacon, a designer of book jackets and album covers, hung out at the Royal Roost and vividly renders its air of electric expectancy. There is also an illuminating track-by-track commentary by Loren Schoenberg, an erudite Parker authority.

On the evidence of the first releases in the "Jazz Originals" series, the Savoy archives are in competent, caring hands.

DB



## Roomful Of Blues

by Frank-John Hadley

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.

**R**oomful of Blues shows no sign of slowing down in its 30th year as a multistyle r&b powerhouse. The winners of the Blues Group of the Year category in the 1998 Down Beat Critics Poll skipped nary a beat when five new members were added in late 1997 to the foundation of drummer John Rossi, guitarist Chris Vachon, saxophonist Rich Lataille and trumpeter Bob Enos. On the heels of their new CD, *There Goes The Neighborhood* (Bullseye Blues & Jazz), Rossi, Vachon and Lataille sat in for the band's first Blindfold Test shortly before one of their 200 or so concert dates last year.

### Jimmie Lunceford

"For Dancers Only" (from *For Dancers Only*, MCA, rec. 1937) Willie Smith, alto saxophone; Paul Webster, trumpet; Jimmy Crawford, drums; orchestra arranged by Sy Oliver.

**Rich Lataille:** At first I thought it was Fletcher Henderson, one of his latter big bands, but I think it's Erskine Hawkins.

**John Rossi:** I got 20 Hawkins albums but don't know any of his drummers.

**FJH:** It's Lunceford.

**RL:** I almost said Jimmie Lunceford, but then it got more of a riff thing going. Usually his arrangements are a little more involved, especially with the saxes.

**JR:** I like a little more high energy in the band. I didn't say Lunceford because it was the first name that came to my head. 3½ stars.

### Jay McShann

"Hootie Blues" (from *Hootie's Jumpin' Blues*, Stony Plain, 1997) McShann, vocal, piano; Bob Tildesley, trumpet; Dave Babcock, baritone saxophone; The Duke Robillard Band: Robillard, guitar; Gordon Beadle, tenor saxophone; Marty Ballou, bass; Marty Richards, drums.

**RL:** The first tenor solo was Gordon Beadle. The other tenor solo sounded like Ben Webster. First I was going to say the album *Hootie's Jumpin' Blues*, but then I heard what sounded just like Ben Webster. Beadle doesn't normally play like that. That's "Hootie's Blues." 4 stars.

**JR:** They did a great job with that song! Who was singing that?

**RL:** Jay.

**JR:** Did Jay do a lot of singing on his '40s stuff?

**RL:** Walter Brown was the singer on the original Decca stuff, but after Jay's big band left, Jay started singing himself.

**JR:** I was thinking that was Walter Brown singing.

**RL:** Jay tries to sound like Walter Brown.

**JR:** I was in a rhythm section backing Jay up. I wish I had a picture of it. It was Jay dressed up like 1940, very, very conservative. I had this on. (Rossi points to his black Roomful t-shirt, black jeans and



black boots.) [Bass player] Pinky [Preston Hubbard] was standing up there with earrings hanging and his eyeliner was on. It was the beginning of his rock 'n' roll era. You had to close your eyes. It sounded great but you wouldn't have believed it by looking at it.

**Chris Vachon:** What happened to his eyeliner when he started sweating?

**RL:** It drips, man. He didn't sweat anyway.

### Jimmy Witherspoon

"Money's Getting Cheaper" (from *Jazz Me Blues: The Best Of Jimmy Witherspoon*, Prestige, 1963) Witherspoon, vocals; Bert Kendrick, organ; T-Bone Walker, guitar; Clifford Scott, tenor saxophone; Clarence Jones, bass; Wayne Robertson, drums.

**CV:** Spoon's "Money's Getting Cheaper."

**RL:** We used to do that tune with Duke [Robillard] in the band. And that was T-Bone.

**CV:** Why would you say T-Bone? Because of the era?

**RL:** Because of the playing.

**CV:** I know, but every guitar player in the world plays that [he hums] dongity, dongity.

**RL:** I've heard T-Bone on another album in a jazzy context and he sounded like that.

**CV:** He sounded thinner than usual.

**RL:** Yeah, he did sound thinner.

**CV:** I wouldn't have thought T-Bone at all because it was and not like his tone.

**RL:** He has a distinct way of playing, as opposed to other guys playing him. 4 stars.

### Count Basie

"One O'Clock Boogie" (from *Count Basie 1947/Brand New Wagon*, RCA, rec. 1947) Basie, piano; Freddie Green, guitar; Walter Page, bass; Jo Jones, drums; orchestra

**RL:** Basie. The rhythm section was the giveaway, hearing Freddie Green. It sounds like RCA Victor stuff, the late '40s.

**JR:** It was the Harmon mute era. They switched over their trumpets to Harmon mutes. I love it.



**RL:** 4½ stars. They're the best accompanists I've ever heard for a big band. It's so sparse. Everything they played counted.

**JR:** What do you mean by sparse?

**RL:** They picked the right spots.

**JR:** It was Basie who turned me on to filling an empty spot.

## Mike Bloomfield

"Farther Up The Road" (from *Live At The Old Waldorf*, Columbia/Legacy, rec. 1977)  
Bloomfield, guitar; Roger Troy, vocal, bass; Mark Naftalin, piano; Bob Jones, drums.

**RL:** I'm trying to think of the guitarist's name. Wayne ...  
**JR:** Wayne Bennett. Is it Mel Brown? We played with Mel and I didn't know he could play so many styles. I did hear some nice chord stuff in there.

**CV:** There are octaves in there. That's not Wild Jimmy Spruill, is it?  
**FJH:** It's *previously unissued live material by Mike Bloomfield on a new release*. [Three surprised voices exclaim "Mike Bloomfield!" at the same time.]

**CV:** Is that an outtake? It sounded kind of rusty.

**RL:** There was a little too much energy from the rhythm section.  
2 stars.

## Freddie King

"In The Open" (from *Hide Away: The Best Of Freddie King*, Rhino, rec. 1961) King, lead guitar; Fred Jordan, rhythm guitar; Sonny Thompson, piano; Bill Willis, bass; Phillip Paul, drums.

**CV:** Freddie King. "In The Open." We've done this a few times. It's cool, kind of like a three-note thing with seventh chords.

**RL:** Do you remember when we were on the first cruise we did and they had all those videos and [they had one] of Freddie King from the early '60s. That was great!

**CV:** Man, look at this! [holding up the CD, with its cover picture of King and his guitar] The guitar looks like a freakin' toy. [laughter] His head's bigger than the guitar body. [more laughter]

**JR:** I just love the way Freddie moves that rhythm. I like that up-stroking but still rockin'. The rhythm of the head is unique.

**CV:** The guitar tone's cool, too. He uses metal picks. That's a classic. 5 stars.

## Little Milton

"What Our Love Needs" (from *For Real*, Malaco, 1998) Milton Campbell, vocal, guitar; The Muscle Shoals Horns; a rhythm section.

**CV:** It's Albert King, isn't it? It's not?

**JR:** Is that one of the guitar players we played with in Central Park?

**CV:** No, it's not Joe Louis Walker, if that's who you're thinking about.

**JR:** I can't think of who it is.

**CV:** We give up!

**FJH:** It's *Little Milton*. How about the horns?

**RL:** The Memphis Horns? Muscle Shoals?

**CV:** It's got a Memphis kind of sound to it. There's no guitar on there really. 4 stars.

## Royal Crown Revue

"The Contender" (from *The Contender*, Warner Bros., 1998) Eddie Nichols, vocals; James Achor, guitar; Mando Dorame, tenor saxophone; Bill Ungerman, baritone saxophone; Scott Sheen, trumpet; Veikko Lepisto, bass; Daniel Glass, drums and percussion.

**RL:** There are a lot of good copy cats out there. The singer sounds like Wynonie Harris. 3 stars.

## Hank Crawford

"The Peeper" (from *Heart And Soul: The Hank Crawford Anthology*, Rhino, 1962) Crawford, alto saxophone; David "Fathead" Newman, tenor saxophone; Leroy Cooper, baritone saxophone; Phil Guilbeau & John Hunt, trumpets; Edgar Willis, bass; Bruno Carr, drums.

**RL:** [after three notes of alto] Hank Crawford. I like his real soulful staccato style of playing. I love the way he arranges this thing. The rhythm section's great, too. You know it's Hank as soon as he blows a note. That's the Ray Charles band without Ray, probably the last of this kind of stuff around. 5 stars. **DB**



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