

Jazz Album Reviews

by Del Shields

GROOVIN' WITH THE SOULFUL STRINGS Cadet LP 796/ST 796

If we're late in reviewing this new Soulful Strings album, it is due to our constant playing of the album at home. Richard Davis is slowly building a name for himself. Here again he displays a most imaginative and beguiling set of charts. There is no gimmickry here. All of the string men know their instruments and with the right blending of organ, vibes and flutes, the strings are really groovin'.

★★★★ THE BLUES IS NOW

JIMMY WITHERSPOON and JACK McDUFF—Verve 5030X

Whatever you do, do not miss this. If we were to award stars to an album, we would give this a five-star rating. Spoon is right where he should always be. Give him a simple blues line with a story and have him tell it. Add McDuff who proves an organist can accompany a singer, and be a welcome partner in the musical exchange. Jack's playing is marvelous and Spoon has never sounded better. "Past Forty Blues" and the revival of "Sweet Splendor" with "Part Time Woman" makes this one of the best of the year.

★★★★ PORTRAIT OF SONNY CRISS

Prestige 7526

The welcome re-discovery of Sonny, alto saxophonist supreme, continues with his second album on Prestige. The problem with re-discovery is why it took so long, and how can a musician continue to play so beautifully in almost obscurity? Whatever the reason, here you'll hear a master. "God Bless the Child" is poetry at its best. With Walter Davis, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; and Alan Dawson, drums, Sonny should be well on the way to becoming re-established in jazz. His voice is sorely needed.

★★★★ PARALLEL-A-STITT

SONNY STITT ON THE VARITONE— Roulette SR 25354/R25354

Henry Glover, one of the best producers in the business, has seen the possibilities of what the electronic instruments can do and the big sound it can add to jazz. Here with Sonny, this is the third album of Sonny playing Varitone. It is not easy to record the Varitone. In person, it completely gassed me, but of the three albums to date this comes closer to capturing the sound of the instrument.

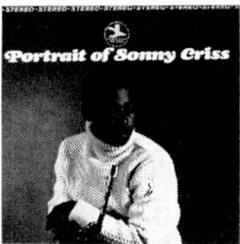
Shield's Column

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the joy of her audience. What she was able to convey was a sincere conviction in what she was doing, and a spiritual invitation to her audience to share in this moment. Her only reference to a person was to Dr. Martin Luther King. She reminded the audience she had

just come off a tour with Harry Belafonte for the benefit of SCLC.

"I'm not much of a speaker, but I do have something I'd like to say if you are concerned about the world." With this, she launched into "Take a Look." And we did. We saw Aretha Franklin, and we feel the world is just a bit better because of the joy she brings.



Country & Western

Big Dot Doings

A large group of Dot Records executives and C&W artists were in Nashville to help celebrate the Grand Ole Opry's 42nd birthday recently. On Dot's agenda was a show, a catered luncheon at the Auditorium and a "Welcome to Nashville" hospitality suite at the Hermitage Hotel.

Among the Dot executives from both coasts present for were: Arnold Burk, new Dot President and VP of Paramount Music Division; Dick Peirce, Dot VP and General Manager; Bill Stinson, VP and General Manager Famous Music; Snuff Garrett, VP and A&R Singles Division; Ken Revercomb, National Sales Director; Ken Myers, Acta label manager; and Fred DeMann, National Promotion Manager for Dot.

Others included Jim Wardlaw, Branch Manager Dot Recording Distributing Company; Dottie Vance, Artists Relations and C&W Promotion; Dick Stone, Manager Famous Music in New York; Henry Hurt, Manager of Famous Music and Dot Records, Nashville; and Ed Silvers, VP and Manager, Viva Records.

The Dot show, which lasted 45 minutes, followed a luncheon which drew more than 2,200 persons.

Bonnie Guitar served as MC of the show which featured Dot artists Mac Wiseman, Sonny Curtis and the Compton Brothers.

Dot President Burk flew into Nashville from London especially for the celebration.

For Nashville Club



Lee Arnold, Music Director of station WJRZ, who also serves as emcee at the Nashville Room of the Hotel Taft in New York, is shown with RCA Victor's Willie Nelson, immediately following Willie's recent opening at the Nashville Room.

Club Review

Dudley, Pride Wow Nashville Room

NEW YORK — Despite the downpour outside, the Nashville Room filled to near-capacity last week to welcome the strong co-starring bill of Dave Dudley (with the Road Runners) and Country Charlie Pride.

Mercury's Dudley, a big, sunny, slightly jittery fellow with a notable flair for humor, leaned heavily—or, rather, lightly—on the personality button. His "truck-driver" numbers were generally lively and always a pleasure. The ballad—such as the plaintive "How the Time Slips Away"—was the exception, but no less appealing. A very likeable, versatile fellow, Dave displayed a thoughtful side on a moving "Hello Vietnam"—his reading of the line "I ain't gonna crawl" had a quietly memorable authority.

RCA Victor's Pride—a Negro singing C/W music and no mean novelty—is not yet as facile as Dave but is still a solid and agreeable country songster. Yodels, too. The audience loved him and gave CCP an even greater ovation than Dudley, who was plenty well received. Showing a particularly soul-stirring wail on several Hank Williams tunes, plus his hit, "Does My Ring Hurt Your Finger," Pride finished by breaking the house record for encores. He is a significant stage in the continuing development of country music.

Prettily complementing the bill (which was overlong—this could be a problem at the Nashville Room) was thrush Barbara Ray, who charmed with her sure, dusky tones in spite of a somewhat stiff stage presence. She sang other people's hits, but deserves some of her own. Lee Arnold continues as a personable double-threat emcee who also can toss off a country tune.

—Doug McClelland.

Star Line-Up At Nashville Club

NEW YORK — The star line-up for the Nashville Club at the Taft Hotel for Nov. 7-11 is as follows: Bill Anderson, the Compton Brothers, Barbara Ray and special guest Jan Howard. Lee Arnold of WJRZ-Hackensack is emcee, as usual.