

pop composers like Henry Mancini and Hugo Montenegro were using. Axelrod also used an impressive brass section, accompanied by loud electric guitar, vibe, and piano solos. And underneath, tying the entire album together, was the rhythm section of the indomitable drummer Earl Palmer and powerful bassist Carol Kaye.

"They called it fusion," says Axelrod, looking back on *Innocence*. "But I don't think it was. I was thinking more of Gunther Schuller, John Lewis, and the Third Stream mixture of classical music and jazz. I took what I loved and used R&B rhythms to tie it together. That's what it really is."

In short, Axelrod's genius lies in the fact that those R&B rhythms he loved were so damn funky, and his choice in using them underneath such dense orchestration was so far ahead of his time. Now, thanks to trip-hop producers and hip-hop musicians like DJ Shadow, it seems natural to hear an ethereal set of melodies tied together by a very heavy drum break (see Shadow's debut *Entroducing* for more information). This "new" music owes much to Axelrod—a fact Shadow most likely would acknowledge, as he thanks Axelrod on the liner notes to his *Preemptive Strike* album.

After Axelrod recorded *Innocence*, he returned to Reprise to record another religious album by his Electric Prunes (actually, Palmer, Kaye and keyboardist Don Randi): *The Kol Nidre*. This album sang with similarities to *Innocence*; in fact, cuts like "Holy Are You" and "General Confessional" sound almost as if they were recorded in the same session. And due to the acclaim that *Innocence* and his Prunes projects garnered, Capitol released the sequel to *Innocence*, *Songs of Experience*, and *Earth Rot* in short order.

Throughout the '70s, Axelrod bounced between several labels, wearing the hat of both artist and producer. He released an album based on Paul Dunbar's poetry on the slave trade, *The Auction*, on Decca, and an interpretation of Handel's *Messiah* on RCA. In the mid-'70s he released *Heavy Axe* on Fantasy and *Seriously Deep* on Polydor, two albums that reflected a new approach to music. And he

produced countless LPs on Prestige, including one for pianist Hampton Hawes and two for Funk, Inc.

With such a wide variety of classic records released under his direction, it is not surprising that knowledgeable hip-hop producers caught on to Axelrod's dynamic music. Innovators like the Beatnuts and Buckwild dug Axelrod's records out of the crates in the early '90s and created such memorable songs as "Hit Me With That Shit" and the "C'mon With the Get Down" remix. The Black Sheep followed suit with the remix to "Without a Doubt" and by the mid-'90s, everyone from Shadow to Kool G. Rap had utilized Axelrod's compositions.

And Axelrod has embraced the hip-hop movement. He converses with producers like DJ Spinna and T-Ray from his North Hollywood home and he recently finished a remix for UNKLE's "Rabbit in Your Headlights." He's currently negotiating an album deal with James Lavelle for an LP he promises will contain no sampling, and a full orchestra. Axelrod recently conveyed a conversation he shared with Shadow about the timelessness of his music: "Josh told me I would live on in posterity," Axelrod states. "And he asked me how I felt about the fact that my music has maintained its power for thirty years and will maintain it in the future. Well, I said 'posterity don't pay.' I thought about what I had said a couple days later and called him to apologize. I said 'I shouldn't have dismissed you.' I thought about how many musicians I've known who have died... but I'm here and 20-year-olds love my music. That's incredible—to know that you can move different generations through four decades. Everyone is falling down, yet I'm still here."

For more information, go digging in your local record store for David Axelrod records on Capitol, Decca, Prestige, Fantasy, RCA, and MCA. Or check out the David Axelrod Information Society at www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Lobby/8238/index.html. Or check my Origins of Hip-Hop four-hour David Axelrod interview in RealAudio at www.113audio.com. ■

Discography:

Song of Innocence (Capitol 1968)
Songs of Experience (Capitol 1969)
Earth Rot (Capitol 1970)
Rock Interpretations of Handel's Messiah (RCA 1971)
The Auction (Decca 1972)
 "The Lost Lament" b/w "Theme From Gumshoe" (Decca 45 rpm 1972)
 "The Lost Lament" b/w "Finally" (Decca 45 rpm 1972)
Heavy Axe (Fantasy 1974)
Seriously Deep (Polydor 1975)
Strange Ladies (MCA 1977)
Marchin' (MCA 1980)
Requiem: The Holocaust (Liberty 1993)
Big Country (Unreleased 1995)

Notable Productions:

Harold Land: *The Fox* (HiFi Jazz 1959)
 Cannonball Adderly: *Mercy, Mercy, Mercy* (Capitol 1966)
 David McCallum: *Music—A Bit More Of Me* (Capitol 1966)
 Electric Prunes: *Mass In F Minor* (Reprise 1968)
 David Rose: *The Bible* (Capitol 1968)
 Letta Mbulu: *Letta Mbulu Sings* (Capitol 1968)
 Don Randi: *Plays Love Theme from Romeo and Juliet* (Capitol 1968)
 Electric Prunes: *The Kol Nidre* (Reprise 1968)
 Lou Rawls: *You're Good For Me* (Capitol 1968)
 Lou Rawls: *You've Made Me So Very Happy* (Capitol 1969)
 Howard Roberts: *Spinning Wheel* (Capitol 1969)
 Pride: *Pride* (Warner Brothers 1970)
 Cannonball Adderly Quintet and Orchestra: *Tensity* (Capitol 1970)
 Cannonball Adderly: *Soul of the Bible* (Capitol 1970)
 Funk, Inc.: *Superfunk* (Prestige 1972)
 Hampton Hawes: *Northern Windows* (Prestige 1974)
 Funk, Inc.: *Priced to Sell* (Prestige 1974)
 UNKLE: *Rabbit In Your Headlights Remix* (Mo' Wax 1999)

Sampleography:

David McCallum: *Music—A Bit More Of Me*. "The Edge"
 Missing Linx: "MIA"
 Song of Innocence: "Holy Thursday"—Blacksheep:
 "Without A Doubt" (Lawng Remix), The Beatnuts: "Hit Me With That Shit," INI: "Think Twice," Artifacts:
 "C'mon With The Get Down" (Buckwild Remix), Fat Joe:
 "Bronx Keeps Creating It"
 "Song of Innocence"—Sadat X: "Petty People"
 "Merlin's Prophecy"—No ID: "Fate or Destiny"
 "Mental Traveler"—Ras Kass: "Soul on Ice"
 (Diamond D Remix)
Songs of Experience: "A Divine Image"—Kool G. Rap:
 "Take 'em to War"
 "The Human Abstract"—DJ Shadow:
 "Midnight In a Perfect World"
 Earth Rot: "The Warnings Pt. 1"—Diamond D:
 "MC Is my Ambition"
 "The Signs Pt. 2"—Common Sense: "Resurrection"
 (Large Professor Remix)
 Don Randi: *Plays Love Theme from Romeo and Juliet*.
 "The Fox"—Blackstar: "Respiration"
 Electric Prunes: *The Kol Nidre* "Holy Are You"—Fat Joe:
 "Respect Mine"
 "General Confessional"—The Beatnuts: "Niggaz Know"
 "The Adoration"—The Beatnuts: "Stone Crazy Intro"
 Cannonball Adderly Quintet and Orchestra: *Tensity*.
 "Tensity"—The Beatnuts: "Engineer Talkin' Shit"
 Strange Ladies: "Terri's Tune"—Show and AG:
 "Check It Out"