

Recorded in Tokyo during the tour, the album features Hancock playing a Yamaha DX-1 synthesizer, an instrument he had been introduced to just two days before. Taking advantage of its flexibility, Hancock produces a sound that complements Suso's kora, a twelve-string West African instrument that, in the right hands, could be mistaken for a full-sized band. Here it *is* in the right hands, and the two players (with vocals by Suso) make some attractive music that takes on the colors of the Middle East, West Africa, India, and even downtown Brooklyn. **C.A.**

RAMSEY LEWIS: *Fantasy*. Ramsey Lewis (keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *This Ain't No Fantasy; Ram Jam; It's Gonna Change; Slow Dancin'; The Quest; Les Clefs de mon coeur (The Keys to My Heart); Victim of a Broken Heart; Never Give Up; Part of Me.* COLUMBIA FC 40108, © FCT 40108, no list price.

Performance: *Foot fodder*
Recording: *Very good*

Pianist Ramsey Lewis has always appealed to the borderline jazz fan, but an album entitled "Fantasy" shows him

clearly aiming at the pop market. With a little help from Maurice White, his former drummer who hit pop gold with Earth, Wind & Fire, the fifty-year-old pianist has armed himself with synthesizers and come up with a set of sounds that will have a much younger generation gyrating and bopping in the strobe lights. This album is only for the most open-minded of previous Lewis fans—and, of course, new ones. **C.A.**

JEAN-LUC PONTY: *Fables*. Jean-Luc Ponty (violin, synthesizers); Scott Henderson (guitar); Baron Browne (bass); Rayford Griffin (drums). *Elephants in Love; Plastic Idols; Perpetual Rondo; Radioactive Legacy; Infinite Pursuit; Cats Tales; In the Kingdom of Peace.* ATLANTIC 81276-1 \$8.98, © 81276-4 \$8.98.

Performance: *Palatable*
Recording: *Excellent*

When Jean-Luc Ponty fiddled his way onto the jazz scene a few years ago, his modern approach was refreshing and sufficiently rooted in tradition to make his appearances with the likes of Stuff Smith and Svend Asmussen seem perfectly natural. Since then, Ponty has ventured deeper into the world of electronic music, and there is little left of the tradition. I do not mean this as a criticism. Ponty's current brand of fiddle fusion is often exciting, and "Fables," his newest album, is a model of modern jazz-violin playing. I would like to hear Ponty in an acoustic setting from time to time, but only because his creative talent and technique are such that he need not hide behind walls of synthetic sounds. Here he hides to a certain extent, but we hear enough of the real Ponty to know that there is such a thing. **C.A.**

WAYNE SHORTER: *Atlantis*. Wayne Shorter (soprano and tenor saxophones); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Who Goes There!; The Last Silk Hat; When You Dream; On the Eve of Departure; Shere Khan, the Tiger; The Three Marias; Atlantis; Crianças; Endangered Species.* COLUMBIA FC 40055, © FCT 4055, no list price.

Performance: *Depressing*
Recording: *Good*

I have admired Wayne Shorter's playing ever since I heard an album by him on the Vee-Jay label many years ago. Since then he has, of course, made his mark with Miles Davis and as a founding member and driving force of Weather Report. "Atlantis" is his first solo album in over a decade, but I'm afraid it's a great disappointment, a plodding, senseless set that, to me, conjures up the image of a Rolls Royce hopelessly stuck in the mire. This is probably the most insignificant album Shorter has made. Even when Weather Report's music was marred by Jaco Pastorius, it had more substance than this bland exercise. **C.A.**



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