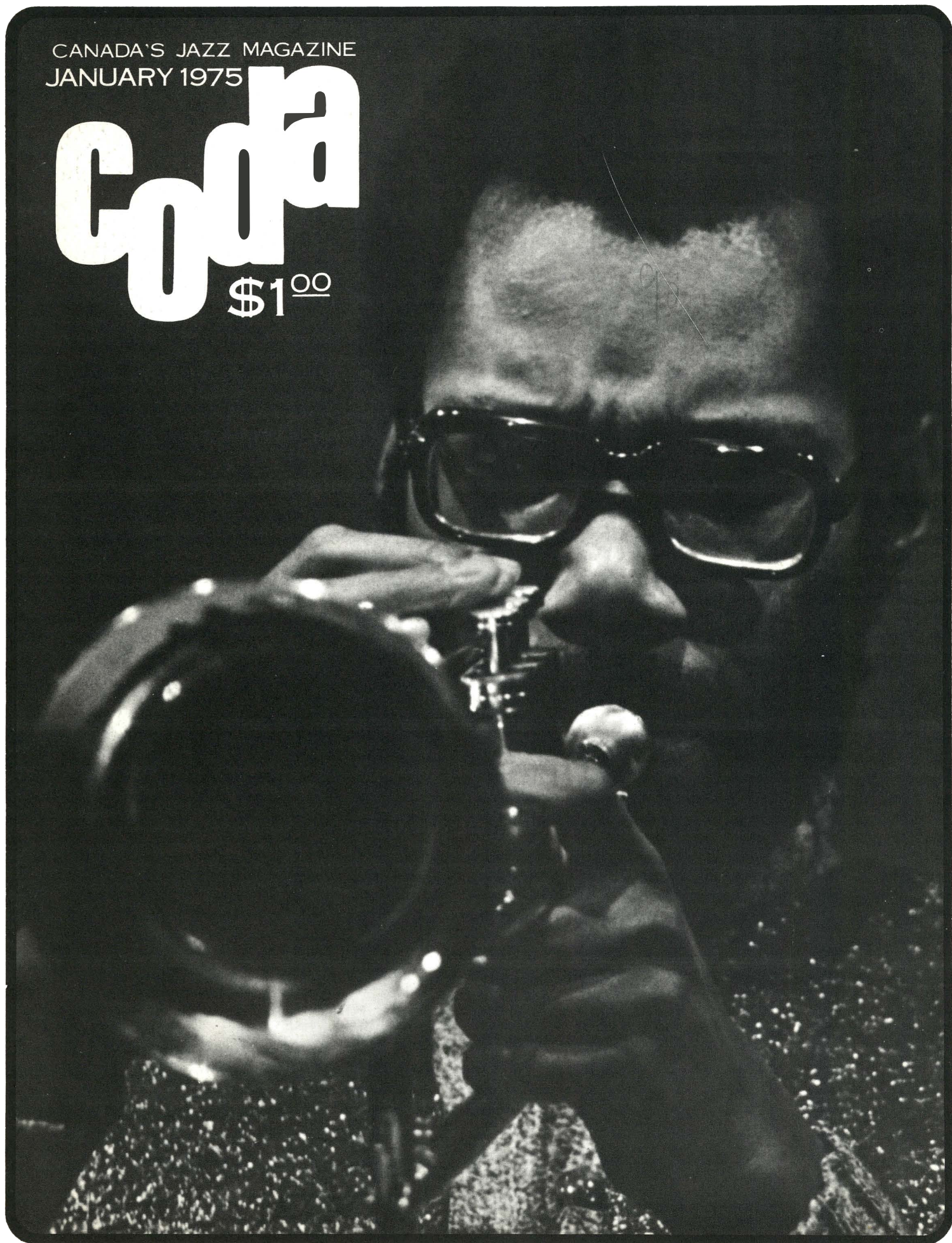


CANADA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE
JANUARY 1975

Coda

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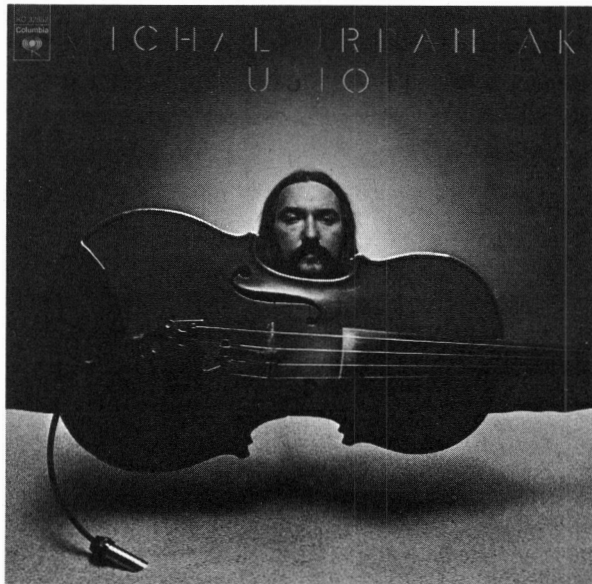
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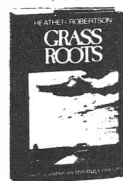
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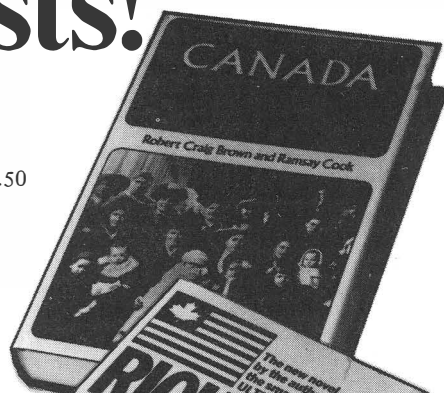
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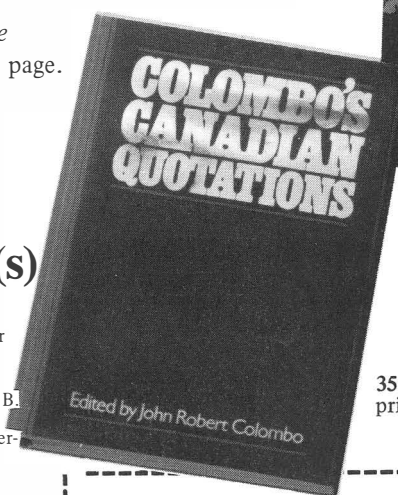
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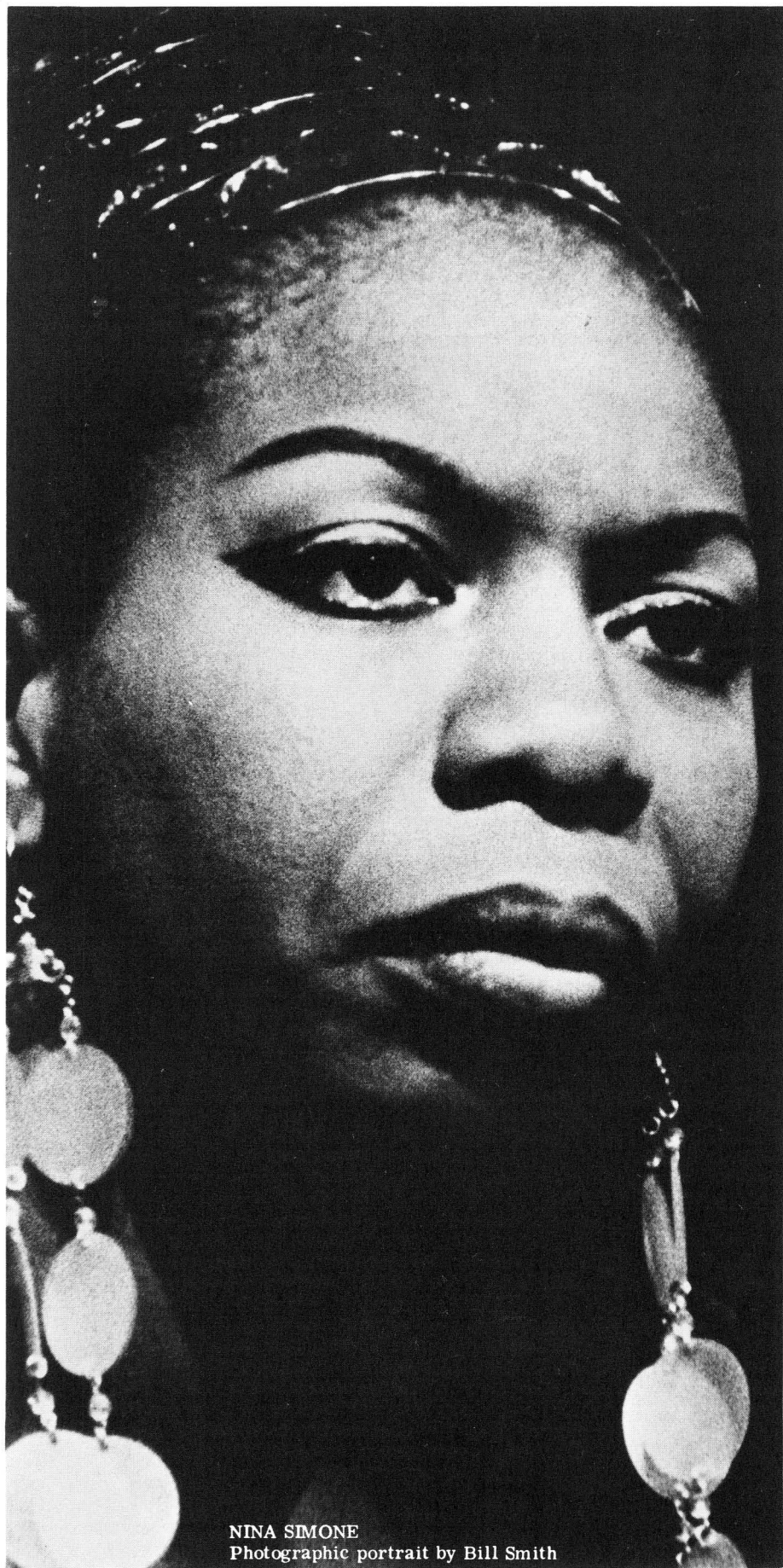
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January 1975 Vol. 12 No. 3 (Issue 135)

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CHARLES TOLLIVER
photograph courtesy Strata-East

EDITORIAL

The crossword puzzle produced a flood of answers - many more than we could sort out in the time available. Obviously the challenges involved caught the fancy of many readers and we hope to publish the results of the competition as well as the correct answers in the next issue.

The lack of columns in this issue is due to the changing schedule of publication as well as the general slowdown of mail on a worldwide basis which is compounded by the annual Christmas flood of mail.

As of this issue the newstand price of Coda is \$1.00! Have a happy New Year.

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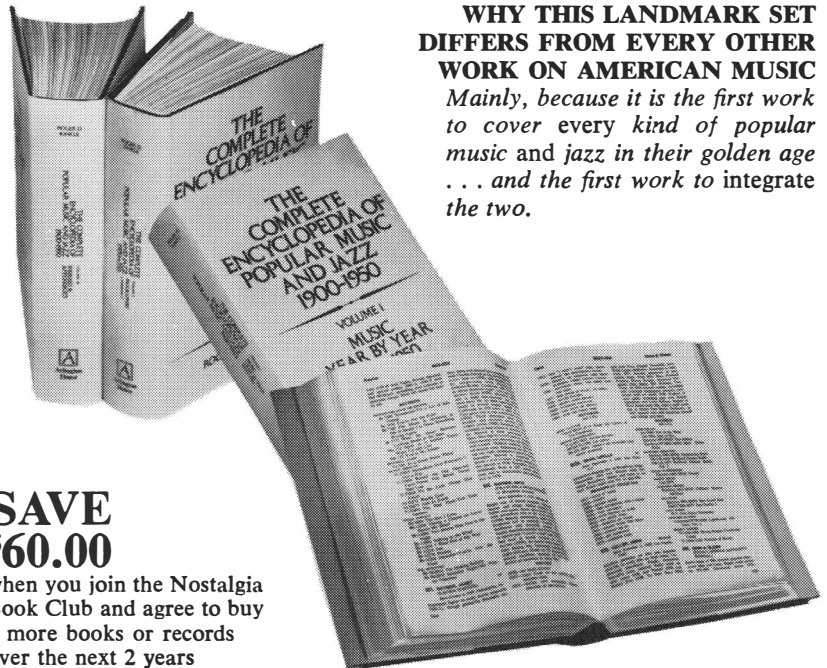
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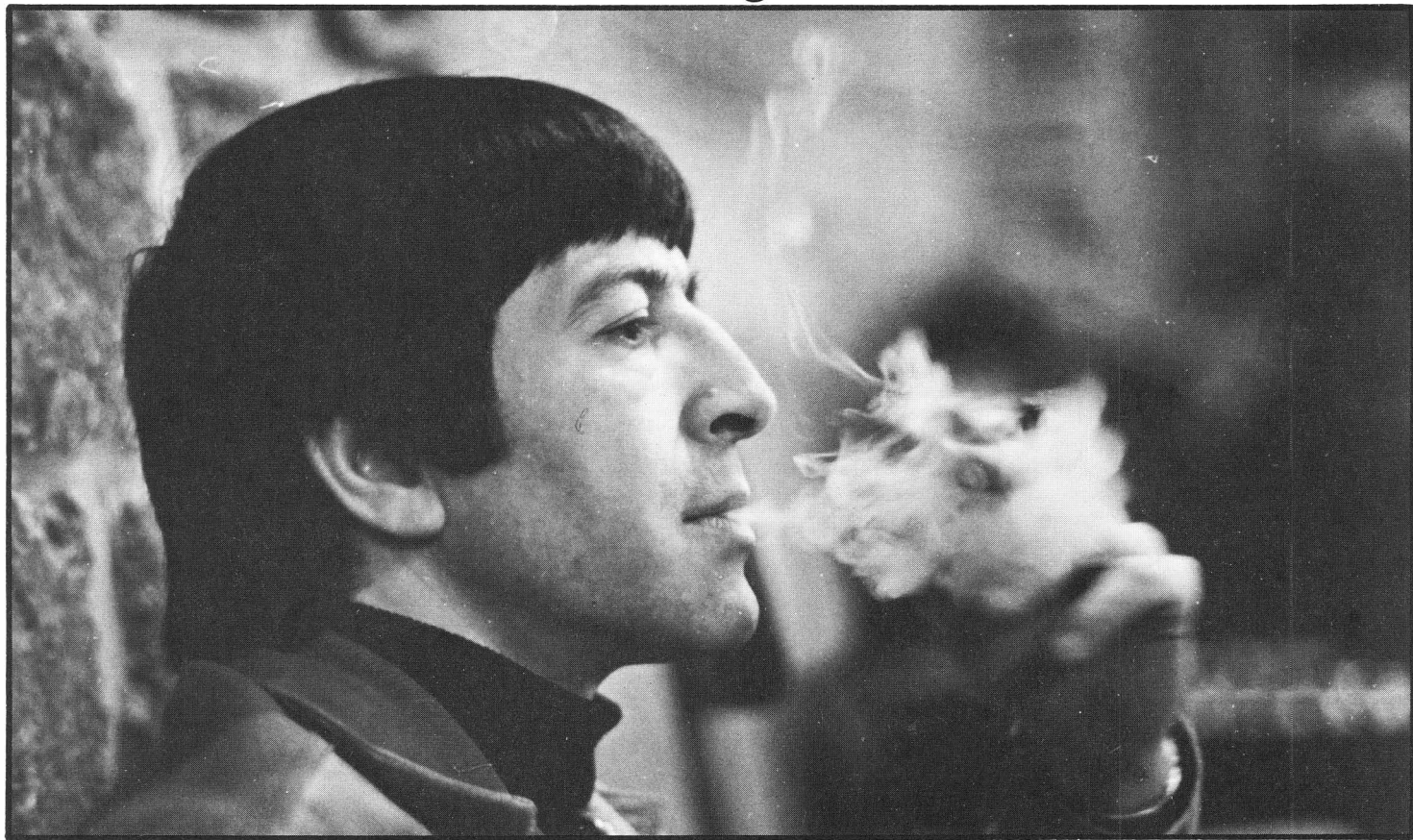
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J.R. MONTEROSE ~ something with music in it



Rhodes St. Genis is a pleasant village ranged about a sizeable lake in lush green countryside some twenty minutes by train from the centre of Brussels. It's a fairly unlikely spot to find an American jazz musician since Belgium, unlike France, Denmark, or Germany doesn't spring to mind quite so readily as a haven for expatriate souls in search of solace, sanity and the furthering of musical horizons. Yet it's here that one finds the tenor saxophonist JR Monterose, a former alumnus of the Claude Thornhill and Buddy Rich bands who has also made records and worked on a regular basis with Mingus and Kenny Dorham. Apart from drummer Stu Martin who lives quite close, Brussels, indeed Belgium in general, never seems to quite make it in terms of a strong jazz identity and although Bobby Jaspar and Rene Thomas both hail from these parts there has never formed up a 'scene' as such. 'JR' rarely works in his adopted country and in many ways doesn't even try to; unlike some of his confreres he chooses not to take advantage of regular work in local radio bands, arguing that this would be a negation of the principle that set him on a course for Europe. Instead, from his Belgian base, he roams freely through the neighbouring countries finding, if not plenteous, at least fairly regular opportunities to wield his axe. Holland in particular seems to afford him compatible companions just at the moment and it was here last year at the Laren Festival that I heard JR perform in the context of the Loek Dikker Improvisators

Guild. Short of stature and small of build but large of tone on his chosen horn, JR in performance resembles a kind of hip pixie, bursting forth with an astonishing stream of arresting sound for all the world like some musical hamster finally yielding up a storehouse of goodies after a long hibernation. It was good to know that he was very much around but it also prompted conjecture as to where he has been all this time and how he had fared.

Happily I was in Brussels a couple of months later and took the opportunity of arranging what I thought would be a fairly modest interview but in fact turned out to be a fascinating three-hour rap in which an extremely articulate JR ranged over his life in music in a highly critical and self-searching way. He talks animatedly yet with a misleadingly lazy drawl and, ever keen to render his points with absolute precision, is sometimes given to long pauses which he terminates, as if echoing the tension of his own solos, by plucking a finely turned phrase from the relaxed space of silence. It is obvious that he has had, and very likely still has, his fair share of demons, but whereas, as most expatriate musicians will tell you, in America they become self-destructive bugaboos, in Europe they can be confronted and transmuted into the legitimate currency of expression. JR climbed off the merry-go-round some while ago now; but not for him inactivity, artistic stagnancy or loss of drive. On the contrary, his music is sprung with a new adventure and experimentation. Settled in his adopted

surroundings with his wife Jacqueline and small son Francesco, JR looks fine, evidently feels fine and is certainly playing with a new freshness, fire and command.

His early life was spent in Utica, New York where he learnt clarinet at 13 and played in the school band. He developed to saxophone and played for weddings, local shows and in beer gardens. At 18 a new reed teacher showed him that his technical approach to the horn was way off so he virtually started over again. To broaden his experience he joined a number of touring society-type orchestras, including that of Henry Busse, and was mainly based in the Mid-West; but his resolve to play jazz was deep rooted and feeling that his playing was deteriorating he returned to upstate New York and worked out of Syracuse where he found no shortage of good rhythm players. As a youngster he had come under the thrall of Coleman Hawkins: "I used to drink a glass of my grandfather's wine - old Dago Red - that wine would really put you out, and just listen to Coleman Hawkins. But although playing by this time, I never dug copying other people's solos. I realized that the sooner I started to play myself, the sooner I would make sense. Lester I came to late, around 1946. I heard Bird twice, at Birdland. I can say there were very few times in my life when I have listened to someone play and was really moved by it and I shall never forget what that did to me. It was just at the end of the 52nd Street thing - Dizzy's Big Band

with Ernie Henry and Cecil Payne, Tadd Dameron's group with Allen Eager, Bird, Pres - man, what a time it was!". Forging and assimilating these influences into his own style sustained Monterose through the spiritually arid gigs that, of a necessity, make up the larger part of a jazzman's early professional life; but by the time he had returned to Syracuse and was putting them to useful account, the early 50's had already come round and the siren call of New York City could not be long postponed. In fact JR fetched up there in '55 and very quickly consolidated with a record made in company with Mingus, Teddy Charles and Eddie Bert. Mention of Mingus prompted the predictably ambivalent response; "I learned a lot from Mingus' music but while I was doing it, it was too chaotic. I think I just played badly; maybe I fitted with what was happening but it wasn't happy for me. It was like this cat wanted you to play his brain. When you played a solo, it was better if you tried to play it the way he would play it, otherwise it was a cancel. There was a time when Jackie McLean and I were in the band and I had already given notice that I was going to split. 'Course that meant Jackie had to rehearse all this music all day with the new man, and then play it all night - he was up to here with it. We had the usual little scene where Mingus threatened to push us off the stand so in the intermission Jackie says, 'Look Charlie, there's no sense - I can't make it anymore'. I'm already splitting and now Jackie says this! Pow! and suddenly there's blood pouring out of Jackie's mouth. I don't fight so instinct made me grab Charlie's coat to say 'What is this?' and what I get is 'You too motherfucker!' With my bad eyes I half-turned away and it just glanced off my jaw; so if I didn't have bad eyes my face would have been on the bar room floor! Jackie's teeth were all loose and blood everywhere. Now I knew he had been planning a group with Kenny Dorham and I started off by depping for Jackie while his teeth mended. So after a few weeks I said to Kenny, 'Look, anytime you want Jackie along, that's okay with me'. He said 'Fuck Jackie baby, you got a gig!' - that's exactly what he said to me. So from something bad it turned out good for both of us. Jackie went with the Jazz Messengers and I played with KD for nearly a year."

We went on the road first with Dick Katz and Sam Jones and everything fell apart. So we got Dolo Coker, Edgar Willis and Arthur Edgehill and started in Pittsburgh. The first night it was happening - it was that kind of group. We recorded but they never released the album. We made two others but they were never as good. I can remember that first date so well. We'd been driving two hours and it was very cold. Edgar Willis, our bass player, had had his hands on the wheel all this time but we just went into the studio and whap!, right on it! It was Benny Golson's tune 411 West, first tune, first take. Under those conditions that's just about unheard of! That was one of the happiest groups

I played with; everybody was happy to go to work. For me, after Mingus, just to play tunes like Cherokee, Shaw Nuff - whew! the difference! After a while with Kenny, as soon as the first note was struck we'd be tuned into each other. Our unisons would sound like one horn. He played good saxophone too. Couple of times he brought it on the gig with him - we'd chase choruses on the Blues; and he'd play some of his hip little things. So I thought the only way to get him is to play long, 'cos he don't have the chops I had for the saxophone. So I just play 20 choruses till he gets tired!". There was a pause at the memory of what was clearly a particularly happy association. Then, feelingly, "Where are these so-called friends of Jazz that something like that could happen to a cat like Kenny? He was a kind person, very straight. In our music it's very difficult to find people with a sense of fairness. He was one."

"Even after the time with Kenny all I wanted to do was play tunes. I was still reacting to the time with Mingus with my head all cluttered with charts. Just tunes - play 'em fast, play 'em slow, play 'em any way you feel 'em and of course there were always certain gigs that would inspire you. I remember some with Teddy Kotick, Osie Johnson and Hank Jones particularly. Hank Jones made me realize there was a lot in me if I let it come out. I'm like a lot of horn players - we stop ourselves but it's actually all in there. I'm one of those players who has to get wound up - then when I'm playing I have a lot of security. In that mood I'll try anything, there's no hesitation."

Both at this point in our conversation and several times later, JR constantly returned to this theme of a horn man's need to play and the precise balance of security / insecurity that is so often the trigger point for a player to unleash his solo. For many jazzmen, lack of regular opportunities to play in the idiom of their choice creates precisely this insecurity so that when the chance does present itself again they often acquit themselves poorly; or think that they acquit themselves poorly which is even more damaging. The vicious circle is established and they need longish bouts of work it that circle isn't, in their minds, to start hemming them in ever tightening coils. Others clearly thrive on a deliberately administered insecurity, walking mental and musical tightropes with an apparently careless abandon yet underneath grimly aware that the chemistry which gets them to the threshold of the solo is one that no alchemist, and perhaps not even themselves, could ever formulate.

"It's that insecurity, that anxiety, that sense of struggling with the instrument which is so much part of it. When the instrument is playing too easy for me, I don't seem to have that much interest in it - we've got to be struggling to play this music. If I'm playing every night for two months I'm at top level but if I haven't played for two weeks I feel insecure - like the man who hasn't made love to his wife for two months, he thinks it's all finished.

I know from all the years that this feeling passes but it's a fear that I sometimes deliberately put into it. The most important thing is to play one's instrument all the time, to maintain the contact, the relationship with it."

Back in the late 50's this is just what JR wasn't doing. At this crucial point in a promising career he realized that he needed more playing. "The competitive thing in New York is good but for that to be valuable you've got to be playing a fair amount and there wasn't enough work there. Consequently, my most consistent playing was away from New York 'cos that's when I played most. A gig I had in Albany in '58 lasted 62 weeks. Remember, this is where I'd lived all my life and all the older musicians had said 'Don't try and make a living playing that Jazz. Don't even try around here'. I just went in and played this little club one night and a whole flock of people came in - the owner flipped out. So then I played one night a week and that turned into four. It all happened without a lot of publicity - just two ads in the paper and the rest was word of mouth. It was in the red light district and originally it was for like Jakeybums but by the end there were doctors and lawyers and all kinds coming down."

Although getting his share of record dates in New York in the early 60's, JR was not able to work clubs for three years on account of cabaret card hassles. The need to play drove him to Iowa where he had another 14 month gig. "People used to say with raised eyebrows, 'JR in Iowa?' but I played every night and at that time it was what I needed. I was just coming out of all that other shit in New York. I had been really hung up for years and I knew the only way was to leave there and play. It was a turning point because after that I went out to California so I had close to two years of playing all the time. Sometimes it was okay musically too!"

On an upward swing again, JR was resolved that the kind of aggravations he had experienced in the past must not reoccur. "I felt I just had to go where I could make it. I've been going all my life and if I'm in one place and nothing's happening I gotta go find it, that's all."

I came to England first and met Tony Williams and Mark Gardner and we hung out for a few days. I remember playing one night with Gordon Beck and Philly Joe Jones - Philly was really on that night. The gig I had come to do in Manchester fell through so I said 'Fuck it, I'm gonna make it anyway'. I came here to Belgium to visit Rene Thomas whom I had known in the States some eight years before. The night I arrived at his home he was due to go off and play a TV show but there was a strike of local musicians so I went with him and made the gig."

The decision to cut out of the competitive US jazz scene is clearly one that JR doesn't regret for a moment. But soon after his second big decision - to settle in Belgium - he took up classical guitar, an instrument imposing austere disciplines and a fair amount of isolation.

Coming so soon on a geographical uprooting, hadn't this marooned him on an atoll of his own making?

"It's true, people don't know I'm here; I've gone totally the other way. One day when visiting Rene I picked up his daughter's guitar, a petite Spanish classical model, a Ramirez, a good make. I held it and the feeling in the instrument! Man!, I thought I'd grooved holding some chicks but this instrument turned me on so much I couldn't believe it! So I just said 'I have to do something with my time, I'll learn it'. Naturally I didn't think of the tedium of practising and of the pain, the sheer physical pain attached to learning classical guitar. But learning the guitar has also taught me things about the saxophone I had been ignoring for a long time - that you can't strong arm an instrument - and most jazz players do, all the time. The advantages are massive and it's those that make me feel it's worth putting in five hours a day on it".

Later, after we'd talked, JR showed me round the compact but elegant house and in his musicroom upstairs he finally gave way to my requests that he should play something. As he delicately conjured a pretty Bach study from the guitar curving compactly into his neat frame it struck me that here was a tableau that summed up much of the major rethinking that necessarily goes on among American jazzmen who come to live in Europe. In fact it was almost too tidy an equation of cultural absorption and if there was an inherent romanticism in the spectacle, it had for JR a much more realistic foundation:

"At 47 my future years are going to be old years, not young ones. And when you're a horn player, teeth get to be a factor. Playing the saxophone with my teeth is the only way I could play. I may still have 10 - 12 years but if it comes on me quickly I want to be ready with something else".

Meanwhile it's the pungent slicing attack of his tenor saxophone that has professional priority. I remembered an early 10 inch Prestige on which he shared front-line honours with Jon Eardley, a trumpeter who lived and played in Germany and Belgium in the 60's and with whom JR had cut an album for a local label. What were the circumstances of this reunion on wax?

"I was going to do a concert with Jon and was approached about an album at the same time. They couldn't get it together in time and also, on principle, I insisted on some upfront money. I thought I was being slick when I finally agreed, that with just a little front money, we would make half an album, see how it turned out and if the promoter liked it we would cut what was necessary to complete it. What happened was the promoter got the Dutch rhythm section in to fill out with some trio tracks; so all it was was me playing a ballad, Jon playing a ballad and a couple things we did together. You see, that's why I sit up here and struggle with the guitar but it's becoming a struggle that I enjoy. I'm not going to

fuck around with any more bullshit because one, I don't need it and two, I've had a hard enough time trying to get rid of the bullshit that's in me.

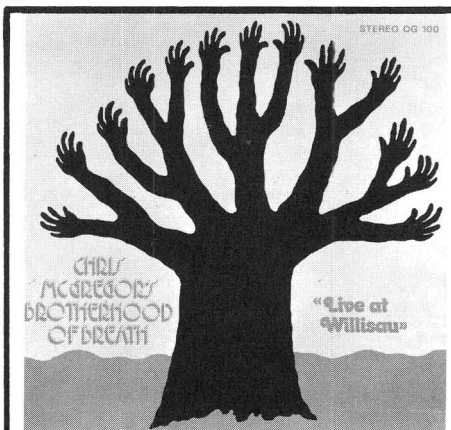
"You see, for the first couple of years here I found myself going with my little tunes and forcing the guys to play some music which they weren't able to play. I could feel the enormous strain and tension for the others so I said 'this isn't the way'. Whenever I tried to be clever and manipulate, I bombed. I remember the first time I played the Paradiso in Amsterdam, same thing. I went in there with my tunes and I felt like a little man who would never take a chance. In Holland the audiences evaluate the things you do in terms of you - not in comparison to something they've just heard. So anyway, the next time I said 'I'm just gonna blow whatever comes out of this horn and let it take me where it wants to take me - here's the place where I can do it. They were running a tape and I didn't know, which made it groovier. There was no conceived plan. It ended up like the Blues from all over the World! When they told me about the tape, I paid it no attention. Finally I got to hear it. I couldn't believe it was me! I said 'that's it, the music is for real, you can release it'. Some of the tracks with just drums put me onto a new line altogether; because with the bass, as soon as I hear it, I'm sympathetic to it and in a way that throws me off. So now I just work with drums, usually Han Bennink.

I stopped playing the tunes because I knew that was the only way I could develop. The moment is the important thing and until you understand that, you're always going to be playing it safe, playing what you played yesterday. There's something about being able to react to the moment and make music - that's really when it comes out for a jazz player. The only way to find fresh things is to let yourself out there. This new way I'm playing is overpowering in a way 'cos you have all the choices and yet you also have the choice. The other way, the old way, I would realize I was playing things inside me that were cliches and I'd use the time to go in certain directions. If I can really let my subconscious take over then I've got 30 years there - I think that's a little hipper than just a few moments of time. The feeling is now but the projection comes from the back, from the past years of playing.

So of course the word got through the grapevine that I was playing free music and people who used to call me from my days of conventional playing would immediately have this disparaging thing: 'Oh, JR's playing free now' - they've decided I'm just freaking out; but they don't know in what sense 'free'; and since I've been playing music all my life and learning control and discipline of my horn, I'm going to be playing something with music in it, right?"

Right. Something with music in it.

ARTICLE BY JOHN JEREMY



SIDE ONE

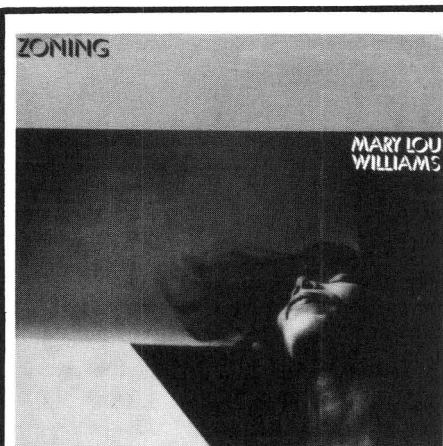
Do It, Restless, Kongis' Theme

SIDE TWO

Tungis' Song, Ismite Is Might, The Serpents Kindly Eye

Chris McGregor, leader, piano; Harry Miller, double bass; Louis Moholo, drums; Dudu Pukwana, alto saxophone; Evan Parker, tenor saxophone; Gary Windo, tenor saxophone; Mongezi Feza, trumpet; Harry Beckett, trumpet; Mark Charig, trumpet; Nick Evans, trombone; Radu Malfatti, trombone

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SIDE ONE

Intermission, Holy Ghost, Zoning Fungus II, Ghost Of Love, Medi II, Gloria

SIDE TWO

Rosa Mae, Olinga, Praise The Lord, Play It Momma, Medi I

Mary Lou Williams (piano) with Bob Cranshaw, Mickey Roker, Zita Carno, Milton Suggs, Tony Waters

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A Louis Armstrong Filmography



The following is a list of the 26 American features in which Louis Armstrong appears or is heard on the sound-track. Only the most basic details are given, but an attempt has been made to list the tunes he performs. This is only a rough first attempt and readers are urged to make additions and corrections. Especially needed are details of when he made these films. A thorough check of contemporary issues of Down Beat and Metronome would no

doubt help determine the exact months of filming. At least this list gives the release dates of every film and it can be assumed that the actual filming took place 2-3 months previously. My thanks to fellow-researcher Gosta Hagglof for help with many details.

Abbreviations: D = director, P = production company, NYT = date of review in the New York Times, R = release date.

1) Ex-Flame - P: Tiffany, D: Victor Halperin, NYT: 1.24.31. This is a mystery film. It was reviewed in "Film Daily" on January 25, 1931, but the FD yearbook is unable to give a release date. It is not known whether any copy exists today. Louis is there, though (according to the cast listing taken from the FD yearbook) but it is not known to this writer what he performs.

2) Pennies From Heaven - P: Columbia,

D: Norman Z. McLeod, R: 12.10.36, NYT: 11.25.36. A Bing Crosby film made around August, 1936. Armstrong featured in *The Skeleton In The Closet* (Arthur Johnston - Johnny Burke), which he also recorded for Decca.

3) *Swing High, Swing Low* - P: Paramount, D: Mitchell Leisen, R: 3.12.37, NYT: 4.15.37. A Carol Lombard/Fred McMurray film, the latter playing a trumpeter, but not the trumpet, which was handled by Louis. Oddly, his name was not mentioned, but the perceptive NYT critic noted: "It may have been played by Mr. McMurray, but sounds more like Louis Armstrong."

4) *Artists And Models* - P: Paramount, D: Raoul Walsh, R: 8.13.37, NYT: 8.5.37. A Jack Benny/Ida Lupino film, with Armstrong featured with Martha Raye in *Public Melody Number One* (Burton Lane - Ted Koehler), which was deleted from the generally released version. He recorded this tune for Decca.

5) *Every Day's A Holiday* - P: Paramount, D: Edward Suntherland, R: 1.14.38, NYT: 1.27.38. A Mae West film, in which Eddie Barefield's orchestra with Louis performed *Every Day's A Holiday* (Sam Coslow - Barry Trivers) and *Jubilee* (Hoagy Carmichael - Stanley Adams). He recorded the latter tune for Decca.

6) *Doctor Rhythm* - P: Paramount, D: Frank Tuttle, R: 5.6.38, NYT: 5.19.38. A Bing Crosby film in which Louis Armstrong performed *The Trumpet Player's Lament* (James V. Monaco - Johnny Burke), which was deleted from the generally released version. He also recorded it for Decca.

7) *Going Places* - P: Warner Brothers, D: Ray Enright, R: 12.31.38, NYT: 1.7.39. A Dick Powell race-track comedy, with Armstrong and Maxine Sullivan featured in *Jeepers Creepers* (Harry Warren - Johnny Mercer), which, as everyone knows by now, was the name of the horse. For the first time Louis appears in the credits in a role ("Gabe") rather than as special added attraction. Filmed c. August/September, 1938.

8) *Cabin In The Sky* - P: MGM, D: Vincente Minnelli, R: 2.15.43, NYT: 5.28.43. The film-version of a 1940 Broadway musical, featuring Ethel Waters, Lena Horne and Eddie "Rochester" Anderson. The cast includes Buck and Bubbles and Duke Ellington's orchestra. Armstrong appears briefly as the Devil's trumpeter. On September 2, 1942, he recorded a sequence entitled *Ain't It De Truth?* (Harold Arlen - E.Y. Harburg), but it was never used.

9) *Jam Session* - P: Columbia, D: Charles Barton, R: 4.13.44, NYT: 5.3.44. A musical starring Ann Miller and Jess Barker and featuring the orchestras of Charlie Barnet, Alvino Rey, Jan Garber, Glen Grey, Teddy Powell and Louis Armstrong, who performs *I Can't Give You Anything But Love* (Jimmy McHugh - Dorothy Fields).

10) *Atlantic City* - P: Republic, D: Ray McCarey. A musical starring Constance Moore and Brad Taylor and featuring Buck and Bubbles and the orchestras of Paul Whiteman and Louis Armstrong, who performs *Ain't Misbehavin'* (Fats Waller,

Harry Brooks, Andy Razaf).

11) *Pillow To Post* - P: Warner Brothers, D: Vincent Sherman, R: 6.9.45, NYT: 5.26.45. A comedy starring Ida Lupino and Sydney Greenstreet. Louis featured in *Whatcha Say?* (Burton Lane, Ted Koehler), which he recorded for Decca.

12) *New Orleans*, P: United Artists, D: Arthur Lubin, R: 4.18.47, NYT: 6.20.47. A musical starring Dorothy Patrick, Irene Rich, Arturo de Cordova and Louis Armstrong, who performs with Kid Ory, Barney Bigard, Charlie Beal, Red Callender and Zutty Singleton. According to the December 1946 *Record Changer*: "The filming of a new picture on jazz, titled *New Orleans*, has been taking place on the Goldwyn lot and features Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory, Barney Bigard, Zutty Singleton and Red Callender. This group which will be seen in the movie has recorded numbers including *West End Blues*, *Mahogany Hall Stomp*, *Tiger Rag* and *Basin Street Blues*." Note that although Louis is shown holding a cornet in the film, he actually uses his trumpet on the sound-track. The tunes performed are: *Farewell To Storyville* (Spencer Williams), vocal by Billie Holiday, *The Blues Are Brewin'* (Louis Alter, Edgard De Lange), *Endie (d:o)*, *Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans?* (d:o), vocal Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday, *Where The Blues Were Born In New Orleans* (Bob Carleton, Cliff Dixon). These were all recorded on Victor (with Minor Hall on drums). Portions of the sound-track were issued on Saga ERO 8014. The following tunes were recorded complete, but only interpolated in the film: *West End Blues* (King Oliver), *Buddy Bolden's Blues* (traditional), *Dippermouth Blues* (King Oliver), *Shimme-sha-wabble* (Spencer Williams), *Maryland My Maryland* (traditional).

13) *A Song Is Born* - P: RKO, D: Howard Hawks, R: 11.6.48, NYT: 10.20.48. A musical starring Danny Kaye and Virginia Mayo. Featuring Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong, Tommy Dorsey, Charlie Barnet, Lionel Hampton, Mel Powell and the Golden Gate Quartet, all of whom performed in *A Song Is Born* (Don Raye, Gene De Paul), which was also issued on a special Capitol record for the Cancer fund (the second Petrillo ban was on in 1948 and ordinarily no records could be issued). Also recorded but not used was *Flying Home* (Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton).

14) *The Strip* - P: MGM, D: Leslie Kardos, R: 8.11.51. A Mickey Rooney film featuring the All Stars in three numbers: *A Kiss To Build A Dream On* (Harry Ruby, Bert Kalmar, Oscar Hammerstein III), vocal Armstrong and Kay Brown, *Basin Street Blues* (Spencer Williams), *Shadrack* (traditional).

15) *Here Comes The Groom* - P: Paramount, D: Frank Capra, R: 9.15.51, NYT: 9.21.51. A Bing Crosby film, in which he is joined by Louis Armstrong, Phil Harris, Cass Dailey and Dorothy Lamour in *Misto Christofo Columbo* (Jay Livingston, Ray Evans).

16) *Glory Alley* - P: MGM, D: Raoul Walsh, R: 5.21.52, NYT: 7.30.52. A dull film featuring Ralph Meeker and Leslie Caron, set in New Orleans. The All Stars

featured in *St. Louis Blues* (W.C. Handy) and *That's What The Man Said* (Willard Robison).

17) *The Glenn Miller Story* - P: Universal, D: Anthony Mann, R: 6.1.54, NYT: 11.2.54. This excellent musical biography starred James Stewart and June Allison and featured Louis Armstrong performing *Basin Street Blues* (Spencer Williams).

18) *High Society* - P: MGM, D: Charles Walters, R: 7.17.56, NYT: 8.10.56. A musical by Cole Porter starring Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra. The All Stars featured in *Now You Has Jazz*, *High Society Calypso*, *Lohengrin*. Bing and Louis plus the studio orchestra under Johnny Green performed *I Love You Samantha* and *Little One*.

19) *Satchmo The Great* - P: United Artists, D: Edward R. Murrow and Fred W. Friendly, R: 9.57, NYT: 3.1.58. An expanded version of what was originally a television documentary of Armstrong touring Europe and Africa. The soundtrack was issued on an LP (Columbia CL 1077). See discographies for titles and dates.

20) *The Beat Generation* - P: MGM, D: Charles Haas, R: 7.59, NYT: 10.22.59. A dull film starring Steve Cochran, Day Spain and Mamie Van Doren. Featuring Louis Armstrong in *The Beat Generation* (Lewis Meltzer and Albert Glasser) and *Someday You'll Be Sorry* (Armstrong). These titles were issued on MGM.

21) *The Five Pennies* - P: Paramount, D: Melville Shavelson, R: 8.59, NYT: 6.19.59. Starring Danny Kaye as Red Nichols and featuring Louis Armstrong prominently. Soundtrack issued on Dot and British London (see discographies for titles etc.).

22) *Jazz On A Summer's Day* - P: Raven Films, Inc., R: 4.60, NYT: 3.29.60. A record of the 1958 Newport festival. Featuring the All Stars in *Lazy River* (Hoagy Carmichael, Sidney Arodin), *Tiger Rag* (La Rocca), *Rockin' Chair* (Carmichael), *Jack Teagarden and Bobby Hackett added When The Saints ...* (traditional), d:o.

23) *Paris Blues* - P: United Artists, D: Martin Ritt, R: 10.61, NYT: 11.8.61. Starring Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward and Sidney Poitier. Featuring Louis Armstrong in the *Battle Royal* (Duke Ellington) sequence and *Wild Man Moore* (d:o). Soundtrack issued on UA.

24) *When The Boys Meet The Girls* - P: MGM, D: Alvin Ganzer, R: 12.6.65, NYT: 1.20.66. A remake of a Gershwin musical starring Connie Francis and Harve Presnell. Louis Armstrong featured in *I Got Rhythm*, *Throw It Out Of Your Mind* (vocal Billy Kyle), both issued on MGM.

25) *A Man Called Adam* - P: Embassy Pictures, D: Leo Penn, R: 7.13.66, NYT: 8.4.66. Starring Sammy Davis, Jr., as trumpeter Adam Johnson (dubbed by Nat Adderley) and featuring Louis Armstrong as "Sweet Daddy" performing *Someday Sweetheart* (Spikes Bros.) and *Back O' Town Blues* (Louis Armstrong), both issued on Reprise.

26) *Hello Dolly* - P: Fox, D: Gene Kelly, R: 12.69, NYT: 12.18.69. The Barbra Streisand blockbuster featuring Louis Armstrong singing the title song.

- Bjorn Englund



STRATA EAST

by Eugene Chadbourne

The track was long and insanely rugged, with no end in sight. So in 1971. Charles Tolliver stopped running. The trumpeter - now into his second decade on the black music scene - wasn't alone. Pianist Stanley Cowell, Tolliver's former associate in the prestigious Max Roach combo, also stopped running. And the five members of the Detroit Contemporary Jazz Quintet, a lesser-known but equally respected instrumental ensemble, had already jumped off the track three years earlier. The story is a familiar one. More and more musicians are jumping the track, abandoning the professional music business to take their lives and music back into their own hands. The Strata Corporation, begun in 1968 by the Contemporary Jazz Quintet and several associates, is one of a growing number of businesses created by musicians in an effort to own their music, lock, stock and barrel. The corporation already has one more-than-healthy branch, New York's Strata-East. Future plans call for a Strata-West on the west coast and... perhaps a Strata North in Canada.

It's all about taking care of your own business. According to Tolliver of Strata-East, the musician who leaves his business in the hands of the average big record company becomes a slave to big business "the way a professional athlete is owned by club owners." To Tolliver,

STRATA

the concept of starting a record company controlled by artists was more than just a good idea. "It's the only idea," he says. "It's all there is left for us to do." But pride - and not desperation - is the emotional force behind the Strata organizations. Strata-East, now into its third business year with more than a dozen albums released, has transformed Charles Tolliver, Stanley Cowell and all the other musicians involved from slaves into masters. Too dramatic? Maybe. But you can feel it in their voices, you can almost taste the feeling of self-control. The idea hasn't reached complete perfection, yet - in many centres Strata-East records are hard to get, and many musicians would still rather throw in their lot with a 'regular' record company than take a personal stake in a co-operative venture. But Charles Tolliver feels good. "We have some new things happening," he says "It feels good being in control of what's happening, that's the main thing." "The venture was born out of the desire to own totally that which we create, our music," Tolliver wrote in a letter to me. "We could have called the company anything. Strata-East is synonymous with self-help We of Strata-East are establishing an institution which will be passed on to our children and children's children and children's...."

Let's backtrack. The original Strata Corporation began in the spring of 1968. The members of the Detroit Contemporary Jazz Quintet - Ken Cox, Charles Moore, Bud Spangler, Ron English and Charles Eubanks - began producing a number of small but successful concerts. Starting out as a loose partnership, the company soon incorporated under the State of Michigan charter in 1969. It was chartered under a profit-making structure because the members felt if the company were to meet its objectives, it would have to have an independence and longevity not associated with grant-supported, non-profit organizations. The objective was basically to produce and expose arts products and services without compromise while generating enough revenue to keep the company afloat. It was structured as a competitive enterprise within the multi-billion dollar arts industry - to produce concerts and films, to put on art exhibitions, to publish and record music and distribute recordings, and to administer and conduct contemporary music curriculums on contract to educational institutions. Although poorly capitalized from the beginning, the company located itself in a 5,000 square-foot, second story facility in Detroit and began operating the Strata Concert Gallery, featuring many local musicians and internationally-known artists such as Herbie Hancock, Archie Shepp, Sam Rivers, Chick Corea, Joe Henderson, Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman, Keith Jarrett, Joe Chambers and Weather Report in concert.

In 1971, via interlocking boards and stock interests, the company spawned Strata East, its first link in a proposed

network of self-determination efforts. Headed by Cowell and Tolliver, the new company gave rise to the producers' alliance recording company, Strata East Records. In the same year, Strata undertook its first Educational And Social Services contract, providing a contemporary music curriculum to the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music. The program lasted two years. The company re-located in 1972, continuing its concerts and beginning the production of recordings, films and video tapes. The company's own label, Strata Records, was formed, along with another subsidiary, Hot Man Distribution, to handle the distribution of these efforts. Synergy Music, was created as a publishing house for all music recorded by Strata Records. At present, there are twenty stock-holders in the corporation. There has been no remuneration to the administrative staff of the corporation - persons involved are donating their skills and time to build a viable company. This article deals particularly with the recording efforts of the New York branch, which in its short existence has already produced an essential catalogue of modern music. The efforts of the main Detroit organization will perhaps be covered in a later article; in a foot-note, one album available on the Detroit Strata label, featuring the founders of the corporation, is discussed.

Strata-East itself works completely on co-operative principles. The artist produces his own recording and pays all costs involved and obtaining a finished, professional product. The company assists him in every way with all the industry knowledge members of the company have gained in doing exactly the same thing - both Tolliver and Cowell have been involved in recording their own music on the label. This initial commitment makes the artist his own producer. In return, he earns back the wholesale price on each record sold - in comparison with a royalty percentage other companies promise an artist on paper. "Of course, any business-minded person or major corporate firm would say one is crazy to try this kind of operation, that the company can't make money," Tolliver says. "Well, it's not about making money! It's about the artist owning totally his product in an industry that makes millions every year by exploiting his creativeness while he, the artist, pays that corporation back only at the rate of, in most cases, 3 to 5 per cent of the retail price - or several cents per record sold." Tolliver goes on to say, "When I say pay the corporation back I mean exactly that. A commercial record company, when putting an artist under contract, will want to own his services for three, four, or five years at least. In a sense, the artist becomes part and parcel owned by the record company, just as a professional athlete is owned by club owners. A new artist will receive in return, when the company has made back production costs, company overhead and the advance - if one was given - 3 to 5 per cent of the retail price. "But,"

Tolliver says, "the artist in most cases never sees any royalties because the company says the above costs have never been recouped. Well, of course, these costs will never be recouped at the rate of only several cents a record payback to the artist. "Similarly, a so-called proven artist may be able to negotiate a contract for 10 to 12 per cent of the retail price and a heavy advance covering 3 to 5 albums. But he, too, in most cases, will never see any royalties because of the tremendous costs the company will charge against him for the albums' production." Tolliver says Strata-East may go on to disprove the concept of black music as hard-to-sell, drug-on-the-market product. "Historically we've been told our music doesn't sell. But in truth our part of the industry accounts for a good deal of the gross sales which run to some nine billion dollars annually." He says "Up until Strata East, the artists' product had been controlled by the major companies, and disseminated at their own discretion. Thus there was no way to know whether the company's statements were accurate unless you went to every store in the country or world and found out how many copies were sold. "Strata-East uses, in many cases, the same avenues any other record company uses in getting its product to the public, including major distributing companies. Once you establish the fact that you are a viable entity with a growing catalogue, and mean business, then those outlets will deal with you on those terms if they want your product.

"Every artist who has come into ownership of himself through Strata East," Tolliver says, "has reaped and will reap more than he would have under contract with any major company, because there is no comparison between making several cents per record and making the wholesale price per record. "no major company will give an artist more rights than it can attain for itself. However, if the artist is the company he will never have to worry about rights or sales unless he breaches himself." One applauds the Strata-East concept in principle. It has worked for many of the musicians who have recorded for the company, especially Tolliver's Music, Inc., which would probably have never found a chance to record with an established section of the music business due to the lack of 'novelty' or 'commercial potential' in the band's music. There are, of course, problems. The idea can only function at full potential if the company has good distribution throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe. According to reports, buyers can pick up Strata-East without too much trouble in main centres on the east and west coast of the U.S. In between, there has been some difficulty, with cities such as Denver, Colorado only recently keeping the albums supplied. Strata East is located at 463 West Street, Suite 1020 H, New York, N.Y. 10014. In Canada, Strata-East albums are available from Coda, through independent purchase or

through local record shops that stock from the Coda catalogue. In Alberta, for example, only one record store in each of Calgary and Edmonton seems to stock Strata-East. Since the albums must be imported by Coda - and duty must be paid - there are difficulties preventing the stocking and ordering of the necessary volume of Strata-East recordings to make sure the albums are always available. Distribution, however, is currently the number one wrinkle Tolliver and his associates are trying to iron out - simply by making as many contacts as possible in each major centre. As more and more private businessmen get hip to the potential of this style of music, the possibility of other private distribution companies picking up the rights for distributing Strata-East as they would any small company such as Takoma (distributed in Alberta by Ackland's/TPC) or ECM (distributed and now pressed in America by Polydor) will be considered. The company rates very high on a consumer index. All the releases are above average with the exception of one disappointment. The pressings, although far from abominable, are not perfect and will hopefully improve. The sound quality of some recordings done in less than perfect conditions by musicians also varies. All technical considerations aside, there is some exceptional recorded music available. Some of the work on this label consists of sessions by loosely-organized groups put together for the session or for a small series of gigs. These albums are meetings of musicians that are normally not even taped, let alone released on album. Other records are conceptual projects put together for the specific purpose of releasing an album or recorded statement. The music can be slotted into several categories. There are at this writing 14 albums available on Strata-East. Four of these represent the music of Tolliver's group, Music Inc., with two volumes of "Live At Slug's"; a two-record set, "Live at the Loosdrecht Jazz Festival"; and a studio recording entitled "Music Inc." featuring the group in a big-band setting. Another five albums represent the work of musicians long-active or currently based on the New York scene. Tenor saxophonist Billy Harper has recorded "Capra Black". The eight-piece Composers Workshop Ensemble spear-headed by drummer Warren Smith has recorded a disc, as has the six-piece group The Jazz Contemporaries. This group's album, "Reasons In Tonality", features the members of this group - George Coleman, Clifford Jordan, Julius Watkins, Harold Mabern, Larry Ridley and Keno Duke in a live concert at the Village Vanguard. "Alkebu-Lan: The Land of the Blacks" is a live session by the large Mtume Umoja Ensemble, at the present recording including percussionist James Mtume with Carlos Garnett, Gary Bartz, Leroy Jenkins, Stanley Cowell, Buster Williams and a host of others. The fifth New York album is "Handscapes" by The Piano Choir, the work of eight keyboard artists, including

Cowell, Mabern, Hugh Lawson, Sonelius Smith and Danny Mixon, who occasionally appear in concert as a group. Three albums on the label can be banded together under the title of "The Dolphy Series", a collection of private recordings produced by saxophonist Clifford Jordan. According to Tolliver, the idea of the series is to basically represent all areas of the music, utilizing taped sessions the musicians involved have wanted released for a long time. The three albums already released in the series are Jordan's "In The World", featuring the leader in septet and octet group settings; "The Music of Cecil Payne", with baritone man Payne flanked by the late Kenny Dorham and Wynton Kelly; and "Iphizo Zam: My Gifts", by Pharoah Sanders. Sanders - whose musical odyssey has been well-recorded by Impulse - is supported here by a 12-piece group. Finally, there are two miscellaneous recordings featuring ensembles from outside the New York area. Robert Northern, a composer and French horn player now calling himself Brother Ahh, is represented with the album "Sound Awareness", the first recording in what he describes as a series of records with his New Hampshire-based group, The Sound Awareness Ensemble. From San Francisco comes the six-piece band JuJu, whose album "A Message From Mozambique" is the only Strata-East recording not originating from the east coast. The music is catalogued by the year it is recorded, with the number of the year - be it 1972, 1973, or 1974 - followed by what number the album in question represents in the year's release. In terms of sales, the most popular recordings have been those by Music, Inc., the Pharoah Sanders album in The Dolphy Series and Billy Harper's

"Capra Black". Future plans include more recordings by Music, Inc., more issues in Jordan's Dolphy series, and... well, whoever else is interested in joining the Strata-East army.

And now, the albums themselves, reviewed in the same categories listed above. MUSIC, INC.: I personally feel that no more justification is needed for the existence of Strata-East than the music of Charles Tolliver and Stanley Cowell. The sounds created by Music, Inc. - a quartet featuring trumpet, piano, bass and drums - are not avant-garde or 'far-out' in any sense of the word. Yet one can't help but feel this music would never have been released if the musicians hadn't taken matters into their own hands. Why? The music has no element of novelty, no gimmicks. It's just pure, unfiltered or watered-down music-making in the tradition of mainstream jazz sounds. The members of the group write compositions and play them, leaving the traditional room for solo statements. It's classic jazz, and the much over-used word 'swing' can be called back into service. Music, Inc. swings - it swings hard, it swings all the way. Although working in the mainstream of jazz improvisation, the members of the group possess an element of inner-communication more typical of the 'free' styles; the players are musicians capable of giving an old formula a new, fresh sound. The reaction of, say, a Columbia records executive, to two volumes of Music, Inc. recorded live at Slug's would be something to the effect of "Yeh? So what else is new..." The music doesn't come on with a new sound or style; in a way, it sounds familiar. But these musicians are more concerned with content and consistency than style. The most remarkable element of the group's music



is its consistency - it pegs in a high level and never falters. The group is on, incredibly on, always full of vitality and exuberance. In its initial stages Music Inc. featured both Cowell and Tolliver, usually backed by Cecil McBee, bass; and Jimmy Hopps, drums. This absolutely perfect quartet recorded three albums, two of which have already been reviewed by Coda. "Music Inc." (SES-1971) was the big-band album, perhaps the best big band album of the year and maybe even the best big-band album of the '70's. Of course it's stupid to speak in terms of 'best', and Tolliver would no doubt frown - everyone is just out there playing. But one has to reach high to communicate the excellence of this effort. Although the members of the quartet are the set's only soloists, the members of the big-band are in themselves a dream horn section. Check out Richard Williams, Virgil Jones, Larry Greenwich and Danny Moore on trumpets; Jimmy Heath, Clifford Jordan, Bobby and Wilbur Brown on reeds and flutes; Howard Johnson filling in on tuba and baritone sax; and Garnett Brown, Curtis Fuller, John Gordon and Dick Griffin on trombones. There are six compositions, three each by Cowell and Tolliver, and the record is stunning... Pressing and sound quality is good. The same quartet recorded two volumes of "Live At Slug's", Volume 1 (SES-1972) and Volume 2 (SES-19720). Both are marvelous, with a too short (13-minutes) side B on the second volume the only slightly sour point. There have been many words about the close-knit, loving unity that characterized this group; for myself, the highlights are McBee's bass, assuring in its strength and affectionate sound; the way Tolliver attacks a solo, bringing to mind the old sage Blakey's advice: "Tell the people a story..." And of course Stanley Cowell, and Jimmy Hopps, right there, right there. Wilpan's, a popular McBee composition which has also been recorded under the title of Wilpan's Walk, is the highlight of Volume 2. Pressing and sound quality: again good. "Live At The Loosdrecht Jazz Festival" (SES 19740/1) is a two-record set chronicling a later stage in the development of Music, Inc. Recorded at the 1972 Holland jazz festival, the group features Tolliver with pianist John Hicks, Reggie Workman on bass and Alvin Queen on drums. The music is excellent; it serves in one sense as a chance to hear Hicks and Queen - two under-recorded players - stretch out. Our Second Father, a dedication to Trane featured on Volume 2 of Live At Slug's gets a new treatment here, and the four other compositions generally point to Tolliver's musical roots. For an encore, the band performs Neil Hefti's Repetition, one of Bird's Favorites (again, this makes up a too short, 12 minute final side). And to open the concert, Tolliver performs his composition Grand Max - a tribute to the drummer with whom he spent many of his formative years. The pressing and sound is good. Again, the music has a strength born out of the fact

that the group is doing what it wants to do. The style is easy to get with and certainly not ground-breaking, but the playing is completely satisfying. Hicks is a man who creates with much power and force; Workman and Queen are behind him all the way. In the liner notes, Tolliver is quoted as saying "I feel, as Charlie Parker felt, that jazz is meant to swing and pretty notes be played, otherwise the beautiful and fruitful legacy that he and others created, the legacy which even allows us to call ourselves jazz musicians, is destroyed." Close listening to his music will explain away that quote's aura of conservatism. This is modern music and it is new music; it is music that changes from one gig to another, that grows and expands in dimension and scope. Charles Tolliver has been able to keep the roots of his musical plant healthy as he flowers all over the goddamn place. Good stuff. NEW YORK: Billy Harper's "Capra Black" (SES-19739) is one of the finest albums Strata-East has released. It's a perfectly realized recording project, without a single real flaw. Whether you like it or not will depend on how comfortable you are with Harper's music and his strident, sometimes uncomfortably tough tenor sound. He's the kind of soloist who grabs attention immediately - he's been doing just that all year with the Gil Evans big band - and his music, once again based on mainstream concepts, compliments that style with its driving, uncompromising force. For this album Harper has gathered together an aggregation of steller sidemen as well as a five-voice choir, used with a great deal of intelligence and taste, on the second side. Three instrumentals on side one come right through with hot, power-punching cooking. The basic group is George Cables, piano, Reggie Workman, bass, Jimmy Owens, trumpet, Warren Smith, drums, and Dick Griffin, trombone. Julian Priester grabs the bone chair for Sir Galahad; Mr. Elvin Jones steps into the drummer's seat for that tune and Billy Cobham takes over percussion on New Breed. Harper solo throughout with characteristic force and aggression. Owens has beautiful spots on every tune excepting the 10-minute Cry Of Hunger, the excellent Cables is featured almost as much, Griffin plays well in a solo capacity on New Breed and Soulfully, I Love You/Black Spiritual Of Love, Reggie Workman also tears out on New Breed and special guests Priester and Jones both get a chance to charge on Sir Galahad.

Although the instrumental side is more than fine, the two vocal pieces are exceptional, especially since this kind of project invariably seems to falter. It doesn't here. The voices are used to create a pretty but strangely stark aura under the tenor's wailing; on Cry Of Hunger, for instance, the nature of the composition - a musical cycle featuring several abrupt, jarring moments of tension and release - creates an effect I find unforgettable. Singer Barbara Grant sings along with some of Harper's solo work on this piece, and

she does very well. All in all, an essential album from a musician who will no doubt be a very important figure on the scene if his music keeps happening like this. Pressing and sound quality: the best of the bunch.

The "Composers Workshop Ensemble" (SES 19723) recorded its album for Strata-East in 1972. It is an interesting work, spotlighting the creative playing of blues and the influence of arrangers such as Monk and Mingus. Three of Monk's themes, for example, are played in layers on Warren Smith's Blues By Monk (not an original device - but effective) and the attempt to create loose, open formats for more than the usual number of horns definitely brings to mind Mingus.

The members of the ensemble are pianist Bross Townsend, bassist Herb Bushler, Smith, trumpeter Johnny Coles (Jimmy Owens subs on Blues For E.L.C.), French horn man Julius Watkins, tenor saxophonist Al Gibbons, bass trombonist Jackie Jeffers and baritone sax and tuba man Howard Johnson. As can be imagined, the arrangements focus on the bottom of musical harmonies; one tune by Johnson, entitled Sub-Structure, explores the sound of the tuba as a solo instrument. The Monk piece, Blues For E.L.C. and Introduction To The Blues (the latter two also penned by Smith) tinker with the blues, while Lament (What Does It All Mean?) and Hello Julius are more memorable for the solos than the arrangements.

The total feeling of the record seems to have been an attempt to create loose arrangements that don't inhibit the basic freedom of a large group; it doesn't always work, but much of the music has a highly original sound to it. Coles and Johnson stand out as soloists. Sound quality and pressing: average.

"Reasons In Tonality" (SES 1972-2), part of a "JazzCo" series that has failed to produce any further recordings, features two long (over twenty minutes each) improvisations by The Jazz Contemporaries, an extremely strong sextet. George Coleman and Clifford Jordan provide lots and lots of tenor sax, both improvising in a highly thoughtful, disciplined manner. Julius Watkins and his French horn give the ensemble sound a mellow middle, while Harold Mabern, Larry Ridley and Keno Duke provide to form a solid rhythm section. Of the two compositions featured, Watkins' Reasons In Tonality provides the most open space for improvisation - not in terms of how much actual time is given to solos, but in the amount of inspiration it provides the improvisers. Nobody slouches on Duke's 3-M.B., however.

But this group, no matter how strong the solos, does fail to clinch into an individual ensemble sound during theme statements. Perhaps the exposure given here is not enough, but judging from this recording, the members of the horn section feel better alone than together. In the end, only a minor flaw. Pressing and sound are good.

"Alkebu-Lan: The Land Of The Blacks" (SES 1972-4) is a two-record set featuring musicians that, if ever given the time to pull together into a real band, would be completely out of sight. It doesn't really



happen on this album, recorded live at The East in New York, but there is enough excitement to satisfy anyone who is at all into this kind of improvisation.

There is also a lot of talking here. Leader Mtume begins the album with a four-minute spoken invocation - his words are most intelligent and set an appropriate mood for what is to come. And, there is poetry and chanting throughout, all of which must have had more of an effect on the total feeling of the music than is possible to judge from this disc due to poor mixing and recording. The poetry of Ysef Iman and Weusi Kuumba, read and recited over the music by the poets and several members of the group, including singers Andy Bey, Joe Lee Wilson and Eddie Mischeaux and two female vocalists identified as Oba and Olugbula, in the end just seems to clutter up the sound.

Clutter does seem an appropriate word. Mtume explains in his invocation that concerts such as this are not designed as occasions to present 'art' but as social gatherings. The social feeling extends to the musicians, and here the effort seems to have been to get as many cats on the stage as possible. The people that made it are Mtume, Ndugu and Billy Hart on percussion; Buster Williams on bass; Carlos Garnett on tenor and flute; Gary Bartz on alto and soprano; Stanley Cowell on piano; Leroy Jenkins on violin and the vocalists and poets listed above. The instrumentalists themselves do not pose more of a

large group than is common today; yet the idea of three male vocalists - and yes, they all sing at once - is something that has to work completely or not at all. The sound of Bey and Wilson - both brilliantly strong singers - moaning, yodelling and vocalizing together has its moments, but in the last analysis there are just too many side-trips going on. No Words, a Mtume composition featuring all three vocalists sing-sounds - but no words, get it? over a simple piano, bass and drums vamp fails simply because the three men seem to be simply trying to drown each other out.

There is a lot of good playing on this record, of course. Stanley Cowell is a gas throughout - his playing on Saud, a tribute to McCoy Tyner, is simply terrific. Baba Hengates, another Mtume composition, has strong solos from Jenkins, Bartz and Garnett. The device of the entire group coming to a complete halt at the end of each solo statement, and the next improviser starting things up again, gives Bartz a chance to come roaring in like a wild wave. Sifa (The Prayer) uses voices effectively in chanting, then breaks into some wonderfully chaotic free improvisation which finally segues into good bass and conga solos. There are other good moments, too. In all, one hopes the Umoja Ensemble will do more, much more recording. Sound quality and pressing: isn't all that hot.

"Handscapes" by The Piano Choir (SES 19730) is a two record set that is difficult to listen to in one sitting. Despite the fact

that the seven pianists involved - Stanley Cowell, Nat Jones, Hugh Lawson, Webster Lewis, Harold Mabern, Danny Mixon and Sonelius Smith - dabble in electronics and small percussion instruments to beef up the sound, the end result of almost two hours of sheer piano sound is intoxication and a hang-over that will result in sheer exhaustion at the slightest mention of the word 'piano'.

That warning aside, "Handscapes" provides lots of room for the listener to dig in. The seven pianists - each with essentially a quite different style - can and do play together, performing a wide range of music.

The music was recorded live in 1972, and the poor sound quality - it appears as if someone in the back of the audience did the recording by holding a microphone above his head - hinders enjoyment. Much of the album is still a bit of a mystery to me; I know what is happening for instance, on Cowell's composition Killers, but I don't really know why. The third side - all thirty-one minutes of it - consists of each pianist going off on his own unaccompanied, and it straddles more styles than most people think exist. Jabooobie's March has all eight keyboards creating a light, highly danceable anthem while Straight, No Chaser sees everyone playing the theme together (whew!) and then trading off solos in a manner that makes the necessity of drummers and bass players questionable at the very least. Hell, this is a good album. Sound quality, as I said, ain't so grand and the pressing sounds like an old 78. London should bring this out in Phase 4.

THE DOLPHY SERIES: These three albums - although completely different in terms of style - hold a similar place for me because of the way they each perfectly capture the essence of the leader involved. A poem on the back of Clifford Jordan's "In The World" (SES 1972-1) the first, album in the series, seems to sum it all up: "There is music in the world/Made by people in the world/Who come from places in the world/This record made in the world/Among my friends in the world/Is the music of my world." Short and simple - and right. The world of Jordan, Cecil Payne and Pharoah Sanders is opened up in this series and the listener is made welcome. Payne and Jordan will no doubt receive an enthusiastic reception simply because each man's failure to be 'now' or 'with-it' or even 'hip' stylistically has kept them from recording as a leader all that much.

Sanders, on the other hand, has enjoyed some degree of financial success and seems to be OUT right now among some modern jazz cults who believe he is washed out, no longer interesting and even - gasp! - commercial. We'll get to Pharoah later.

Clifford Jordan's world is a pretty and happy place. We've had glimpses of his power as a sideman, but this recording - featuring four of his compositions - puts things into perspective. It's a bridge between the old and new. Recorded in 1969, it manages to feature opposing musical forces such as Don Cherry and Kenny Dorham; Al Heath and Ed Blackwell; or Wilbur Ware and Richard Davis without

any clashing. The point is that each player here seems to bring to mind a certain approach to music, yet it all blends together.

On side one the band is Jordan, Julian Priestler, Cherry, Wynton Kelly, Ware Davis and Heath. On the flip side, Dorham replaces Cherry and a double drum team of Roy Haynes and Blackwell replace Heath. A lot of players, a lot of playing. It's essentially a mainstream session, yet on the 17-minute Vienna Cherry does his thing without bothering anyone. Indeed, Wynton Kelly gets behind his playing and the result is a remarkable study in contrasts.

Jordan is the king-pin, of course; the man who makes such a mix of concepts possible. His compositions are good, his playing is firm, and his world is delightful. Sound quality and pressing: all right.

Dorham and Kelly also take part in "Zodiac: The Music of Cecil Payne" (SES 19734), the third album to be released in the Dolphy Series. Al Heath and Wilbur Ware round out the rhythm section. I find this album not quite as exciting because the music simply isn't as challenging; Payne's compositions are simple heads which set the stage for soloing, and the arrangements are nothing particularly new. However, the playing is damn good. Dorham opens the album with a seven-minute, trumpet solo, entitled Martin Luther King, Jr., which showcases his sound and clarity of conception - still without serious flaw in this late stage of his career. Payne follows with a shorter baritone solo, entitled I Know Love, and then the album goes into the tunes, four bouncy bits of bopping with plenty of space for everyone to stretch out. One remarkable thing is the way Payne gets around the range of the baritone; players such as Pepper Adams have used the cumbersome quality of the horn as an end in itself, but this doesn't enter into Payne's conception. His alto - also featured on the album - is durable and original. Sound quality and pressing: good.

Now for Pharoah. I find "Iphizo Zam: My Gifts" (SES 19733) an exceptionally beautiful album, just as I have found all of Pharoah's recordings on Impulse exceptionally beautiful and just as I will no doubt find everything the man records until he Oms off to the next world exceptionally beautiful. I'm a Pharoah freak, I admit it. I find it hard to argue about his music simply because I hear it as a physical, emotional and spiritual experience. The sound of his horns, the way he arranges the sounds in his groups and the total music he plays simply makes me feel good.

Reviewers will often point out certain simplicities in his style the way people at used-car lots go around kicking tires. So what? It's true, the searching, crying quality that characterized Trane and his many disciples such as Sanders and Shepp seems to have been replaced by a serene peacefulness, but I don't look on this as a problem. He seems to have found what he was looking for all along, and in his new music one simply hears a man at peace with himself, floating far, far away

....the experimentation is, in one sense, gone, but the feeling Pharoah has always played his music with is still there, the emotion and love. There's something stark and vital about it - his music is real. But like the man said, you have to dig it to dig it.

"Iphizo Zam" is a special album, an unexpected album that digs back into a casual session with a lot of cats present. There are three tunes. Prince Of Peace on side one has been recorded elsewhere as Humn-Allah-Hum-Allah, and it's lovely. Leon Thomas never sounding better. Balance is a gyrating theme with a hip calypso slant and some brilliant tenor from Pharoah.

The title piece on side two is nearly thirty minutes of group improvisation, during which the musicians work their way toward one idea in several different ways. The building up, tearing down and building up serves almost as a primer to Pharoah's music - it's all full of that special love. The musicians joining Pharoah are Sonny Fortune, alto sax; Howard Johnson, tuba; Lonnie Liston-Smith, piano; Leon Thomas, vocal and percussion; Sonny Sharrock, guitar; Cecil McBee and Sirone (Norris Jones), basses; Nat Bettis, Chief Bey, Billy Hart, Majeed Shabazz and Tony Wylie on percussion.

MISCELLANEOUS - "A Message From Mozambique" is highly derivative of Sanders in a way; but from another standpoint, the six members of this combo are simply dipping into a common pool that Sanders and many other musicians are fond of. The players are Plunky Nkabinde, tenor and soprano sax; Lon Moshe, vibraphone, flute, piccolo; Al-Hammel Rasul, piano; Ken Shabala, bass; Jalango Ngoma and Babatunde, percussion.

The sounds are based around the piano providing a modal base for improvisation, the bass a backbone and the percussion a running commentary. Nkabinde blows energetic and hard - his playing sometimes lacks any real spark or ideas but it carries on through sheer muscle and force. The sixteen-minute (Struggle) HOME which opens the album is par-for-the-course in this style, as is the adoption of several traditional Nairobi chants which closes the set. Much more interesting is Soledad Brothers, an Al-Hammel Rasul composition which unfolds slowly around one winding, spiralling line. The use of vibraphone amidst all the percussion is also intriguing. Sound: mixed poorly. Pressing: okay.

"Sound Awareness" by Brother Ahh (Robert Northern) (SES 19731) is the only real disappointment out on Strata East. Ahh is a fine French horn player who has worked with Charlie Haden's Liberation Orchestra and Sun Ra, among others. This album doesn't present his music as much as it does his philosophy, which borders on the sophomoric. Side one consists of a seven-part suite entitled Beyond Yourself (The Midnight Confession), about which the composer writes "The scene is set at midnight. A lone figure sits in his room faced with two decisions: Should he give up his daily life of drugs, alcohol and fantasy...or should he

renounce the world entirely and become a monk." Well, anyway, there are some interesting sounds from Northern, percussionist Barbara Burton, cellist Pat Dixon and singer Barbara Grant. But the sounds are made less interesting by the fact that the echo unit on the tape recorder seems to have been turned on permanently. And these sounds only exist to frame the narrative 'plot' of the piece, which is pretty banal unless you happen to be a lone figure sitting in your room faced with...never mind.

The other side features special guest star Max Roach and his M'Boom Repercussion Ensemble, Howard Johnson, the leader and the 90 voice Sound Awareness Ensemble. 90 voices! All 90 engage in call and response with Roach, the subject basically a continuation of side one.

Again, this is only for those who agree with what the people are shouting about here, which will provide same with some kind of a contact high...maybe. Funny thing is, Brother Ahh slips a tribute to Sun Ra in on the liner notes, and this mentor is a man who can make anyone believe just about anything. Ahh, on the other hand, just doesn't pan out. But you hate to land too hard on a subject - what's happened here is that the intentions behind the words didn't cut the wax along with the words themselves.

Hopefully, Strata East will continue to grow. Designed as a competitive thing, it's a small but noticeable voice rising out of the back alleys to make the big record companies notice a few things they've chosen to ignore for so long. With the exception of Sanders, no one here has been provided any kind of real forum before. And unlike artists recorded by, say ECM - Chick Corea, Keith Jarrett, etc. - these men aren't going to be moving on to bigger and better things. This is really a last stand, a statement that you don't have to be different to be good, that purity is as important as novelty. At this stage of the game, this is music that has been lost in the shuffle.

FOOTNOTE: "Location" (Strata SR1 1001-73) is the first in what will hopefully be a series of recordings by The Contemporary Jazz Quintet, who, it must be stressed, started the whole Strata ball rolling. It's a very fine album, full of surprises, both electronic and natural. It's electric music with strong ties to Miles, Hancock, etc.; but it isn't copy-cat stuff. Unlike the latter artists, whose newest albums are crammed to the gills with sounds, this ensemble uses electronics to help create a feeling of infinite space. This entire album just floats - indeed, the five compositions are described as "beginnings and endings depending on your level of entry." Right, right. The men involved add up to more than a quintet - Ron Brooks, Ken Cox, Ron English, Charles Eubanks, Leon Henderson, Phil Mandelson, Charles Moore, Bud Spangler and Dan Spencer. Good players all, merged into a group sound as clean as air used to be about 600 years ago. The record is available from Strata Records, 46 Selden, Detroit, Michigan, 48201.

record reviews



Eugene Chadbourne
Jack Chambers
Ian Crosbie
Doug Langille
John McDonough
Mark Miller
Roger Misiewicz
John R. Nelson
John W. Norris
Barry Tepperman
Dean Tudor
Tex Wyndham

CHARLIE HADEN

Liberation Music Orchestra
Impulse! AS-9183

For all that it won a 1970 "Grand Prix de Disque", "Liberation Music Orchestra" has had one of the spottiest histories of any recording in the Impulse catalogue. It was originally released that year with a minimum of advertising, and then quickly withdrawn from the market for fear (apparently) that its political content would offend ABC-Paramount shareholders. Even before its release, the question of whether it would appear at all caused resignations and dissension in and around Impulse, with the final rupture of Bob Thiele's Flying Dutchman Productions from affiliation with Impulse, and the development of many musicians' resentment toward Thiele. But for Ornette Coleman's "Crisis" (which lasted in the Impulse Canadian catalogue a mere four months), "Liberation Music" held the record for short survival in a jazz line that for a long time had the reputation of carrying indefinitely everything it had ever issued.

This new edition of "Liberation Music", even given the same issue number, is substantially revised from the original. Production is now credited to Haden himself rather than Thiele, the sound has been remixed for quadrophonic reproduction, the sleeve has been changed somewhat, and the musical content of one title has been changed. The programmatic intent of the Orchestra's music is readily apparent - to pay tribute to those who have fought for their own freedom, and those who have fought for others. Haden has, of course, been hassled over his beliefs before - including an arrest in Portugal for dedicating a performance of Song For Che to the Frelimo movement.

At the core of this music there are three heartbeats - Haden's own, Carla Bley, and the skills and convictions of the performers. As I wrote about "A Genuine Tong Funeral", there are strong parallels between Carla Bley's music and the work Kurt Weill did for Bertolt Brecht and others during the decay of the Weimar Republic. (The parallel in political atmosphere, too, is much too powerful to ignore.) With this recording and "Escalator Over The Hill" Ms. Bley's conceptions have become more and more thoroughly permeated with the Teutonic music-hall sarcasm. At their best, her arrangements for others, and particularly her own compositions, have a vinegar



snap of frank exposure, perhaps a satiric bitterness bordering on malice. However, she, like Weill, often forgets that the dividing line between satire and saccharine is as thin as the skills of an individual interpreter. She is fortunate in having the passions of Gato Barbieri for The Introduction, The Ending To The First Side, and The Interlude (Drinking Music), which tend to cross the boundaries in his absence. (I can't hold her responsible for my delusions, but somehow I can see these without him not-too-esoterically as television soap opera or situation comedy themes.)

The meat of the first side of "Liberation Music" centres around the performers' visions of four mid-30s marching songs - Hans Eicher's Song Of The United Front, and - from the Spanish theatre - El Quinto Regimiento, Los Quatro Generales, and Viva La Quince Brigada. The latter three are Spanish traditional songs given new meaning in wartime; Quinto Regimiento, originally Venga Vallejo, has already been heard in the jazz repertory as John Coltrane's Ole. One mark of these four selections is authenticity; United Front is based closely on Hans Eicher's original piano sheet music, while the other three utilize orchestral and choral arrangements from the film "Mourir A Madrid"; mercifully, Ms. Bley has seen fit not to grossly superimpose her musical personality on these, but work from them as read. The aura of the era's struggle is further enhanced by the original sound track recordings of "Generales" and of "Brigada" dubbed as undercurrents across the improvisations. In this edition of the album, a similar dub is used for Quinto Regimiento as well - this was not present in the original issue. The concept sounds unusual, but the unity of

the two performances merges quickly. And there is a solidity of musical purpose in the face of a layered voicing that groups sections of the orchestra in differing (but complementary) directions. (If you don't know what I mean and can't get a copy of this recording, try Charles Ives' "Holidays Symphony" or "Three Places In New England".) Soloists, rather than being segregated from the ensemble, sit in the middle of a multidimensional cascade of ideas. The ensemble concept is a major distinction of these sides, but the soloists bring new impact to the songs. Sam Brown contributes well-appointed flamenco. Don Cherry remains the space-formed substantial trumpeter we remember rather than the pseudo-Renaissance philosopher he has since become. Gato Barbieri's lightning smoothness precedes his spiritual return home; here he is an open player, much less hung on rhythmic figures and harmonic extrapolation than he has since become. The most distinctive of all, though, and the one who most successfully directs the ensemble from beneath, is the lamentably little-heard Roswell Rudd, whose visceral trombone rumblings have a funkily cocky personality of their own. With the same depth of passion as Barbieri, Rudd is still able to catch and reflect the wistfully sad humour that pervades the charts.

Side two and Haden's own Song For Che open with an exquisite exposition of the bassist's melodic art. This moving requiem for Dr. Guevara lets Dewey Redman be heard for the first time. Redman's approach is substantially different from Barbieri's, and relies less on exploiting registers and timbres of the tenor saxophone than it does on creating elasticity in the middle of rhythms and note sequence. Carlos Puebla's mournful Hasta Siempre lies underneath. Ornette's War Orphans is charted by Ms. Bley as a feature for herself, and is the most diffuse and underdirected area of the recording. (I say "area" intentionally; it seems much more a mass of ambient sound than a performance of any intent.) She seems able to take up the energy generated around here by the ensemble, but not to retain or mold it into a musically usable force. Quite properly it resolves into the sitcom boozy businessman's bounce of The Interlude (Drinking Music), to soothe us all before leaping back into the foray of Haden's Circus '68-'69. "We now pause for a commercial." "Circus" is Haden's personal portraiture of the chaos and factionalism of the 1968 Chicago

Democratic convention (the one that made Richard Daley a household word... if you happen to be in the washroom). Again, like the Spanish Civil War songs of the first side, the multiple-band texture is created in the ensemble, but here much more effectively because of its diffusion of purpose, as we move almost dreamlike through the permutations of the chart. (Not so much Charles Ives as, say, the Lukas Foss of "Phorion".) The ensemble is, however, spread thin, and in the original mastering textures tended to merge into a near-chaos that was difficult to sort. (The current remix clarifies and separates the ensemble textures for the stereo listener, but at the expense of the prominence of the individual soloists, who now seem to have receded further back into the collective.) Keys to the performance are the running underpinning of Carla Bley's organ and Rudd's continued subterranean leadership.

"Circus" moves into We Shall Overcome - a profoundly stirring condensation of the album's various ideals pointed by the conviction of Rudd's horn. Somehow, this one performance erases all the glibness and hypocrisy the song took on in the last decade. (Remember Lynden Johnson's civil rights speech?)

All the improvisers in the revolutionarily-directed ensemble - those heard at length and those not - believed in this music as they played it, and gave their gifted all in these performances. Unless you find yourself particularly put off by the political content of this recording, there's no justification for passing up this explosive album. - B.T.

LES MCCANN

Layers
Atlantic SD 1646

Everyone knows that Les McCann gets tepid reviews from the jazz press. As the bellwether of the swingless set in the '50's, he got a lot of attention by playing sophisticated gospel-funk while Ray Charles was on the charts, and he has tried to keep up with all of the other funks when their time came. He is the plastic man of jazz keyboards.

Predictably, he is into jazz-rock-funk now. But brace yourself. "Layers" is well worth listening to. Primarily it features the most creative, and most controlled, ARP synthesizer to find its way into jazz-rock so far. That may seem a dubious honour in view of the random babbling we are hearing from it on a lot of recent releases. However, McCann obviously knows the machine well enough that he no longer surprises himself with it, and he will surprise a lot of listeners.

The strategy was contrived. First he recorded about forty-three minutes on acoustic or electric piano with Jimmy Rowser (bass) and percussionists Buck Clarke, Ralph MacDonald and Donald Dean. Then the sidemen were dismissed while McCann overdubbed the synthesizer parts.

The result is real enough. Side 1, collectively entitled Songs From Boston, is a series of ballads shading into one another, with especially effective playing on the tracks called Sometimes I Cry and The Dunbar High School Marching Band. Side 2, collectively Songs From My Childhood, is less successful because the rhythm is generally more rock-us, and the synthesizer gets quite aimless on, for example, Soaring At Sunset. Nevertheless, the whole album remains quite listenable after repeated turns.

Whether or not the synthesizer will develop into a viable improvisational instrument is a larger question, and one that won't be answered for some time. There is no doubt that much of the pleasure of "Layers" (my pleasure, at least) comes from sorting out all the things that the synthesizer is capable of doing. McCann makes it sound like brass and woodwinds and percussion and Martian music and a lot of other things, familiar and unfamiliar. That kind of pleasure should prove transient. The deeper pleasure won't come until someone proves that it can be sensitive to the individual touch like an upright piano or a scarred old bass. No one has come close to that yet, but the possibility that someone might accomplish it someday had never even entered my mind until I heard McCann playing it. - J. C.

JELLY ROLL MORTON

Library of Congress Recordings -
Volumes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
CJM 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
New Orleans Memories and Last Band Dates
Atlantic 2-308

In its final form (8 volumes) the Classic Jazz Masters series incorporates all the material issued in the twelve Circle (Riverside) LPs as well as additional performances omitted from that series. The unexpurgated version of Winin' Boy Blues, for instance, is included in Volume 4 and it is easy to pick out the portions left out in earlier versions. The language is in common use on the street so it will hardly startle many people. Volume 5 is particularly fascinating as it contains the sequences on funerals and marching bands. Morton's philosophical discussions on music give tremendous weight into many of the basic elements of the jazz style. While writing the above, volumes 7 and 8 arrived through the mail - thus completing this series. (Presumably Volume 6 is issued even though a review copy has yet to materialise here.) It's ironic that the final two records are probably the most interesting for the average jazz listener. Volume 7 is a collection of piano solos containing some of Jelly's most "classic" compositions - Wolverine Blues, The Pearls, King Porter Stomp and Jungle Blues as well as such attractive themes as Sweet Peter, Fickle Fay Creep, Freakish and Pep. Volume 8 contains Morton's much quoted "Discourse on Jazz" in which he lays down the basic principles of his musical philosophy. The

marvelous sound of Morton's "Spanish Tinge" is prominent on side 2 where Creepy Feeling, Mame 'Nita and Spanish Swat are rewarding examples of Morton's strutting piano style. No one, with any interest in jazz, should be denied the fascination and pleasure of Morton's distinctive (and un-copyable) music.

As a musical and social document these recordings were without parallel. They go beyond the personal in establishing the life style of the nomadic hustler at the turn of the century and beneath the bravura we are given a chance to perceive the personality and creative thought of one of the great masters of our music.

The 1930s were down years for Morton. He lacked a recording contract, his music was considered old-fashioned and he had virtually disappeared. It is apparent, from listening to these Library of Congress recordings, that he had continued creating fresh material and many of these numbers, in finished form, are heard in the Atlantic two-LP set. They are the last statements and rank with Morton's finest. The eight piano solos (four with vocals) have long been acclaimed and were last reissued on a Mainstream LP. This material, recorded originally on General, gained wider circulation on Commodore which explains their presence here as part of Atlantic's retrospective series on the label.

The band sides warrant special comment. Personally, I find them more satisfying than the Victor sessions of the same period and they rank with the better sessions from the late twenties. To begin with there are such delightful Morton compositions as Big Lip Blues (a characteristically fresh interpretation), If You Knew, Dirty Dirty Dirty, My Home's In A Southern Town and Why. Characteristic Morton hokum abounds (which might distract some people) but it is very apparent that Morton was musically abreast of the times. His arrangements are designed to highlight the moods of the numbers as well as giving his stellar interpreters - Henry "Red" Allen and Albert Nicholas - considerable room to demonstrate their empathy with Morton's music. Panama is the only standard performed by the band while in Sweet Substitute Morton produced an instant classic.

This two record set and Victor's "King of New Orleans Jazz" (Victor LPM 1649) will give any newcomer a marvelous introduction to some of the most imaginative music to be created in the jazz idiom. Once addicted, the newcomer will gravitate to the "complete" Morton on French RCA as well as the fascinating Library of Congress series. This set, incidentally, should be heard at all costs - but not necessarily owned - so libraries everywhere should make a point of obtaining these recordings.

A technical note for collectors: The Library of Congress material has been remastered - correcting as much as possible the variations in speed of the original acetates. Sound quality on the Atlantic set is good - much better than the Mainstream and Fontana (band sides) reissues.
- J.W.N.

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GEORGE RUSSELL

New York, N.Y. and
Jazz In The Space Age
MCA MCA2-4017

George Russell is home. Not only has he come back to America as a recognized musical power, able to teach, and write, and work in the music and still survive, but suddenly the cream of his output is rematerializing onto the accessible marketplace from the haunts of producers' vaults, library shelves, and auction lists. These two extended works by Russell, being made available by this issue for the first time in some ten years, were his most ambitious offerings to that time, looking forward to musical developments that are only now being realized, and musically successful to an extent that no extended large-ensemble work of jazz had previously achieved.

The backbone of Russell's music - then as now - was his "Lydian Chromatic System" of harmonies - an elaborate extension of modern jazz harmonizations away from the bebop chord progressions (where substitutions and superimpositions were many but true originality a very rare commodity). And one would have to emphasize the word "chromatic" - this was not only the nature of the harmonies he espoused, but the wider range of colours in ensembles and solos the system permitted. To the musician initiated into these concepts (and as Hal McKusick, who was one of the mainstays of Russell's music in the mid-1950s, admitted, it was like learning a new language) this dramatically augmented vocabulary meant new dimensions of freedom, improvisational freedoms which were preserved even in mid-barrage in heavily-arranged large ensemble musics. (These had always - even in the hands of past masters like Ellington and Dameron - previously been compromises between soloistic invention and ensemble range if extended works were to be viable as jazz forms at all.) Russell's genius as an ensemble chromaticist - with the added freedoms the Lydian concept gave him in writing for featured improvisers in an ensemble - led to polyrhythmic, polytonal call-and-response and superimposed ensembles, and "new" textures such as guitarist Barry Galbraith's various functions as section lead, countervoice, and even whole-section-in-one-instrument.

Russell was thus a major innovator in the realms of ensemble voicings and harmonic usage. He had the third attribute as well - in the midst of all this, even at large scales, because of the freedom he left for his soloists and for his own section scorings he was able to play and build with rhythms in a way that no other jazz composer (with the significant exception of Jelly Roll Morton) did. Primarily for this reason, Russell from the start was the only builder of large structures to successfully incorporate Latin rhythms into his music (from the 1947 Cubana Be/Cubana Bop to the

Manhatta-Rico section of "New York, N.Y.") without compromising ensembles or soloists, and in fact to make the alien pulse an integral and essential part of a music which remained completely true to the jazz aesthetic rather than just stitch together some grotesque patchwork.

But as Ellington points out, in order to write jazz successfully you have to know who your soloists are and how they're going to respond to what you've written. The genius of Russell's music is not his alone; the power is also that of the soloists who filled the demands of his scores as readily as he filled theirs. From the initial 1956 "smallett" recording onward through these, and especially in the apocalyptic All About Rosie (1958) that summarized in short form everything there was to know about Russell's pre-Ornette music, the one musician who graced George Russell's scorings to their mutual best advantage was Bill Evans. (Bill Evans????) Hearing these two extended works, the listener is treated to an Evans almost forgotten now - a pianist of range, power, surging drive, and harmonic and rhythmic audacity totally unique in the music. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that - apart from Russell himself - between 1956 and 1960 the two people most responsible for the success of this music by virtue of their being most fully attuned to its potentials were Bill Evans and Barry Galbraith. But the settings and the stimulus they provided somehow work the same magic with any of the disparate soloists Russell chose to invite into his musical world - all of whom were superlative musicians to begin with.

"New York, N.Y." is Russell's evocation and ode to the Apple, constructed as a sequence of shifting moods out of some original compositions, some refurbished show tunes, and a narration by Jon Hendricks. The narration is easily the most expendable part - dated hip doggeral in forcedly rhymed couplets; while it does contain one or two gems ("lack of acceptance is less like something to hide from... and more like something Bird died from") for the most part it's overstated. (I don't think that in 1973 even John V. Lindsay could get away with calling New York "a city so nice they had to name it twice".) While the various segments of "New York" do tribute to the city appropriately as Russell intended, they hardly form a congruous musical unit.

Manhattan is the Rodgers-Hart show tune whose basic melodic contours are retained while its other content - and its essence - is subverted, recomposed, and fully incorporated into Russell's chromatic universe. The solos make the piece: Bob Brookmeyer displaying a bluesy two-fisted guttiness of which I would have never believed him capable; Evans, it goes without saying; Art Farmer high above the ensemble sputtering and crackling like Brownie; and John Coltrane. This was perhaps the most intense of all of Trane's late-'50s improvisations, searching, searing and soaring, leaving you with the image of a man possessed,

tearing through his mind in search of he knows not quite what himself.

Big City Blues is the best of Russell's attempts to infuse his extended harmonic idiom with a true bluesiness. Ensemble writing is superb, but again it's the soloists and what he draws from them that stay with you long after the track ends. Particularly outstanding is Benny Golson, whose tenorist pretensions had always struck me before this as particularly dubious commodities. I suppose, though, that in discussing any of Russell's works you have to return repeatedly to the point that his extended forms are by no means just orchestral ends in themselves. Rather, they are mirrors in which an improviser can visualize, blend, and stretch his vistas. Manhatta-Rico returns to the composer's fascination with rhythm play - something which he has been able to build into his large-scale scores extremely successfully from the very beginning of his career. Manhatta-Rico is not only the culmination of his sequence of Latinesque works since 1947, it is much the climax of the lineage. It's a swirling pastiche of contrasting ensemble moods and colours. The reed writing, which looks back to Fletcher Henderson and forward to horizons nobody else has managed to see yet, is the ideal setting for the power and grace of Phil Woods. The East Side Medley - transmogrifications of Autumn In New York and How About You - gives Bill Evans his head toward the rhapsodic impressionisms that are his present bread and butter, until the ensemble reemerges in its full potency as a driving force, with Farmer, beautiful as before, riding the crest. A Helluva Town is a glance at the ground covered by all the previous sections, the full diversity of New York moods, climaxing and dissolving finally in Max Roach's message.

But as Russell himself says, "New York" was the culmination of everything he had done and been to that point (1958-1959). "Jazz In The Space Age" is a move toward further realms of light, a suite all of one piece, which in many places touches on concepts as yet untapped by jazzmen since (most of all Russell himself, who at the present stage of his career seems at work overextending a few of his originally germane harmonic devices at the vast expense of abandoning others - especially his shining rhythmic polychrome - almost completely. But that's a discussion for another time.).

"Jazz In The Space Age" is a single piece expanded into LP form, united firstly by the three sections of Chromatic Universe for various percussion (which closely foreshadow Don Cherry's recent infatuations with gamelan music) and two pianists - Bill Evans and Paul Bley - building dense, dissonant, fast-moving counterpoints somewhere above metre. The second agency of form here is the further extension of Russell's harmonies by the absorption of one of Ornette Coleman's serendipitous innovations - the concept that meaningful improvisation need come not only from the notes of a chord or mode, but from its associations

in one's mind, the colours and contours it denotes. This is the fundamental precept of Russell's ensemble scoring throughout this work, and lends virtually unprecedented depth and grace to the massed forces. It also presents a set of premises on which Russell has neither improved nor abandoned to the present. (Thus "Space Age" is simultaneously the first and the most significant of all Russell's post-Coleman oeuvre.) While the soloists are undeniably and almost unexpectedly strong, most of the featured players are no longer protoboppers who secondarily mastered the composer's idiom, but rather true transitional figures whose panthea really begin with Russell and Coleman and move ahead from that point. Evans, Bley, and the young Dave Baker all exceed that mold but fit it no less well for their other abilities; on the other hand, Dave Young (tenor) and Al Kiger (trumpet) distill in single lines all Russell's essence without transmitting much personality of their own. The composer's jagged, hard-swung (and almost brittle) ensembles and swirling lines shine with diamond-hard brilliance. The individual movements are the three sections of Chromatic Universe, Dimensions, The Lydiot, and Waltz From Outer Space; but, unlike "New York", there's no need to do more than acknowledge that Russell chose to apply different titles to different sections of the same opus.

The composer's mastery of rhythmic play follows quite naturally from his initial vocation - drumming. Often, listening to these works, I find myself pondering the late Herbie Nichols' concept that jazz is essentially an elaboration of the harmonics of a tuned drum. It fits; and driving a drum music is a massive challenge for the real drummers underneath all this weight. Max Roach, Charlie Persip, and Don Lamond handle those tasks magnificently. But you realize also that here, in hearing the fullest expression of George Russell's musical concepts, you also approach the roots of his music - futuristic roots (like Sun Ra's) that even in his most "now!" works (the faddish "Living Time" and "Electronic Concerto For Souls Loved By Nature") the composer has yet to fulfil completely or even approach again as openly. Sometimes in recent years you hear verbatim echoes of these earlier works (the two recordings of You Are My Sunshine parroting Dimensions), and you realize that Russell is still trying to capture the essence of his musical thought as well now as he managed to in 1960 when "Jazz In The Space Age" was new and fresh in his mind and a challenge in the unknown.

The original issues of these two albums have been going for as high as \$40 on the auction market. I feel sorry for all the people who've just seen the bottom fall out of their investments. Tough shit, guys, but you're about the only people I could think of who could possibly be unhappy about seeing these monuments to George Russell's genius and uncanny foresight unveiled again. - B. T.

GABOR SZABO

Mizrab
CTI 6026

Take a couple of originals by Gabor Szabo, blend them smoothly into timid arrangements by Bob James, and stir gently with top professionals who will not make ripples (Szabo, Ron Carter, Billy Cobham, Jack DeJohnette). Rotate for about twenty minutes. Flip it over, sprinkle in Hubert Laws and a handful of strings, and begin rotating again. Fold in pop tunes by Seals & Croft and Carole King, separating them with a dash of Shostakovich (Concerto #2) for class. Withhold all spices, and do not even think of garlic. This CTI casserole serves any number of guests at a cocktail party, and will also make an attractive hum in shopping malls or in crowded elevators. - J. C.

ELMER SNOWDEN

IAJRC 12

Readers familiar with records produced by the International Association of Jazz Record Collectors will know what to expect: music illuminating some half-forgotten, shadowy corner of jazz; material rarely, if ever, available on Lp; and performances good enough to be deserving of reissue. This Lp, which hangs together on the somewhat loose thread of including veteran banjoist Elmer Snowden (who died May 14, 1973 at age 72) on each track, though he rarely solos, is right up to the IAJRC's standards.

The styles present run from trios to early big bands. All of the material is from 1924-34, except for three tracks from a 1963 broadcast of a trio made up of Snowden, Pops Foster, and Darnell Howard, whose rich, liquid clarinet was at the top of its excellent form.

Not everything succeeds. The sound track of a film featuring Snowden's 1932 show band at Small's Paradise is, from a listener's viewpoint, a failure on almost every score, but in keeping with IAJRC's policy of offering material for collectors, the track probably deserves inclusion because it contains a number of well-known jazzmen (Otto Hardwicke, Roy Eldridge, Sid Catlett, and others) and has almost certainly never previously been issued on record. But most of the tracks are quite good, with Booker's Dixie Jazz Band (1924) offering a tight, hot little group, and the Musical Stevedores and Jasper Davis (both 1929) bands turning out some strutting, two-beat, early big-band jazz.

IAJRC Lps are admittedly somewhat specialized - perhaps not for everyone and perhaps not the place to start your collection. But they're put together by men who know their jazz, and in this case, they've hit their target just about dead center. - T. W.

GUNTHER SCHULLER

The Red Back Book of Rags
Angel S-36060

This thoroughly successful Lp presents Gunther Schuller conducting the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble, a twelve-piece orchestra comprised of students at the New England Conservatory, in a program of eight Scott Joplin compositions using the arrangements from the famed "Red Back Book" of rags. This book was a collection of fifteen stock arrangements of ragtime numbers published by John Stark during the ragtime years; though a few attempts have been made to record the arrangements recently, they have, until now, been made by jazzmen who seemed unable to handle the arrangements in a properly "legitimate" way.

By contrast, the NECRE musicians hit every note dead centre, handle parallel voicings with precision, and generally breathe life into these arrangements in a way that clearly demonstrates why ragtime took such a quick and firm hold on popular music after the turn of the century. The brisk tempos and sudden changes in volume are handled with ease, bringing out the richness of the compositions and their irresistible rhythmic pulse.

Along the way, you'll move from a full-fledged string quartet, in the trio of Crysanthemum, to the sliding trombone figures in the closing strains of Sunflower Slow Drag. My own favorite is the full-length version of The Ragtime Dance, Joplin's first extended ragtime composition, filled with little surprises and good humour, and indicating the directions in which a composer of Joplin's skill could take ragtime. For variety and comparison purposes, the Lp is filled out by the piano solo versions of two of the band numbers.

A great job all around. If you don't like this, I doubt that you really understand what ragtime is all about. - T. W.

EDDIE TAYLOR

I Feel So Bad
Advent 2802

For many years now Eddie Taylor has been well known as an accompanist to Jimmy Reed, as well as having played with many other Chicago greats. Here, with sidemen Phillip Walker, David Ii, George Smith, Jimmy Jones, Chuck Jones, Johnny Tucker, and Little Williams, we have him playing his blues in a sympathetically and well recorded album.

He finger picks his guitar, which makes for a more traditional sound than some of the other Chicago bluesmen, but I find that this adds rather than detracts from the album's merits. The sidemen are all together too, so this makes for a cohesive, full sound, rather than one which depends solely on electricity and volume for its excitement.

He sings in a full, rich voice, and his interpretations are without exception first rate. I especially liked Stroll Out West and Bullcow Blues, both of which are outstanding. A first rate Lp in all respects. - R. M.

CLIFFORD THORNTON

Communications Network
Third World LP-12272

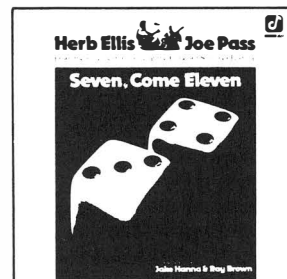
There are two artists who define - by virtue of their complete authority within the tradition - what and where the jazz trumpet of the 1970s is. One is Lester Bowie, who neatly sums up the heritage of the horn whenever he picks his up. The other is Clifford Thornton, whose music lives the ghetto now. In effect, Thornton has taken up the trumpet where Don Cherry left off on his footloose wanderings into various cultures, and since the mid-1960s has been building the instrument's expression from there.

Communications Network, side A of this album, could hardly be titled more aptly. Thornton's plaintive cry is immediately communicative and evocative. The composition is an intricate net in two parts - one kinetic, one meditative - linking the cornetist's mother wit and philosophic bent with the Oriental sagacity of Lakshinarayana Shankar's violin. "Network" is a quintet composition, built around Shankar's sonic science over Thornton's sensitive electric piano, with support from Sirone (bass) and Jerome Cooper (drums). In the middle of it all, Thornton's cornet (overdubbed, I assume) extends through and around, commenting, interrelating, interacting, and elevating. The music achieves a plane of expression that transcends the initial cultural divisions of the artists; Shankar and Thornton lie equally and broadly between East and West. Sirone (Norris Jones, for those who insist on slave names) has a full, rich, woody sound, and gives the ensemble powerful rooting and tremendous depth.

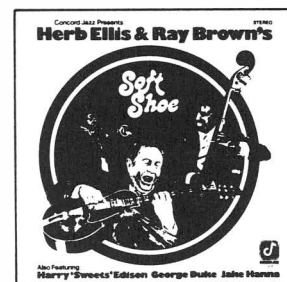
The extended Festival And Funerals is a tower of strength for ghetto poetess Jayne Cortez, whose dramatic reading of her cry for day-to-day survival reflects a wonderful understanding of the forms of Black music - riff, call-and-response, intonation and rhythm play - with never less than a maximum of the conviction that comes from knowing her subject intimately. She swings, she knows and speaks the blues, as much as the musicians who surround her. Her voice rides the top of a bubbling, swirling ensemble of colours. Her lines are perfectly formed like the choruses of a horn, her timing superior; and all the music is subservient to her. Which is as it should be. The musicians individually and collectively command a broad sweep of hue; but while individuals may draw momentary notice, the basic experience is Ms. Cortez, the ensemble sound a revealing secondary attribute. Jay Hoggard (vibraphone), Andy Gonzales (bass), and the three percussionists -



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Jerry Gonzales, Vincent George, and Nicky Marrero - are names to conjure for the future. Nathan Davis (soprano), far afield from his usual bebopping realms and the more germane a voice for it, and Thornton are people you should have known about already.

Festivals and Funerals is a concert recording, and the sound quality carries all the usual minor sins - a difficult echo on Ms. Cortez' voice, and some ringing distortion of the horns; but given the strength of the experience, that's hardly worth fussing about. This is vivid, alive, free music. - B. T.

(available from New Music Distribution Service, 6 West 95th Street, New York, New York 10024, U.S.A.)

TAILGATE RAMBLERS

Swing
Jazzology J-43

Dixieland calisthenics from Detroit by musicians whose understanding of jazz music is minimal. There is brashness, exuberance and enthusiasm - but feeling, musicality and imagination are sadly lacking. The Roaring Twenties in all its giddy glitter is the inspiration for this music which is so entirely predictable - right down to the tunes and the arrangements.

It is now more than thirty years since Lu Watters began an evangelical movement which has got weaker and weaker with every year. It has made it possible for musicians with the minimum of technique and musical know-how to perform in public. While there is nothing particularly wrong with this (after all the same charges can be made at polka bands, country and western groups and rock bands) in principle it becomes a nuisance when this music is mistaken for jazz - for the same music which was created by such people as Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton and Johnny Dodds. That's where the line has to be drawn and the music on this record is only of value to those people in Detroit who use the band as a means of escaping the realities of their own lives.

The music on this record is interchangeable with hundreds of others in the same genre. - J. W. N.

TERRITORY BANDS

Tax m-8009

Here are eight bands that never made it to the big time, no particular disgrace in a time when hundreds of bands were reaching for the top and the competition was tough.

By and large, success seemed to come to bands that offered something different. Goodman and Shaw were brilliant instrumentalists and stylists that caught the public's ear. Jan Savitt has his shuffle beat. Glenn Miller built his reed section around the clarinet. Basie had Pres and

a rhythm section that never touched the ground. Hal Kemp had those stuttering trumpets, and so on.

These were the bands that offered nothing new. They were the followers who never quite got ahead of their public. Working out of New York, Chicago, Birmingham, Hot Springs, San Antonio and Los Angeles, they represent together some of the best and worst characteristics of the swing era, but almost always second hand.

Having said all this, let me point out that some very considerable work has been done by followers from St. Peter to the present. Perhaps too much weight is given to originality in measuring the worth of a musical performance or a band. The fact is that some of the selections on this collection just sound good, period. They do nothing new, but they do it well.

There is Bob Pope and his Orchestra (Birmingham), for example. His Dreamboat Comes Home is so utterly simple and unaffected yet completely mellow that it should win over anybody with a taste for Fletcher Henderson at his most elementary. There are three choruses - the first with reed section lead and soft brass counterpoint, the second with brass lead and a gently undulating reed counterpoint, and the third brass and reeds together. There are no solos. A second Pope track, Always, is strongly imitative of Benny Goodman's band of that time (1937), but the clarinet and trumpet solos lack the polish of the original.

On the funkier side is the Carolina Cotton Pickers Orchestra, a local black orchestra from Birmingham. Off And On Blues has a gutty vocal by Ottis Walker, and the youthful trumpet of William "Cat" Anderson (1937) can be heard on top of the trumpet ensemble riff near the end. Deed I Do pokes fun at the mooring sax of the more excessive sweet bands, but contains a fine 16 bars from Cliff Smalls on piano, who went on to play with Earl Hines.

There are two lively sides by a band led by Blanche Calloway (1935). Line-a-jive, particularly, is a first class swing chart with playing of the highest order. A glance at the personnel reveals Eli Robinson and Vic Dickenson on trombones, Chauncey Haughton and Joe Eldridge and Prince Robinson on saxes, and Clyde Hart on piano. Hart also wrote the arrangement.

A Hot Springs, Arkansas, group called the Yellow Jackets offers two unpretentious tracks which permit nothing to get in the way of a genuinely swinging momentum. Tenor solos by Bill Pate add the right touch. A group led by Bobby Gordon gets off a cute novelty number and then sails into Loveless Love at top speed with a leathery solo by an unknown trombone. The performance has its moments but seems a bit over arranged to really soar. It's fun, nevertheless, for its time (1935).

Two other 1935 pieces out of San Antonio by unknown personnel are rather insignificant except for a singing though nameless alto. The St. Louis Cracker-

jacks contribute one nice chart that is effective once a rather unpleasant vocalist has done her trick. The only group that is totally without value is the Club Plantation band, whose falsetto vocalist is recommended only to Tiny Tim fans.

On the whole, this is a modest amount of deadwood to endure, considering the generally high level of big band swing that has been concentrated into this collection. These groups never made the big time, living out their days in the local musical frontiers of depression America. But don't take that as a measure of their musical value. This record holds many delightful surprises. - J. McD.

MC COY TYNER

Extensions
Blue Note BNLA 006F
Song For My Lady
Milestone 9044

McCoy Tyner has always been a giant, but lately there's no stopping him. He'd signed up with Milestone, released the award-winning Sahara, and followed it up with two more albums. In the meantime, Blue Note, a company Tyner left because they refused to release his sessions, has gotten wise and put out a long-in-the-can super session.

Although Tyner has been accepted as a piano genius because of his work with Coltrane, not that many of his fans have followed him up since that group disbanded. A shame. Tyner has made good albums consistently, and has broadened the piano conception he put together with Trane just as Elvin Jones has broadened the percussion style, that along with Tyner, used to make Trane's music sound like smooth air wafting down from heaven.

The new Tyner group (Sonny Fortune, Alphonze Mouzon, and Calvin Hill) that recorded "Sahara" and the new "Song For My Lady" is, in the final analysis, a damn good group. It's a working band, and despite any flaws can build up a wall of sound that would scare any rock group right off the face of the earth.

That, of course, is the most important thing about Tyner. He's remained pretty much where Coltrane left him in the mid '60s, ignoring whatever might pass for innovations these days. He hasn't dabbled in electronics or brought electric guitars into his groups. Not that there's anything wrong with all that - it's just that Tyner, in choosing to keep his music in the pure state he found it in, has grown spiritually in a way most people couldn't even understand. That made "Sahara" such a beautiful album, because it was like suddenly hearing Coltrane again, alive and as beautiful as ever in the middle of 1972, a gloomy, grimy year if there ever was one.

"Song For My Lady", although not as shockingly great as "Sahara", has enough good stuff to stay around a long time. The quartet rips open The Night Has A Thousand Eyes, and dig Tyner's left hand - what the hell is he doing, anyway? Fortune is there on alto sax, his best

horn, and Mouzon and Hill really churn.

Charles Tolliver, Michael White, and Mtume are added for Essence and Native Song, with mixed results. Essence is terrific, with a burning Tolliver solo and White's dreamy violin floating above Tyner's piano. Native Song bogs down because of Fortune's flute, which just isn't his instrument. White occasionally sounds alienated here as well.

The quartet is back for the title cut, a lovely serenade that, with a typical Tyner turn of phrase, becomes ferocious and then settles back into warmth. Tyner also plays an unaccompanied piece. What can I say? He plays extraordinary piano.

"Extensions", matching Tyner up with Wayne Shorter, Gary Bartz, Alice Coltrane, Ron Carter and Elvin Jones, is anything but a mismatched super-star drama. Tyner's link with Mrs. Coltrane and Jones is obvious, and at the time this was recorded everyone else was working with Tyner fairly regularly. Bartz and Shorter were meeting each other mid-stream, so to speak, as Shorter had just left Miles and Bartz was on his way into the band.

The music consists of simple head arrangements for modal blowing - and there is lots of great blowing. Alice Coltrane's harp is a surprisingly natural mate for Tyner, and the sax work, with Shorter handling tenor and soprano and Bartz sticking to alto, is out of this world. Survival Blues, a gassy, laughing line, is really together. Throughout, the playing is relaxed, with neither the frantic exploration of the Coltrane days or the soaring ferocity of today. Captivating music all the same.

As I wrapped up this review a new Tyner came in, and from just one listen, it seems to be a bitch. It's called "Song Of The New World" (Milestone 9049), and it's Tyner with a big band, and on two cuts, strings. All arrangements are by Tyner, and guess what - it's not the usual CTI-type glossy jive. There's a version of Afro-Blue that goes right off into outer space; comparing this version and the old one, as well as the new Night Has A Thousand Eyes, and the old one on Atlantic shows how Tyner has grown. He continues to say so much in a stream of music too many people insist is dry. It isn't, and won't be as long as McCoy Tyner is still around. - E. C.

Song Of The New World
Milestone MSP 9049

Between the two of them, McCoy Tyner and Alphonze Mouzon would make one hell of a boxer. With Tyner's hands (one of the strongest one-two punches in jazz), Mouzon's flexibility and unpredictable but graceful movement, and the intense energy that flows between them, they could be unbeatable. Heavyweight division, of course.

Essentially a trio album (Tyner, Mouzon and bassist Jooney Booth), "Song Of The New World" introduces Tyner's talent for scoring the large brass and string ensembles which provide the framework

for the solos. The fourth member of Tyner's working quartet at the time (April 1973), saxophonist Sonny Fortune, takes only one solo and is more often partnered with Hubert Laws in the two man reed and woodwind section.

By drawing very clear lines of distinction between the function of the trio and the larger ensemble, Tyner has avoided the trap which has done in so many similar albums. Although his arrangements are seldom more than decorative, sounding less like either a big band or a symphony than a movie score, they are at least interesting and in the case of his writing for brass, quite dynamic. Mongo Santamaria's Afro Blue initially brings to mind the earlier "Sahara" in its random use of percussion and flutes but a brief bash by Mouzon brings on the full and thrilling brass section (from tuba on up). With Sonny Fortune cutting through the interweave of trumpets and lower brass on soprano sax (in perhaps a tip of the arranger's pen to John Coltrane, with whom he played Afro Blue so often), the score seems to update the sound of the old New Orleans marching bands. And the echoes persist in the great rollicking shout-up which concludes Tyner's own Little Brother. However, his writing for strings (on The Divine Love and Song Of The New World) is not nearly as ambitious or evocative, staying fairly close to the lines that Fortune would presumably play alone in live performance.

Although they may come from the same inspiration, Tyner has kept his writing and playing separate. The focus is clearly on the trio. Mouzon and Booth are very much to the fore and the drummer is especially adept at stealing Tyner's thunder (and thunder it is, not all of it sweet). Of course, it is the persuasive rhythms of Tyner's left hand which free Mouzon to play as he does. And if anything, Tyner's playing has grown even more tempestuous. He can still be the wistful romantic, as Some Day reveals. But those racing right hand lines, ever verging towards dissonant tone clusters and arhythmic patterns, together with that stalking left hand whips the keyboard into the eye of a proverbial hurricane. It's a heady mixture, with Tyner playing at the emotions and Mouzon playing for the feet. They make quite a team, the two of them. - M. M.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

THE EARLY YEARS, 1928-1938
Louisiana Cajun Music, Volume 5
Old Timey 114

Yet another volume in the Cajun series. Mr. Strachwitz is to be commended for making this rare music available, especially since it would seem to appeal to a rather limited number of collectors. The music is an acquired taste to non-Cajuns. Many people were first exposed to it via the Harry Smith Anthologies on Folkways; others through Blues Unlimited

interest starting several years ago.

In any case, for many of us who do like it, it serves as sort of an escape from reality - all these strange singers, weird sounds, incomprehensible French patois. My wife (she's the objective listener) says that the nasal vocal quality makes the performers sound as if they are sick; and often the accordions sound as if the tape were being played in reverse. To me, there is just the luxuriance of listening to fresh, unusual music without trying to pick out different performing techniques - the pure listener's enjoyment.

Students of American music, Cajun fans, and others with a taste for it will find this a very important release. For those who haven't heard Cajun music before, this record is a good place to begin, since it contains cuts which would have been on Volume 1 of this series had they been available then, such as the first (1928) recorded version of Jole Blonde, perhaps the best known Cajun piece. All selections are carefully remastered, with translations where appropriate. A fitting capstone to the series, and fully recommended to fans of the genre. - R.M.

BUNNY BERIGAN
Jazz Archives JA-11

SAM DONAHUE
Jazz Society AA 507

CHARLIE BARNET
Joyce LP-1001

THE 1930's VOLUME 1
Aircheck 1

THE HOTEL ORCHESTRA
Good Noise GN 5003

The Berigan album contains a selection of airchecks from 1938-39, apart from three titles with a pick-up group from October 1936. Pianist-arranger Joe Lipman told me that Bunny's commercial recordings often didn't represent the band at its best and, from the evidence of these airchecks, he could be right. The band swings hard, with some scorching solos on tenor by Georgie Auld, fluent reedy clarinet by Joe Dixon, on the earlier sides and Gus Bivona on the 1939 tracks. There are interesting contributions from Ray Conniff on trombone and the two Joes - Lipman and Bushkin - on piano, but, of course, the main attraction is Bunny, himself. He solos on every track with enormous authority, fierce swing and freshness of ideas. Martin Kite's sleeve notes are informative for those unfamiliar with the Berigan story; recording dates are given but, unfortunately, personnel are omitted. Jazz Archives have done a good job on the reproduction and the album is another excellent addition to their very promising series.

My good friend Sam Donahue died last March and the Jazz Society album comes as a timely reminder of his skill as a leader, arranger and tenor saxist. This is the US Navy band which Artie Shaw led

in 1943-44 and which was taken over by Sam Donahue after Shaw's discharge. The band played all over Europe during World War II and broadcast regularly on AFN and BBC. Inevitably, comparisons were made with Glenn Miller's Army Air Force band and, although it may have lacked some of the versatility of the Miller band, it undoubtedly swung much more. The titles on this album were recorded in 1945 after the band returned to the U.S. The trumpet section was outstanding, led by the incomparable Conrad Gozzo and including Frank Beach, Don Jacoby and Johnny Best, the principal soloist. Trombone solos were shared between Dick LeFave, who did most of the 'sweet' and Tak Takvorian, who handled the 'hot'. Ralph LaPolla played the occasional clarinet solos and, of course, all the tenor sax solos were performed by the leader. Ten titles on this album are duplicated on Halcyon HEP 2.

The Barnet album consists of a 'One Night Stand' broadcast from the Casino Gardens in Ocean Park, California, on January 27, 1946 and is produced by the indefatigable Charles Garrod. Charlie Barnet always had a good band and this one is no exception, including Peanuts Holland and Al Killian in the trumpet section, Tommy Pederson's beautiful trombone and Barney Kessel on guitar. About the programme, I'm not so enthusiastic. True, it includes, as expected, a healthy slice of Ellingtonia - C Jam Blues, Take The A Train, The Sergeant Was Shy - but I could have done without the gloomy vocals of Phil Barton. Perhaps next time Charles, you could leave out the vocals and use the instrumentals from two different dates? Reproduction is acceptable, personnel is listed, but no sleeve notes.

The 1930's album is noteworthy firstly, because it contains two Benny Goodman titles not included in BGON THE RECORD and, secondly, because it also contains the only recording, as far as I know, of Artie Shaw's Interlude In B Flat, which started him on his career as a bandleader. In addition, side 1 contains airchecks by Tommy Dorsey, Stuff Smith and Cab Calloway, none of which is very distinguished. Side 2 is devoted to excerpts from Paul Whiteman's 8th Experiment in Modern Music concert at Carnegie Hall on December 25, 1938. Track one features Artie Shaw soloing on The Blues, arranged by Irving Szathmay, which turns out to be a montage of snatches from his Blues, recorded a year earlier, St. Louis Blues and large chunks of Shavian cliches and scalar flourishes, which later developed into Concerto For Clarinet. Track 2 has Louis Armstrong singing Shadrack and Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen with the Lynn Murray singers and not a peep from Satchmo's horn. Reproduction is good, broadcast dates are given, but there are no sleeve notes nor personnels.

I really don't know what to say about The Hotel Orchestra. This is a recently recorded album of old warhorses like Tuxedo Junction, South Rampart St.

Parade, In The Mood, Song Of India - all carbon-copies of the originals (Tuxedo even has Marvin Stamm recreating Corky Cornelius' trumpet solo on the Gene Krupa record, note for note!) - together with a couple of pieces by pianist John Lissauer. Phox Trot or Fox Trott - it's called one on the label and the other on the sleeve - ought to belong to the soundtrack for The Great Gatsby! I really don't know what to say about this album, except: Who needs it? - I.C.

Hot Dance Obscurities 1926-1930 Jazz Studies JS-1

For Canadian collectors, the cover of this LP is a real eye-catcher. It reproduces the labels of the 16 titles included on the disc, and all are in that familiar navy blue and gold propagated so prolifically by the Compo Company of Lachine, Quebec. They include Apex, Domino, Crown, Microphone, Lucky Strike, and Sterling ("Good As Gold") which were just a few from Compo's Canadian output - they also issued Canadian Gennetts.

Back in the early fifties, I was writing about this company's machinations in the record field and I was haunting the junk-stores looking at (and occasionally buying) records such as these reissued on this LP. Who knew then that such pseudonyms as the Imperial Dance Orchestra and The Midnight Serenaders featured Red Nichols? Or that Matty Crawford's Orchestra included the Dorsey Brothers? Or that nestled in the personnel of The Ten Blackbirds were Mannie Klein, Bob Effros, Tommy Dorsey, and Tony Parenti? These are some of the groups that are featured on this fine disc - others are Goldie's Syncopaters (Deep River Orchestra - Willard Robison), The Blue Ramblers (Original Indiana Five), Palm Beach Serenaders (Harry Reser), Clarence Sherman's Orchestra (Billy James), The Arcadians (Sam Lanin), The Pierrot Syncopaters, and many more.

Remember, this is hot dance stuff so that along with the interesting solo work you have to put up with the inevitable corny "Vocal Chorus", so they are not exactly jazz records. Full discographical data (where known) and all titles and recording dates are given on the sleeve by Ross Wilby, whose labour of love produced this LP. What will make this disc so interesting to Canadian collectors particularly is that some of these old Compo labels (pictured on the sleeve) can still be found in the second-hand or "antique" shops - just look for that brown wax and/or those tell-tale navy blue and gold labels. Tell the man Ross Wilby and John Nelson sent you - but get a copy of this limited pressing first.

From a production point of view, this LP is a hundred per cent Canadian content, as were the original Canadian pressings. The musical content, however, is strictly import as all sixteen titles were drawn from Plaza and Pathe. To its credit, Compo sometimes issued different takes, and "usually, but not

always, Apex used the correct artist credits. The other labels, made for various stores, normally used pseudonyms....sometimes the same one was used several times for the same artist, sometimes the same one was used for different artists, and sometimes different pseudonyms were used for one artist" - to quote from the liner notes. (Can we go over that again, slowly?). The original records evidently were made to sell at rock-bottom prices and therefore cheap, inferior materials were often used. In spite of this, Ross Wilby has done a remarkable job of transfer without any heavy filtering or artificial echo. I hope he will continue his efforts in this field - you can support him by buying a copy of this LP now. It is available from CODA for \$5.66 postpaid. - J. R. N.

Jazz In Black And White RCA (F) JPGH 004

This is volume 79 in a long series of reissues on the French RCA label. As a sampler, it is about 79 volumes too late and obviously should have been released years ago to introduce their excellent series. I am sure that any serious collector knows about Mr. RCA of France, Jean-Paul Guiter, but if you have just returned from darkest Africa and are not aware of what French RCA are doing in their reissue program then you should grab this sampler (at a special low price) and get with it. All the titles have appeared on LPs devoted to each particular artist and there is a four page catalogue in the album listing all the goodies available. For example, there have been six Benny Goodman LPs, five by Lionel Hampton, seven by Jelly-Roll Morton, issued so far in this Black And White series. By the time you read this, many more will undoubtedly have been released. This sampler (it would make a good gift for your Aunt Harriet to explain what jazz is all about) contains these titles: St. Louis Blues (Armstrong, 1933), The Chant (Morton), San (Whiteman/Bix), Handful Of Keys (Waller solo), Sweetie Dear (Bechet), I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music (Goodman - Gene Krupa's Swing Band), Piano Man (Hines), John Hardy's Wife (Duke), Body And Soul (Hawkins), Jivin' With Jarvis (Hampton), Hey Pretty Baby (Basie), Good Bait (Gillespie), Victory Ball (Metronome All Stars - take 1), Coltrane (Stephane Grappelli). Like every single RCA Black And White LP, the sleeve includes complete discographical data and liner notes in both French and English. And Bonjour to you too. - J. R. N.

STEEL GUITAR CLASSICS Old Timey LP 113

Although this LP will appeal most strongly to pre-war hillbilly collectors, it should be strongly considered by those interested in bottleneck styles in particular and guitar in general. Fourteen classics are presented, each one beautifully re-

mastered, for a comprehensive view of the history of this style.

My favorite is Tomi, Tomi by Kanui and Lula, a pair of Hawaiians who apparently recorded in Australia. Several other songs on the album are related to this one, and all are well worth a listen. Also included are three by Jimmy Tarlton, a couple each by Cliff Carlisle and Roy Acuff, and three strange, unusual offerings by Jimmie Davis, the sometimes governor of Louisiana.

This is a valuable, musically interesting and listenable Lp, well worth acquiring if you can afford the luxury of experimenting outside of narrow musical categories.

- R. M.

PACKIN' UP MY BLUES Muskadine 102

Country blues continued its hold on the imagination of the Southern artists after the more or less arbitrary cut-off date of 1942, but this fact is often hidden by the recording policies of commercial companies. Indeed, little was recorded in this vein until the late '40's and early '50's, when most of the cuts on this album were made. Even so, the rough exuberance of the music did not propel it into instant hit status, so it is indeed worth while to have collected here 16 fine cuts from this period, as collectors who have tried to find the originals can readily testify.

The star of side one is Stick Horse Hammond, with 4 credits. Recording in Shreveport around 1950, he growls and sings in a manner reminiscent of Tommy McClennan. In fact, all of side one could easily have been recorded in the late '30's, and for me this side alone is worth the price of the album.

Side two continues in the same vein, with Levi Seabury, Sunny Blair, Drifting Slim, and The Confiners, a Mississippi State Prison group. These are all group efforts, with a more contemporary lineup of instruments, but still with the country feeling. It all adds up to a very good LP indeed, perhaps most like Blues Classics 15 (Memphis and the Delta) of the LP's already issued. It is well worth adding to your collection if you are a country blues fan. - R. M.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN Muskadine 100

An anthology of Chicago blues in its classic post war period (1947-1954), this LP hangs together as a fine compilation of some of the toughest music to have been recorded at that time. Side one basically features Little Walter, and other artists include Floyd Jones, Johnny Shines, John Brim, and J.B. Hutto and his Hawks.

Taken from rare originals, the remastering is very good, and the excitement and sound in the grooves is even better. Surely by now everyone has some idea of the sound of post war Chicago, if not directly then through the

effects it has had on succeeding music and musicians. If you do, rest assured that this is a compilation of cream from the top of the many remarkable and great songs that were recorded. If you don't know through some mischance, this is one of the best ways to find out. - R.M.

The Complete 1971 Pasadena Jazz Party Blue Angel 510/511

The favorable impressions of an exciting jazz event don't always last when they are listened to clinically at a later date on tape or disc. The particular mood of the occasion can obscure less than satisfactory musical endeavours. Fortunately, in the case of this particular Blue Angel Jazz Club Party, the music is enhanced by its preservation on disc.

The two-lp package is a cross section of all the music which took place over a twelve hour period in November 1971. Much of it I had forgotten or failed to hear properly in the first place so it is a pleasurable surprise to discover how well Red Norvo played on that occasion as well as finding that Marvin Ash's contributions (Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now, Tishomingo Blues) are of a high enough calibre to sit comfortably beside the efforts of the other musicians.

This 1971 party was something of a watershed for Dr. MacPherson. He finally allowed the music to outgrow the Bob Crosby-era musicians who now make a comfortable living in the Hollywood studio world. Not that his previous parties lacked for good music (you should check them out at the time you order this package) but when you are in the presence of Harry Edison, Herb Ellis, Clark Terry, Sonny Criss and Jimmy Rowles you know that the music is going to take on a different texture. In actuality all these musicians fit comfortably within the principal esthetic ideal established for these occasions - to allow first rate musicians to play without restrictions in settings which are compatible but not necessarily familiar. There's a marvelous version of The Theme by Terry and Criss which should have inspired someone to get them together for a whole lp. Their interaction (on trumpet and soprano sax) is lightning fast and sure-footed. In fact, these performances capture a remarkably resilient Clark Terry in something approaching his best form. Like Harry Edison, he can resort to his own trademarks too often. Fortunately neither trumpeter had to resort to this in their performances preserved here.

Flip Phillips, who was the star of the previous year's party (Blue Angel 507/508) comes through magnificently with a remarkable ballad version of Nuages as well as igniting the jazz flame in vocalist Lou Norris' Don't Take Your Love From Me. Joe Williams, another unannounced guest, runs handily through the blues in Rocks In My Bed with strong support from Edison, Criss, Ellis and Rowles.

One of the keys to the success of this session is the coherence of the rhythm

sections. Pianists Jimmy Rowles and Russ Tompkins (listen particularly to his solo rendition of Emily), bassists Monk Montgomery and Monty Budwig, and drummers Jake Hanna, Johnny Guerin and Donald Bailey provide flowing continuity which constantly provides the compatible ground on which the various soloists can function with elan.

Finally, there is trombonist Carl Fontana's astonishing solo on Limehouse Blues, at the end of the day when everyone was all but through. Fortunately Dr. MacPherson had the sense to include it - despite its insecure framework.

Recordings such as this capture the essence of jazz music so surely that it is a shame they are often so difficult to find. Irrespective of style, this set is so much better than those carefully planned productions which the major companies persist in leaving with us. The best way to get this set is to send \$12.00 to The Blue Angel Jazz Club, 2089 Pinecrest Drive, Altadena, California 91001. Perhaps it will encourage the good doctor to take another look through his tapes and release some more gems from these sessions. - J.W.N.

The Blues: A Real Summit Meeting Buddah 5144-2

The written consensus of the jazz press was that the blues concert at the 1973 Newport in New York Jazz Festival was one of the high spots. Listening to this recording makes it easy to understand why the writers felt that way. This two-lp set contains some of the highlights by Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Big Mama Thornton, Jay McShann, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Lloyd Glenn and Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup.

There are always discussions regarding the crossover points between jazz and blues music. This set comfortably accommodates both idioms and shows how they are interrelated with each other. Blues fans will react immediately to the presence of Muddy, Big Mama and B.B. King. Their performances, here, are predictable but delivered with all the professional skills they have developed over the years. They bring an intensity and honesty of feeling to their songs which makes them continually real.

The meat of this set is contained in the work of Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Jay McShann, Lloyd Glenn and Gatemouth Brown. Vinson is a volatile alto saxophonist whose work with Cootie Williams' band will always be remembered. Here, he joins Jay McShann's combo (with the remarkable violinist Claude Williams) in some extended workings of his perennial favorites - They Call Me Mr. Cleanhead, Hold It Right There, Back Door Blues and Kidney Stew. Working comfortably with his peers, Vinson sounds relaxed and very much at ease. His instrumental exchanges with both McShann and Williams are an object lesson in the kind of interaction which made Kansas City

(South-Western) swing such a dominant force in jazz music.

McShann's own contributions are good, too. Confessin' The Blues is his interpretation of Walter Brown's version of his own composition. The band is a bit tight and unsettled in Smooth Sailing and the pickup on the violin is a bit strange at this point. (Incidentally, the revelation of Williams' "caloric, idiomatic fiddling" as described by Dan Morgenstern in his notes was anticipated by at least six months on disc through Sackville's "The Man from Muskogee" - but perhaps I'm biased on that score. It does seem that many American writers on jazz are unaware of the many recordings of their musical giants in Europe, Japan and Canada.) McShann is also heard behind the extended blues interpretations of Gatemouth Brown - a singer (and guitarist, violinist and harmonica player) who best exemplifies the onward traditions of Walter Brown, Amos Milburn and Wynonie Harris. He is, of course, a contemporary of these men but somehow failed to reach a wider audience.

Lloyd Glenn's three numbers were superb. His grasp of the fast blues idiom is complete (Honky Tonk Train and Pinetop's Boogie have rarely sounded better since first being recorded) while his version of After Hours ranks with the original Avery Parrish version and Ray Bryant's interpretation with Dizzy, Rollins and Stitt.

A major source of pleasure in this set is the compatibility of the musicians. There wasn't a producer around trying his best to update the music with soul/rock overtones. This was the blues in all its glory - one of the best moments captured on disc in many years.

- J.W.N.

PHILLIP WALKER

The Bottom Of The Top
Playboy PB118

Basically this album is a fine set of modern, however not super hip or over produced, West Coast guitar blues, with Phillip Walker's unique guitar and smooth vocal well in the foreground of a backup group consisting of several saxophones, trumpets, piano, bass and drums. For the sake of variety, Walker has worked solo Texas blues, a little New Orleans R & B and a small touch of C & W into his type of West Coast blues. Do not let such a mixture frighten you off. For Walker is able to blend this mixture into a set which flows smoothly, provides enough variety and at no time do the elements conflict with one another. There is really some outstanding material on this LP, with the emphasis definitely on blues. Seven out of the ten cuts are blues.

The blues content includes the West Coast classic Tin Pan Alley written by Bob Geddins, Lightning Hopkins' Hello Central, Sam Cooke's Laughing And Clowning, Long John Hunter's Crazy Girl and J. Johnson's The Bottom Of The Top. There are also

the uptempo takes of Lester Williams' I Can't Lose (With The Stuff That I Use) and Phillip Walker's own Hey, Hey, Baby's Gone. All are beautiful takes, but Tin Pan Alley, Hello Central and The Bottom Of The Top are possibly the most outstanding. Tin Pan Alley is not simply a copy of Jimmy Wilson's 1953 original. It is an extended version coming in with a beautiful piano solo, featuring relaxed expressive vocal, droning emotive guitar and fading out with an extended sax solo. Hello Central is an electric guitar and vocal solo which borrows a great deal from, but does not copy its composer, Lightning Hopkins. The others feature fine guitar, vocal and appropriate band arrangements.

The retake of Phillip's first recording (1959) Hello My Darling blends New Orleans R & B with a taste of C & W, and comes off well. All In Your Mind has a soulful pop influence while the last cut of the LP, Crying Time, is from Buck Owens. All In Your Mind is relaxed, easy going and should not be too objectionable to blues fans. If you liked Crying Time as recorded by Ray Charles, you should like this one. It has the added feature of Phillip's wife in a vocal duet and Phillip's fine electric guitar work.

All the cuts on the album feature Phillip Walker's vocal and guitar work. It is difficult and possibly meaningless to compare his vocal and guitar work with others, for he is definitely his own man. Generally, if you like the vocal work of Lowell Fulson, you'll appreciate Phillip Walker. His guitar is straightforward, without gimmicks and is used extremely well to create or emphasise a desired mood. At times it is reminiscent of the late Magic Sam, Bee Houston, Buddy Guy, etc.

Although not well known, Phillip Walker has been around for quite awhile. He has worked with Lonesome Sundown and Clifton Chenier, has played throughout the Southwest and is currently working around L.A. He can also be heard on Eddie Taylor's Advent LP and on his own Jolliett 45's.

Hopefully, this well produced and technically sound, high quality LP will establish Phillip Walker as a significant if not major West Coast bluesman and guitarist. No doubt the Playboy Empire will see to it that this LP receives wide distribution.

- D.L.

CEDAR WALTON

A Night At Boomer's, Vol. 1
Muse 5010

Solid is the best word for this live set recorded in Greenwich Village in January 1973. No waves are raised and certainly no dams are busted, but the magic flows from the mainstream where it is deepest.

In short, it is neither more nor less than you might reasonably expect from Clifford Jordan, Cedar Walton, Sam Jones and Louis Hayes playing for a typically inattentive audience three days after New Year's. The audience neither prods them nor impedes them. Left to their devices, they play easily and listen to one another res-

pectfully.

The set includes a couple of ballads (The Highest Mountain, This Guy's In Love With You), a couple of polyrhythmic swingers (Down In Brazil, St. Thomas), and a couple of bop tunes (Cheryl, Holy Land). The surprise is This Guy's In Love, because Walton wrings out its soul when most people wouldn't have guessed it had one. Bird's Cheryl and Rollins' St. Thomas give a good measure of Jordan's maturity and individuality by inviting comparison with the familiar originals. That he holds his ground will only be surprising to listeners who have not had a chance to hear him in the last few years.

Strangely enough, there is very little of this informal night club music on record in proportion to the number of hours of it that disappear into the smoke night after night. Certainly a lot more of it is worth preserving. A Night At Boomer's proves it. There isn't a bad track on the record.

- J.C.

BEN WEBSTER

My Man
Steeplechase SCS1008

Now, seven months after Ben Webster's demise, it's hard to know what more one could write about him. He was always true to himself and to his time. In his later years in Europe, his lines became less complex, but never lost their agility, and their stark, preaching drive always remained. His personality was unique in his music, the sophistication of his ideas subtle and deep. The Ben of the European recordings was more forthright, less ornamented than the man in the classic Ellington reed section; but was certainly no less consistent or rewarding, and - considering the influence he exerted on Archie Shepp and others in recent years - no less germane.

"My Man" was recorded at Club Montmartre, in Copenhagen, in January and April 1973, and as such these six titles (and others from these dates taped but unissued) are part of the final instalment in Webster's legacy. If so, this is the only way to remember him. These were happy sessions, like - say - Jerry Newman's Minton recordings; the power horn, relaxed, in front of a close, spare rhythm base doing everything he needed, impeccably. The titles - five standards and a riff blues - all go back to that era.

One fact that Ben's playing always reflected was his confidence of himself; he always was aware of his identity and surroundings, his reasons for being what he was (if you will), and made sure the musicians sharing the stand with him knew it, too. The rhythm sound is surprisingly (and, next to Webster, anachronistically) boppish, but through repeated encounters the three men knew Webster and his music, and bent admirably to his will. Ole Kock Hansen sounds like many other European pianists (he always churns up the image of Bent Axen behind Eric Dolphy in 1961), playing

with precise and incisive agitation without ever reaching individuality; he certainly does know a lot about Junior Mance, though, and the blue infusion of that style complements the tenorist's very nicely.

Bo Stief's bass sound seems to fill the ensemble from the bottom upward; leader/drummer Alex Riel is a confirmed Kenny Clarke addict. Together, with or without Webster, they work beautifully... but I'm not sure I'd care to listen to a whole album of them alone.

Webster, as always, plays with passion throughout the album. But one title goes well beyond that. Old Folks is an exquisitely deep performance, the kind that even a great artist gets to play only once in his lifetime. He always played his standards with a knowledge of the lyrics directing his lines. This one sounds like he was singing it with himself in mind, almost as though he'd had a premonition of September and was playing his own requiem.

The sound quality of this recording is amazingly good for a live date. That's a minor point. Most of the jazz public forgot about Ben after he left for Europe in the early 1960s; but the music is much the poorer without him, and this album is a more than ample demonstration of why. - B. T.

Ben At His Best
RCA Victor 741.060

This album, recorded in mid-1970, is the most recent on issue to come out of the huge bell of Ben's tenor. Now that Ben Webster is no longer with us, one hopes sincerely that this isn't the last word he left for us - but if it is, it's the best eulogy the man could have wished for.

The spirit of this music is timeless. There's an irrefragable vitality to Webster's playing that spreads throughout the band, a vigour that few younger musicians could match. His drive carries the entire group - like a gentle juggernaut he bounces from idea to idea, always wrapping you in that huge warm bear-hug of a sound of his. He was a natural, heart-felt bluesman, with a feeling for the deep dark centre of jazz that only two other reedmen of prebop generations ever attained; and certainly classing him with Sidney Bechet and Johnny Hodges is no insult. The gusto of his attack, and even the lightening of his vibrato as he gets more and more involved, all attest to his kinship with Hodges.

For this session, Ben is joined by a familiar rhythm section - Cees Slinger (piano), Rob Langereis (bass), and John Engles (drums) - who lay down precisely the hard-swung framework the tenorist's lines demand. The three accompanists have their roots in stylistically a later era than Ben's, but any sort of gap appears only during Langereis' virtuosic solos. In any case, it seems that during his European stay Webster's harmonies were growing considerably more complex, and his phrasings were definitely lighter and more even than they were some years ago; in effect he made the transition with

the times that Don Byas was always trying for, and kept all his former genius intact while doing so. Certainly second tenorist Rudy Brink's close approximation of Dexter Gordon's style, or Herman Schoonderwalt's Bird-tinged alto, sound quite right for the context. Ray Kaart's sputtering Eldridge trumpet isn't heard quite as much.

The feeling of the band is the exuberant small-group swing of any number of late-1940s / early-1950s bands (Coleman Hawkins and James Moody come to mind as being the masters at that time). All charts are by one "Cardonn" unknown to me, and include two jumping originals (Nenny's Little Scheme, Steff's Shoes), and six "traditional" tunes. The two spirituals - Deep River and Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen - are Ben's meat, and his alone; he gives them the breathy body of the whole sanctified congregation. Billy Boy, I'd always thought, was for kids and Red Garland, Greensleeves for Benjamin Britten and John Coltrane. Webster's play with Billy Boy is a masterful musical belly-laugh (which is, after all, the way it's meant); and in his own way (dig the way he fragments and rebuilds time) he produces a Greensleeves at least as definitive as the others.

Ben Webster passed on a few months ago. This album is called "Ben At His Best" - and among all his recordings of the 1960s and early 1970s, that's precisely what it is. If some catastrophe were suddenly to obliterate all his Ellington and Fletcher Henderson sides, all his quartets with Tatum, all his Verves with Hawkins, and left only this album, he'd still be recognized as a great tenor. That's one hell of a memorial. - B. T.

VIOLA WELLS

Saydisc Matchbox SDM 227

Eleven recently recorded vocals by Viola "Miss Rhapsody" Wells, who sang in theaters and clubs on the East Coast from the late twenties through the mid-forties before retiring from show business. Since that time, the bulk of her singing has been in church, and five of the tracks are hymns with accompaniment by Mrs. Grace Gregory, the church pianist; the remaining six are jazz tunes with accompaniment by pianist Jay Cole, bass, guitar and drums.

Miss Wells is obviously a professional, with clear enunciation and a direct, uncluttered delivery. Her voice is still reasonably full-bodied, and what it has lost in timbre over the years is generally made up for in interpretation. Her jazz style is that of the thirties - light, easy-going vocals over rhythm that sticks to basic, unobtrusive time-keeping; both pianists show the beneficial effects of long association with Miss Wells, turning in simple but forceful background work.

All tunes were made at the same session, and while the order is not given, I wonder whether the performers ran out of gas at some point. In any event, all five tracks

matrix

incorporating THE DISCOPHILE

It may be that you are interested enough in your jazz records to want to know who plays on them and when they were recorded. You may already own the standard jazz discographies but still need to know that bit more. MATRIX is the magazine designed to fill that need. Issue 102/3 contains the first part of a listing of the Egmont AJS series which was taken from the Charlie Parker Record label, it has an article by Bert Wyatt on discographical techniques, many pages of limited edition jazz lps and there is another instalment of the discography of Gene Austin. A Billie Holiday series resumes with the next issue.

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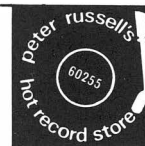
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on side one are better than any on side two. In particular, Down Hearted Blues is funky and blue, Brown Gal (a fine tune) has a nice build to it, and In The Garden, with its rolling piano work against the slower melody line, drips with sincerity and righteousness.

Summing up, some tunes reflect credit on all concerned. On the rest, Miss Wells still does well for a seventy-year-old, showing she knows more about where it's at than many a pair of younger lungs I've heard. Certainly of historical interest, the overall musical results stand up surprisingly well - say, B-minus. - T.W.

DICK WELLSTOOD

Jazzology JCE - 73

Eleven piano solos by a pianist with complete command of the keyboard and a thorough grounding in the two-handed, flashy "Harlem stride" style. If you like traditional jazz piano, you really don't need any more information than that.

Somewhat surprisingly, over half the titles are rags, but heavily laced with more modern ideas and more swing and heat than one might expect to find in ragtime. Nevertheless, Wellstood's complex, almost impressionistic version of Confrey's neglected Poor Buttermilk seems right in keeping with the adventurous spirit of the piece. His sly and humorous reading of Cobb's Russian Rag, with its dazzling top-speed finish, also fits the lighthearted conception of the tune, as does the retarded tempoused to close Joplin's more reflective Fig Leaf Rag. Johnson's Carolina Shout, Waller's Viper's Drag, and Wellstood's Dollar Dance are solidly in the "rent party" ragtime idiom, with plenty of rich right-hand work and a flexible left hand that moves with ease among single-note stride, octave-stride, counter-melodies, boogie rhythm and anything else you'd want.

Filling out the program are a number of tried-and-true jazz tunes, ranging from the piano-like-roll Cheatin' On Me to the soulful Atlanta Blues. Even the one misfire, a far too long and repetitive boogie titled South Amboy Highball, contains some technically difficult passages that provide additional perspective on Wellstood's artistry.

As I've said before in these pages, Dick Wellstood is a monster talent at the piano. A very impressive LP. - T.W.

From Ragtime On
Chiaroscuro 109

In this album of eleven piano solos, Dick Wellstood covers the whole range of jazz piano, with emphasis on the more traditional styles. At one end of the spectrum are four hot-as-hell, stomping, striding renditions of classic rags (Scott Joplin's New Rag, Kitten On The Keys, Pork And Beans, Handful Of Keys). At the other is Fucallia, a somewhat impressionistic, difficult (for me) -to-follow Wellstood composition that closes out with a musical

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quotation so wry in concept that you'll wonder if the whole track isn't a put-on.

In between, there's something for everyone, all of it played crisply, cleanly, and confidently. Ragtimers will be interested in Waller's Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now and Confrey's non-ragtime composition Three Little Oddities. Those of a more modern persuasion will go for Sunday Morning Blues, Hines' Chicago High Life or the Beatles' Yesterday, which have more unusual voicings and fleet, complex right-hand runs. Everyone will dig Put On A Happy Face, which sneaks up on you by opening as a ballad and closing with lightning-fast, searing, Harlem stride piano.

I come away marveling at Wellstood's stupefying left-hand work, striding along at top speed and generating enough rhythm and momentum to flatten you against the wall. But this is only one impressive element of a diverse, imaginative and satisfying program that does Wellstood credit. He demonstrates a grasp of jazz piano in breadth and skill to a point that few contemporary pianists can approach and that all would be proud to claim. First-class. - T. W.

WILLIE WILLIAMS

Raw Unpolluted Soul
Supreme SR 1001

Here is a fine program written and arranged by Mr. Willie Williams, and produced by Mr. Willie Dixon (hmmmm) - some tasteful, some gut-bucket, some instrumental blues. Williams, up from Mississippi, has drummed with Waters and the Wolf in the past, and now he presents a record that is labelled "soul" in an attempt to sell beyond the blues market. I hope he succeeds. With him is an all star group, including Hubert Sumlin on lead (Wolf has held him back, but here

he cuts loose with typical rolling notes), Eddie Taylor on rhythm, a superb Carey Bell on harp, and a weak Pinetop Perkins playing discreet piano (background filler mostly). This disc is to be noted for its fine lack of horns, which may start a nice reverse trend.

The ten tracks lay heavy stress on current themes in the blues and pop music generally. Back To Mississippi is an instrumental short boogie, an intro-warmup like an "IT'S SHOWTIME" opener, swinging right into the slow, down home flavour of Ruthy Baby. The change of pacer is the heavy metal Wine Headed Woman, followed by a delicious 38 Woman after the style of Muddy Waters (complete with assorted voices of encouragement). Blues At Half Past Twelve is the longest selection - five minutes - and reflects that soft, after hours feeling of stoned, laid-back musings. In The Valley is the only really autobiographical item, and Detroit Blues is the only real r'n'b selection. Willie is a good drummer in this latter genre. The best track of all is the last - Hot Pants Woman, with a good vocal and exceptional recording (note the faded back harmonica).

Throughout, there is acceptable sound, but Willie's vocals are underrecorded (problems with muffling the drums?). All that comes through is a very harsh, guttural voice, with the lyrics almost spoken and shouted. Side one of my copy had scratchy surfaces. Yet this is a welcome issue, in view of the heavy hype of Guy-Wells or B.B. King, or anyone else in this style. On the other hand, it is a studio gig that probably won't tour because of its all star nature. Recommended for all Chicago blues enthusiasts, it is available for \$5.00 post paid (\$6.00 international) from Rah-El Productions Co., 1330 E. Hyde Park Blvd., Chicago, Illinois. - D. T.

In 1971, Bill Coleman and Raymond Fonseca's Original Band cut an album for Concert Hall (SJS 1335) which strikes me as one of the finest records I have heard in a long, long time. I go even as far as to say that I can't think of a more exciting trumpet-player than Bill Coleman on today's jazz scene. It is my belief - being honest, I have to state that Bill himself doesn't quite share my opinion, though - that his collaboration with bands of the more classic jazz types has been far more musically rewarding than his associations with, what I call, "mildly modernistic groups". Where this humble writer is concerned the album under review illustrates and confirms....what? Well, listen. Just listen. And then again. And again... (Who am I to argue with Bill? Let the music speak...).

It has often been said that Bill Coleman - although distinctly marked by Louis Armstrong's influence during Bill's formative - (and even a great number of his mature years) - is a real individualist, playing in his own, inimitable, very personal style. (Come, think of it and find out that there are very few trumpet-players to whom this would apply). Contrary to most musicians of his generation, who either did not want or who did not succeed in getting accustomed to "modern" musical devices, Bill fits in well with many such groups. Bill is very adaptable and holds his own in almost any company as long as the performers are musicians. However, it cannot be denied that the adaptability mentioned has almost always led to a certain loss of self-identity. To make myself clear: No matter how well Bill is able to perform in "modern" surroundings, quite a number of his most characteristic traits - exactly the ones that make him the admirable individualist he is and which set him apart from every other trumpeter - get lost. In other words: What we hear is often not quite "the real Bill Coleman". Mind you, there's still a fine trumpet player, but for some of us he simply isn't fully the great musician who was and IS the only one to do full justice to that (HIS OWN) UNIQUE style, known as "the Bill Coleman way of playing".

On this most recent record by Bill and the Raymond Fonseca band you hear "the real Bill Coleman" - but, wait a minute, with a difference: This is not the same man you know from his admirable records in the thirties and early forties. Of course, such a thing would be impossible for a variety of reasons. What we hear today is the same original and highly inventive musician at this PRESENT stage of his rich musical life. Bill Coleman has seen, heard, experienced and lived so incredibly much since he made his above mentioned old records, that he would be an insensitive man, indeed, if all these countless impressions hadn't had an influence on his way of playing. And because Bill just happens to enjoy life, because he is a very alert, always attentive and sensitive person, he has undergone certain changes...but without losing his identity. What comes out in his music is a Bill



Coleman who has developed his personality. HIS personality, I want to stress. (One doesn't create a "Bill Coleman style" over years and years and then drop it and become a second-rate Dizzy Gillespie. That would be a pity, wouldn't it?) In fact, on this extraordinary record it becomes clear that Bill has added to his music. This is why I think that at this very point of his career he succeeds in dishing out even more impressive music today than ever before. On the album "Bill and the Boys" he is in possession of all his most admirable assets. In every respect the man has stayed so fit that one is at a loss to know at what to marvel most: His consistently new, surprising ideas (there are so many that you're bound to miss out on quite a few until you know the record really well), the perfect control over his instrument (every note "sort comme il faut"), his beautiful tone in all registers, the terrific drive and vitality of his playing at all times, his quick musical thinking when he's running through the changes or the contagious excitement which marks every phrase he's playing! An excitement without which jazz can be merely "pleasant" - or "good" at best - but not GREAT. It is needless to point at particular tracks since Bill plays long solos on each of them and he's constantly playing at the top of his form! Well, this is how I feel about Bill's blowing on this great record and if I have sounded like a seventeen year old boy swooning away over his first "hot record"...well, I can't change anything about it. Sorry folks but Bill Coleman is just Too Much!

The supporting Fonseca group is very good (it had to be....otherwise Bill couldn't have wailed the way he did) and the rather unlikely rhythm-section, comprising piano, banjo, bass-saxophone and washboard, performs with a constant rhythmic flow, keeping things swinging all through. Incidentally, the three lastnamed instruments aren't over-recorded as, unfortunately, happens so often. The recording, clear and well-balanced, adds to the listening pleasure. Of the soloists mention must go to Raymond Fonseca himself who takes especially excellent trombone solos on Let Me Dream, I'm Topsy, Travellin' On A Cloud, Bill And The Boys and

Summernight's Dream. Clarinet-player, Jacques Caroff has studied and caught Albert Nicholas' playing to an amazing degree. He has truly fine solos on Travellin' On A Cloud, Memories Of Old Days, Summernight's Dream and To-morrow Is Sunday. Last, but by no means least, there's the band's very talented pianist, Philippe Baudoin whom I especially admire in Tenderly Yours (what perfect timing and beautiful chords!), I'm Topsy, Travellin' On A Cloud, To-morrow Is Sunday, Bill And The Boys and Memories Of Old Days. (And it's a pleasure to know that Marcel Bornstein, who played such excellent trumpet with Albert Nicholas in 1953 on Vogue, is still around).

The compositions are all by Raymond Fonseca and Bill Coleman and all of them have good melody and/or rich chords, allowing inspired improvising by Bill and the Boys!

Oh yes, I wrote all this because Messrs. Coleman and Fonseca want it to be universally known that the title of the first number on the record is Tenderly Yours and not just Tenderly as marked on the sleeve. Consequently, all royalties from people having a blow at Tenderly Yours should go to the bank account of Messrs. Coleman and Fonseca, in Paris, France and not to Messrs. Gross and Lawrence in New York, N.Y. USA. Thank you for taking good note.

Also recommended are:

Bill Coleman, "Accompanied by Raymond Fonseca's Original Jazz Band" (National 16,169)

Bill Coleman with Lino Patruno and his Friends from Milan (Durium A 77313)

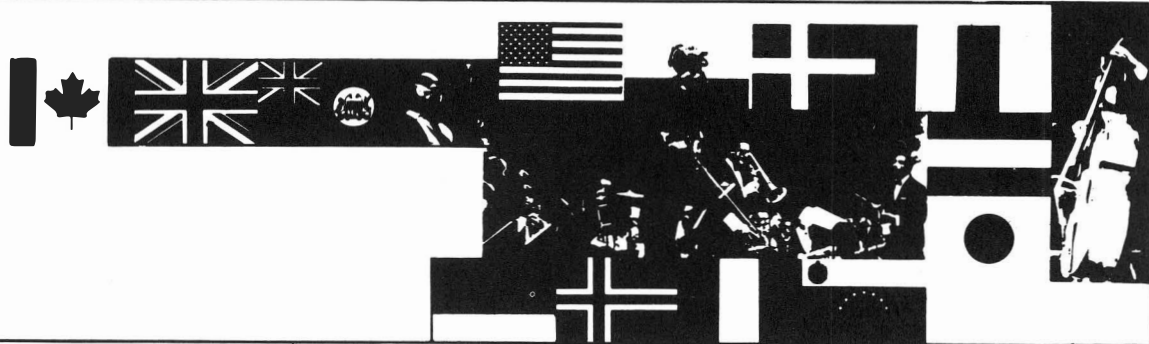
Bill Coleman and Ben Webster, Swinging In London, Black Lion BLP 30.127

Bill Coleman and Guy Lafitte, 'Mainstream at Montreux', Black Lion, BLP 30.150

On December 3 and 4, 1973, Bill joined forces with Stephane Grappelli, for MUSIDISC - something the two artists wished to do for many years! Finally, I've just finished reading the manuscript of Bill's autobiography, "From Paris to Paris" which will go down in history as one of the essential books about jazz!

- Johnny Simmen

around the world



TORONTO

After many months of near misses, it was finally possible to make the scene at the Sapphire Tavern where Jim Galloway musically directs an open-ended jazz policy. The music functions under the benevolent auspices of Paul Rimstead, a journalist who admits he isn't the greatest drummer in the world. Completing the regular lineup are bassist Dan Matri and pianist Ron Sorley. One of the reasons for the continuing success of the room is its informality, its encouragement of that old-fashioned tradition - the sitting-in of visiting musicians as well as its relatively inexpensive attack on the pocket book. Musically it is very flexible and comfortable. The major reason for this, of course, is Galloway's ability to function outside of the traditional idiom in which he is most readily identified. In fact, on the night in question, the music reflected a healthy interest in the intrinsic swinging qualities of the central core of the jazz tradition rather than dixieland and for one climactic set when Sadik Hakim and George Reed sat in, the music took on a more harmonic guise. Galloway's development on tenor is noted with pleasure. He now has a good tone and a firm grasp of the instrument's possibilities which adds a further dimension to his capabilities. On the whole, it was a most enjoyable evening.

The Toronto Musicians' Cooperative has served the community well with their "Jazz On A Sunday Afternoon" series of concerts at St. Paul's Church and the Fall season was climaxed by a remarkable event on December 8. Sam Rivers, originally scheduled to appear with Barry Altschul cancelled two days before the event - leaving the concert in jeopardy. Fortunately, there are gentlemen in the jazz world who care about their audience and the mutual responsibilities which make it possible for creative music to be heard in ever wider areas. Anthony Braxton and David Holland, at a moment's notice, volunteered to fill the void and the result was one of the best concerts I have ever attended. The first half was completely improvised music - without pre-determined themes or directions. Braxton, Holland and Altschul have worked together so often that their inner senses enable them to understand, interact and develop musical directions without prior determination. They have such a wealth of language to draw from that they are able to construct fascinating music which is both spontaneous and valid. For

close to an hour they set and maintained a mood which drew the listener into a web of closely interlocking textures which ranged from hard swinging time-oriented sections to mysterious tonal/color shadings in which individual notes played by each musician added up to a musical line of fragile beauty. This kind of musical adventure requires musicianship, imagination and creativity of the highest order - otherwise it can easily slide into meaningless jargon. Braxton, Holland and Altschul individually and collectively are artists of the highest calibre - and for those with any scepticism in their hearts the answer to their doubts was revealed in the second part of the concert when the trio played from standard themes. Perhaps it was the relief of familiar ground which drew immediate audience recognition of Coltrane's Impressions as the opening material. Listening to completely fresh (i.e. nothing pre-determined) music places an extra demand on the audience as well as the musicians.

Both Braxton and Holland have been extolled in this magazine on numerous occasions but this was the first opportunity to experience, first hand, the marvelous percussion work of Barry Altschul. The emphatic use of the word percussion is deliberate here because he is much more than a drummer. He is a musician of the highest calibre. His array of bells, gongs, cymbals and metallic objects are all part of his options to create sounds to blend with the music being created. His sense of rhythm is highly developed and one of the ways in which you can respond and understand his rhythmic pulse is to realise that you can feel the time even when it isn't being stated. And yet, when it comes time to lay down the beat in what used to be the normally accepted jazz vein - he's right there.

Disbanding the Modern Jazz Quartet is a bonus for those who believe that the remarkable jazz talents of Milt Jackson were being stifled in that environment. Unquestionably the vibraphonist was swinging harder during his two week engagement at Bourbon Street than would normally be the case under the corporate strictures of the MJQ. Whether they are preferable depends on your point of view. Nonetheless, Milt Jackson, equipped with a large stack of music, came to the club ready to stretch out and play. Michel Donato was ready as well and his pulsating, vibrantly alive bass lines gave the vibraphonist the kind of harmonic foundation on which to extend his musical thoughts. Some of the material

was familiar - Opus de Funk, Love For Sale, Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me - but Milt Jackson has a keen ear for compositions by his peers - hence the inclusion of lines by such people as Dizzy Gillespie and Lee Morgan. The blues has always been Jackson's forte and those intricate lines which make up such a large portion of the jazz language are ideally suited to his probing, ever rhythmic variations. Jackson prods percussively (the vibraphone is, of course, a percussion instrument) while unveiling his highly imaginative solos which build in momentum. The rhythm section was surprisingly tight behind Jackson but part of the reason for this was his willingness to adjust his ideas and ambitions to their level in order to create an overall harmonious sound. Functioning as a house rhythm section is a difficult challenge for so much of jazz music is the result of intuitive telepathy and that simply doesn't develop overnight. Hearing Milt Jackson in this setting is still a more accurate reflection of his art than the glossy artifacts being produced by CTI, a record label which, ironically, does more to promote their artists than any other jazz organisation while removing some of the artist's uniqueness in a quest for wider audiences.

Rob McConnell's Boss Brass is persisting in its independence of thought and action while defying the odds. Comprised of the city's top session musicians, The Boss Brass displays a healthy lack of pretentiousness in its invigorating musical program. New charts are constantly being added and the band sounded in particularly good form during its engagement at The Colonial. Perhaps the proximity to the band helped but there seemed to be considerable punch and drive as well as an almost total disappearance of the throwaway pops which constitute its recorded repertoire for CTL.

Muddy Waters was back at the Colonial in early December and delivered the blues with his customary authority. He has a class which transcends tastes and fashions and wins the respect and enthusiasm of his audience through his mastery of the idiom and his reality every time he sings or plays. His band remains the tightest-sounding blues group and his retention of his roots gives his music its unique sound.

Vocalist Jodie Drake collapsed in Vancouver in October with what appears to be a brain tumour. Although released and home from hospital she is unable to work and a benefit was put together at the Sapphire Tavern on December 14 by Paul Rimstead



and Jim Galloway. Many local musicians volunteered their services and hopefully a substantial amount has been raised for the ailing singer.

Concerts in town are drawing mixed support from the community. Less than 400 people showed up for Gary Burton's concert and there was less than a packed house at Convocation Hall for Larry Coryell's all electric concert which also showcased the violin of Michel Urbaniak.

Convocation Hall had also been the scene for Cleo Laine and John Dankworth's concert in October.

Music of another kind was presented at York University on November 25. Electronic composer and synthesizer performer Richard Teitelbaum presented a concert titled "Couplings" with the assistance of David Rosenbloom and Michael Byron... Indian music, after falling from fashion, has made something of a return. Ali Akbar Khan performed to a small audience at Massey Hall while on December 14 Shri Purshottam Randev gave a performance of Sarod Music at Bathurst Heights Library.

Humber College, developing fast as a music centre of importance, published an elaborate booklet entitled "Studio 1", which outlines the activities of participating composers and players (all well known musicians about town) in this community college environment. Humber offers a three year diploma program for music students and further information is obtainable from the

Community Relations Office, Humber College, P.O. Box 1900, Rexdale, Ontario M9W 5L7.

Scarborough Public Library has initiated a "popular sheet music" lending service at its Cedarbrae location. This addition to its lending services has been received with enthusiasm. Perhaps it means more people are returning to the practical advantages of home entertainment on the piano... seen in town - an illuminated sign being towed around announcing the coming arrival of Charles Mingus to El Mocambo... Atelier de Musique Experimentale were part of a French Canadian season of the Arts at Forest City Gallery in London, Ontario during December. - John Norris

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ARGENTINA

Portena Jazz Band: On October 22, the Portena Jazz Band celebrated its 8th birthday with a party thrown at the Sheraton Hotel, with 1,800 guests present. Among the musicians who took part in the celebration were Enrique "Mono" Villegas, and the ragtime pianist Rosario Quqrtd.

On November 3, the Portena band travelled to Brasil, for a series of concerts.

Enrique Villegas gave concerts at the Teatro Nacional Cervantes on November 6, on the 8th in the city of Rosario, and on the 9th in the Teatro La Cova in Martinez, Prov. Buenos Aires.

Lona Warren, old time lady vocalist, but still very active with her own radio show, is scheduling a concert at the Teatro San Martin with the cooperation of the Original Jazz Band, Opus 4, Delta

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A new Jazz spot opened in Buenos Aires, called South Pacific. It will operate only on Mondays, and features all styles of Jazz, from Traditional to Swing. Already scheduled and appeared have been the Quinteto Hernan Oliva, Swing 39, Antigua Jazz Band and others. The club is located at Medrano 81 in Buenos Aires. Swing 39 finished recording their second LP, which will be ragtime oriented.

Oscar Aleman and His Quintet are currently appearing on Saturdays at the Teatro De La Cova.

La Antigua Jazz Band played the beach resort of Mar Del Plata on November 1 and

2, and were also featured during October as the main attraction at the Sunday concerts at the Teatro Santa Maria Delbuen Ayre.

Cuarteto Lopez Furst, on the modern side of jazz, gave concerts at the galeria Wough, the Museum of Modern Art, and Teatro Cervantes. The quartet features the brothers Hector (violin) Ruben or "Baby" (guitar) and Carlos (bass), and either Luis Cerevalo and/or Jorge Cassalla in Drums. - Martin Muller

ITALY

1974 has been a very important year for the Italian scene. Several Afro-American artists visited Italy and also some young local musicians started or continued to develop their own thing. Some Great Music was played during the Art Ensemble of Chicago's ten day visit in February in Bologna. Each concert showed a different face of the group: from drama (Ericka) to irony (A Jackson In Your House), from free improvisations (Message To Our Folks) to more arranged compositions (Ohnedaruth). Most memorable of all was an extended performance of People In Sorrow, which may be considered a/their masterpiece. Particularly beautiful was an improvised set by Joseph Jarman who played in solo some Coltrane tunes.

Very much appreciated also was Archie Shepp's only concert in Bergamo. Unfortunately his group was put together in a hurry and could not help him in any way. Shepp seems to suffer from the absence of a steady group and not only that. He works so seldom (and no more records for some time it seems!) - not his choice, certainly.

In April Ornette Coleman made his brief appearance with a really fine group: Billy Higgins (drums), Sirone (bass), and James Blood Ulmer (guitar). They played in some psychiatric hospitals and briefly in Roma, at Music Inn. We already knew Ornette and Higgins, but very pleasant surprises were Sirone (borrowed from the Revolutionary Ensemble), a wonderful musician, and Ulmer, who is really saying something new with his guitar (as well as Sarnie Garrett and Derek Bailey and probably nobody else).

Before the big summer festivals in Umbria, Steve Lacy, Byard Lancaster, Noah Howard, Charles Tolliver and Don Cherry made very brief appearances.

Then the two festivals (in Pescara and Perugia), both under the open sky with an attendance of about 100,000 (!) people in eight nights of concerts. The Art Ensemble was back, this time with pianist Muhal Richard Abrams as the sixth member of the group. Beautiful sets were also those by Tiny Grimes, Gerry Mulligan, the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis big band (tenor saxophonist Billy Harper and vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater will not be forgotten easily), The Mario Schiano Ensemble (one of the best Italian groups), The Gil Evans Orchestra (with the important trumpeter Marvin Peterson), then The Horace Silver Quintet and Sonny Stitt (a really moving performance). But the real event of the

festival, like Sun Ra last year, was The Charlie Mingus Quintet. It was one of the best bands he has ever put together. With him were Dannie Richmond (drums), pianist Don Pullen and reedmen George Adams and Bunny Bluiett. A real mighty band that should be recorded in a hurry, at least for the life of those who weren't there. Almost matching Mingus' two concerts was the last night of the Perugia festival. Joe Albany opened the night, beautifully. Tunes like Embraceable You and Night In Tunisia were revisited with great feeling and inventiveness. Life has not been too good to the 'old' Charlie Parker pianist, but now Albany has come back. Not only does he deserve to be heard, but he has something to say that he only can say. That night he was really amazing. Then two triumphs. First Anthony Braxton, solo alto. The audience may have loved him a bit too much and forced him to give up the silence that is part of his music. Let's hope we will hear him again, as soon as possible. Then Sam Rivers with Dave Holland (bass), and Barry Altschul (drums). Again a real success, absolutely great music (improvised).

After the two days of the festival in Alassio (Charlie Mariano, Guido Manusardi/Red Mitchell, Hugo Heredia, Paul Bley), in late November some good concerts were those of McCoy Tyner and Gato Barbieri at the Bologna festival. But besides these famous performers who came on tour, some original Italian musicians are really coming out. Maybe the most mature player in Italy is Massimo Urbani (alto sax, bass clarinet, etc.) He has paid his dues and is developing a very personal approach to his instruments.

One of the highlights of the year has been a concert by Urbani with trumpeter Enrico Rava and bassist Calvin Hill (Firenze). Two other young musicians had the chance to release their first album. Trumpeter Guido Mazzon ("Gruppo Contemporaneo") and pianist Gaetano Liguori ("Gile Libero, Gile Rosso", with a very fine rhythm section: Roberto Del Piano, bass, and Filippo Monico, drums). But they are not the only ones and really many deserve to be known - for example pianist Patrizia Scascitelli, bassist Roberto Della Grotta, bassist Bruno Tommaso, trombonist Giancarlo Schiaffini, saxophonists Roberto Giammarco, Tommaso Vittorini, the Gruppo Tarahumara and others. This generation of musicians is perhaps the best that Italy has ever had. Instead of merely copying some foreign styles, they are trying to find their own way.

Working conditions are still bad and that's the main problem. Nonetheless some musicians (like Schiano, Liguori, Urbani) are bringing the music to students and workers, giving concerts in popular quarters, factories, alternative circles, etc. The future of creative music in Italy is firmly in the hands of musicians like them.

- Roberto Terlizzi

ODDS & ----

Delmark celebrated 20 years in the record business November 19 in Chicago. Over 300 people attended the bash in the company's newly redecorated offices. Many Delmark artists attended and a spontaneous blues jam session developed when Sleepy John Estes, Hammie Nixon and Big Joe Williams began playing. Blind John Davis,

Jimmy Walker and Erwin Helfer took turns at the piano and Bob Koester showed many of his rare jazz, blues and comedy films on a continuous basis. Recently released albums include "Together Alone" - duets by Joseph Jarman and Anthony Braxton, "Grace And Beauty" by the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra (a repackaging of a previously released Pearl album) and reissues of Clany Hayes' "Oh By Jingo", Roosevelt Sykes' "Hard Driving Blues" and the Yank Rachell/John Estes collaboration of "Mandolin Blues".

If you're heading into the mountains for winter skiing you should stop off in Denver at the Hotel Continental. Peanuts Hucko, Ralph Sutton, bassist Colin Gieg and drummer Bert Dahlander are in residence... Jim Martin's Paint Creek Jazz Band with Paul Temple on trumpet are heard every Wednesday at Pontiac, Michigan's D.A.C., 2592 Dixie Highway... The ninth Manassas Jazz Festival took place December 6 to 8 and featured Washington area musicians along with Claude Hopkins, Butch Hall, Billy Allred, Tex Wyndham, Gene Mayl, Monty Mountjoy, Maxine Sullivan, Natalie Lamb and Dave Wilborn.

Additional names for the Smithsonian Institution's winter concert series are Clark Terry (February 9), Dizzy Gillespie (March 9), National Jazz Ensemble (April 13), Jimmy Witherspoon (April 27), and Andrew Hill (May 4). Tickets and information from Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 14196, Washington, D.C. 20044.

RCA has just released an album featuring the piano stylings of the first "Jazz Piano Quartet" of Marian McPartland, Hank Jones, Roland Hanna and Dick Hyman. They launched the record with a party at Michael's Pub on November 20.

RAPPORT (SB-1) is a musical dialogue and exploration of traditional tonal, modal, and intervallic atonal compositions. JOE DIORIO has played and recorded with such notables as Sonny Stitt, Eddie Harris, Stan Getz and is currently working with the legendary Ira Sullivan. A student of John Cage, WALLY CIRILLO has recorded with J.J. Johnson and Kai Winding, is the author of the first recorded twelve tone jazz composition, and recorded with the Jazz Composers' Workshop which included Charlie Mingus. CIRILLO and DIORIO had complete control over the music played and released on this disc.

WALLY CIRILLO
PIANO
JOE DIORIO
GITAR

RAPPORT

RAPPORT (SB-1) is available by mail from SPITBALL RECORDS, INC., P.O. Box 371, Gratigny Branch, Miami, Florida 33168 U.S.A. \$5.00 plus postage and handling (50¢ - U.S.A., \$1.40 - Canada, \$1.55 - Europe: surface mail). Please send an International Money Order for all payments outside the U.S.A.

Trumpeter/bandleader Don Albert was inducted into the San Antonio Musicians' Society Hall of Fame in October - only the fourth musician to be accorded that honor. The honour is bestowed on musicians whose contributions to the community go beyond musical accomplishment. Previously elected to the Hall of Fame were Ernie and Emilio Caceres and Jim Cullum Sr.

The Harvard University Jazz Band, a twenty piece group under the direction of Thomas G. Everett, left on a six-day tour of the Dominican Republic on November 26. The orchestra presents a cross section of jazz music in its performances - ranging from dixieland classics through the big band repertoire to charts by Thad Jones and Maynard Ferguson... The Manfred Schoof Sextet tours Asia under the auspices of The Goethe-Institut in February/April 1975. Along with trumpeter Schoof will be Michel Pilz (bass clarinet), Ed Kroger (trombone), Eberhard Weber (bass), Rolf Huebner (drums) and Jasper van't Hof (piano). Writer/critic Joachim Berendt will accompany the group as lecturer and historian.

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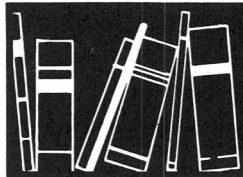
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JAZZ LITERATURE



MILES DAVIS

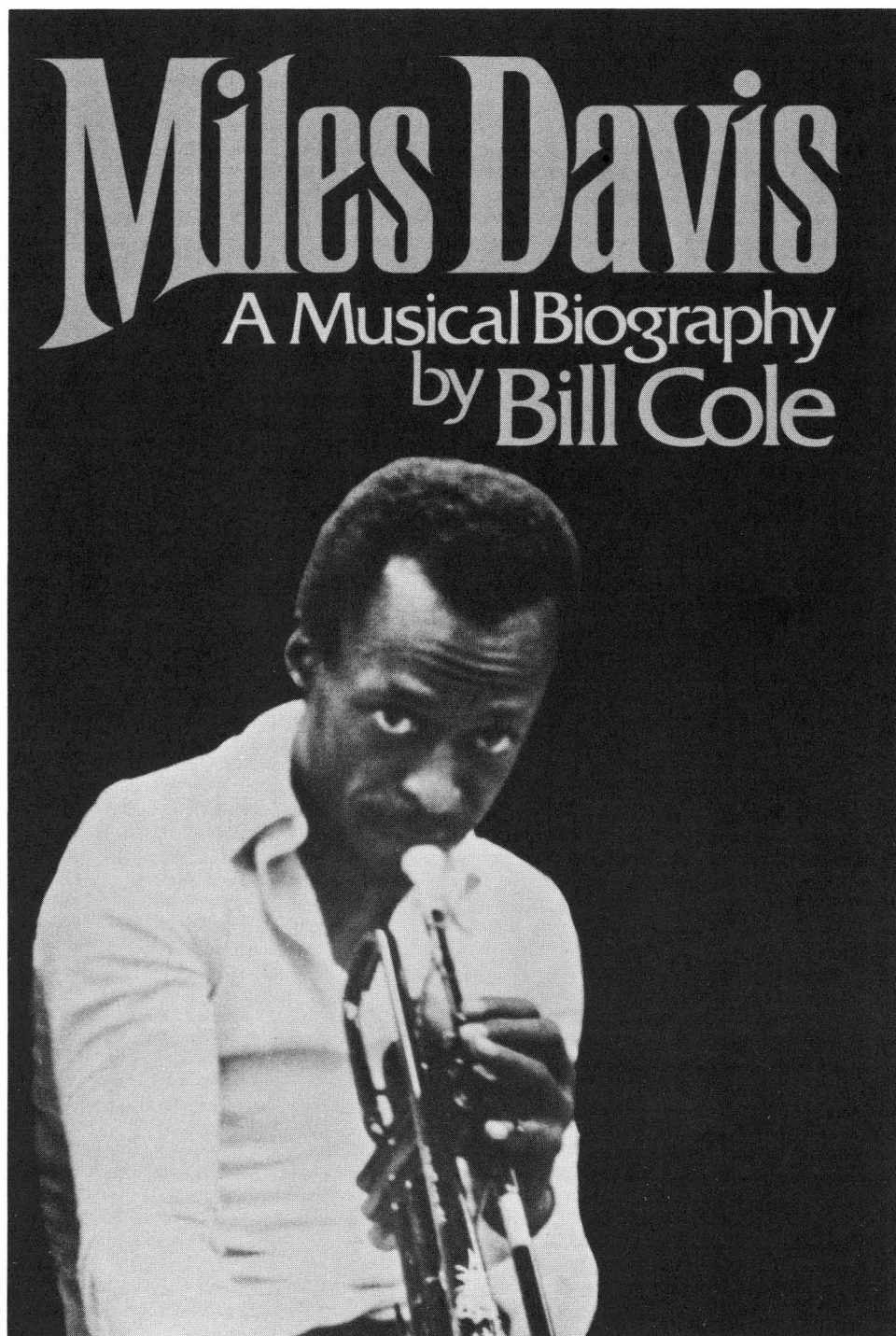
by Bill Cole

William Morrow & Co., New York, 1974;
256 pp., \$7.95

The musical biography is a form of literature wherein the author attempts to trace the development not just of a person, and not just of that man's art, but to explore the factors in an individual that would lead to the ultimate branchings of his music. To do so demands a carefully-formulated retrospective viewpoint; and only now are we coming far enough away from their prime years of creativity to allow the adequate assembly of an appropriate picture of a John Coltrane, a Miles Davis, or an Eric Dolphy. Details of day-to-day personal existence are absolutely relevant in these books only insofar as they reveal the reasons behind the artist's musical choices. The author's commitment is to the aesthetic rather than to journalism for its own sake, and we need not look for the sensationalism of a "Bird Lives!" in such a volume.

Author Cole has divided this book into three basic sections - an introduction, which depicts the basic nature of the music during the course of Davis' career and places him in the proper perspective of such evolution; the "biography" proper, which deals with the chronology of the artist's career and musical development without necessarily discussing the extra-musical aspects of the man underneath; and "style", which analyses - in detail but still in terms accessible to the interested layman - a number of landmark improvisations that enable the plotting of the trumpeter's development. Beyond that there are several addenda - a listing of recording sessions, bibliography, thirteen transcriptions pertinent to the discussion of style, and an index.

The introductory chapter states most of the conclusions the remainder of the text will ultimately draw, conclusions with which I am inclined to agree. You may not. They differ markedly and refreshingly from Down Beat's ass-licking idolatry. The process by which Cole states his case begins in the "biography", and here lies my main problem in coping with this volume. The biography does reveal several important and previously unrecognized facts about Miles' career chronology - his initial encounters with John Coltrane in 1948 while the latter was in New York with Call Massey, his approach to Eric Dolphy to join the quintet in 1963-1964. But there have been so many unpredictable and unusual deflections in Davis' musical path - as Cole himself acknowledges - that somewhere, it should have been a valid endeavour to discuss his motivations in some detail. The author questions his sub-



ject's motives at times (why would Miles in recent years choose to work with white musicians when he publicly stated that they were inferior, and so many brothers needed the work?), states at some points that Davis was a victim of circumstances (his turn to rock in 1968-1969 as a result of producer's pressure to either sell or get out of Columbia, his evolution during the

classic 1956-1960 years as a response to Coltrane's onslaught - surely the reverse of the way Coltrane always told it to interviewers), and at others implies that the trumpeter acted wilfully in directing his path (his rejection of hornmen who could challenge his stance after the dissolution of the Coltrane-Adderley sextet). But nowhere does he give any consistent answer

to such questions as he raises them, and the extramusical data on Davis he provides is too scanty for us to draw our own conclusions about his reasons for being what he is. Considering the stature of the subject, such questions deserve answers.

The "style" section, to my mind, is the *raison d'être* of the book - a musicologist's assessment of the artist's evolution in terms of style, content, and career circumstances. And it is this one segment that - more than the others - prompts me to suggest this book for anyone involved in the music - educator, performer, committed or casual listener. While Cole's choice of solos for examination are perhaps not all the obvious ones, they are all well-justified for pointing up the direction of Davis' evolution. While the author's observations and transcriptions are erudite, well-detailed, and correct, they're also couched in terms which make them accessible - and therefore potentially worthwhile - reading for the interested non-musician not completely enlightened to the mysteries of the art. The one omission I note comes in the discussion of the quintet of the middle-1960s, where the author fails to note Tony Williams' contributions in more than general terms. Specifically, Williams' approach to multidirectional percussion bore the prime responsibility for liberating Davis and the other bandmen from the rhythmic orthodoxy of chorus orientation and pointing them toward their current stance, which makes use of episodic interplay over free rhythm.

Any other comments I could make would be minor quibbles. I must commend Cole (from personal experience) for opting for sanity in including a listing of pertinent details on recording sessions - dates, personnel, titles - without any pretense of keeping up with the myriad issues of each title. However, according to various of my sources, some of his composer credits are incorrect. (To choose a couple: Parker, not Davis, wrote Donna Lee, according to Savoy Records and various other texts; however, Miles did write Little Willie Leaps, Compulsion, and The Serpent's Tooth.) There are few factual errors in the text, and those I found were incidental, not relevant to Miles. Although Cole speaks derisively of some of the white musicians the trumpeter has employed from time to time, surely he realizes that whatever his motives or their merits, both Steve (not Stuart) Grossman and Dave Schildkraut were adequately functional for the trumpeter's ends at that moment. Occasionally the author's words seem not to say quite what the context leads you to believe he wanted to say, and a couple of musical references (to Eric Dolphy's Africa orchestration for John Coltrane) are injected and let drop without any apparent tie-in to context ever attempted.

But enough. I have to pick on small matters, I suppose, because the large points all favour this book. It is not Miles' authorized biography; it has an objectivity, comprehensiveness, and accuracy that the man's vanity and press just would not tolerate to that extent. Every

student of Miles Davis' music should read this. At least once. - Barry Tepperman

SIX BLUES-ROOTS PIANISTS

by Eric Kriss
Oak Publications, \$3.95.

The bulk of this volume consists of transcriptions of 17 excerpts, usually two or three choruses each, from recordings by Jimmy Yancey, Champion Jack Dupree, Little Brother Montgomery, Speckled Red, Roosevelt Sykes, and Otis Spann. Brief biographical information on these musicians is included, as well as lists of selected books, periodicals and Lps relating to their type of boogie-blues piano.

The work seems primarily designed to help a pianist who already has a basic knowledge of the keyboard get started in playing this style. Kriss' comments along these lines are generally sensible and helpful. For example, he notes that boogie-blues is virtually impossible to transcribe accurately without making the music so complex as to be unreadable, and that his transcriptions are therefore most profitably studied simultaneously with the recordings from which they were taken. Also, each artist's material is preceded by a page or two offering exercises, or illustrating characteristic licks, that suitably orient the pianist for tackling the solos. Unfortunately, Kriss does not suggest specific fingering for tricky passages, normally present in any piano instruction manual.

I have 8 of the 17 performances, which seem to be captured fairly well on paper. There are some errors in the book, however, which are obvious even to someone like me, who isn't that deeply into boogie-blues. The C-chord figure in the bass of bar 10 of Yancey Special, for example, does not fit with (1) Kriss' notation of a G-chord for that passage, (2) Yancey's record or (3) common sense; and what about the statement on page 38 that says "In Vicksburg Blues No. 2, for example, the chorus is 24 bars long, but is subdivided into 4 sections of 8 bars each."? Perhaps these are the result of sloppy proofreading rather than sloppy scholarship, but there is no excuse for them either way, and their presence, along with others, makes me suspicious of the overall quality of the scholarship represented here.

These criticisms notwithstanding, the book presents a collection of boogie-blues piano figures and rhythms that will keep a beginner in the field busy for some time and, once mastered, provide him with a firm foundation for his own improvisations; in that respect, Kriss accomplishes a commendable objective. Even if this wasn't the only book around of its type, which it is as far as I know, I'd say it was worth the price.

- Tex Wyndham

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STAN KENTON

STRAIGHT AHEAD: THE STORY OF STAN KENTON

by Carol Easton
William Morrow & Co., New York, 1973

If one examines an extensive share of the references to Stan Kenton in print, one is tempted to partition the commentators into two mutually exclusive camps - the Stan Kenton Fanatics and the Stan Kenton Detesters. Such an easy division can hardly be expected to bear much relationship to any sort of objective reality. It is a credit to Carol Easton's journalistic background that the subject of her biographical scrutiny comes off much less saintly than the Olympian deity pictured by the Fanatics,

and much more humanly sympathetic than the bombastic automaton portrayed by the Detesters.

It should be made clear that, as the subtitle indicates, the book is not intended as an analytical thesis. Indeed, it approaches a tragicomic novel in tone (though one which would no doubt be lambasted for lacking realism; truth is indeed stranger than fiction). It is a biography, sometimes a chatty one, often a downright gossipy one. Yet it also relates much of the world that affected and was affected by Stan Kenton and his music. In fact, the book is as often about the Kenton orchestra(s) as it is a lifestory of the man himself - the two are so often inseparable.

While the book can hardly be called a muckraker's delight (as it was not Ms. Easton's intention to write an exposé), it does uncover an inordinate number of warts in Kenton's character. If the author occasionally feels a tinge of perverse delight in disclosing particularly juicy bits of scandal, she at least attempts to check her writing with a reporter's sense of dispassionateness. (This is quite interesting in the light of the dustjacket blurb, which includes "advertising copy, publicity, and political and religious propaganda" as part of her professional background.) Stan Kenton did have a drinking problem, he did run his band in a rather monomaniacal manner, he did give his music far too much priority over his personal life, etc. Perhaps there's too much emphasis on all this in the book, but it did greatly influence the rulebreaking and impossibly idealistic aspects of his music and the professional machinery instituted to present this music to a rabid public.

On the other hand, there isn't enough emphasis on the historical end. There are a lot of places and events, but not always enough dates to associate with them. Kenton's beginnings with Gus Arnheim, Everett Hoaglund, and lesser bands are certainly taken care of, and the original Artistry in Rhythm band is well documented. Once Kenton had become established as a top leader, and the personnel and musical character of the ensembles had begun their amazingly rapid turnovers, the exact years become less apparent. Kenton's life and career become a continuous cycle, with only the details (including the names of wives and sidemen) changing on each revolution. Thus, the reader occasionally becomes confused as to exactly when all these whats and wheres took place.

The author herself would probably not consider this a criticism. In her introduction, she acknowledges that there may very well be "a windfall of inexact minutiae" which could turn the book into "a nitpicker's picnic". While this statement alone could, by its refreshing candor, jeopardize her credibility among certain specialists, she is more interested in communicating a historical sense, a factual atmosphere, a biography which is not only as accurate as can be, but also as human as possible.

This sense of the "real life" is especially apparent in her descriptions of life on the road. She writes with a linguistic precision, an intelligent clarity, and a literate perspective that eludes those musicians

who write on the subject. Yet there is a "you are there" authenticity that leads you to believe she was there (and she no doubt did attend the 1971 Redlands clinic which opens the book, and apparently did travel with the band for a short while after). It is in the road passages where Buddy Childers, Mike Vax, Vido Musso, Carlos Gastel and many others come alive as more than familiar names in print or (aside from manager Gastel) on record. However, her most touching (not to mention most analytical and most historically needed) characterization is that of the tragically misunderstood Bob Graettinger, whose misfortunes were not only those of the road.

While my own perception of Stan Kenton is highly flexible (depending on the period or record under appraisal), I must confess that this book has changed my overall attitude to the music and its creator. In the final analysis, Kenton must be acknowledged as a person who wrote/performed original music he totally believed in, no matter how much financial and emotional sacrifice this entailed at times. He was at worst a pretentious paranoic. But more often, he was the possessor of a sonic vision, the accomplishment of which may not have been total, but which resulted nonetheless in an entirely personal, stylistically innovative, often exciting brand of music. By giving us this portrait of Stan Kenton, the person, Carol Easton has performed a valuable service for those of us whose lack of Kenton Fanaticism is due not only to a widely differing aesthetic, but also to a misunderstanding of the source and genesis of the music itself.

- Tom Bingham

TEX BENEKE

Discography

by Charles Garrod
Joyce Music Publications

Charles Garrod has taken over the mantle of the late Ernie Edwards and his colleagues, who produced Jazz Discographies Unlimited. This Tex Beneke discography appears in the same format, listing issues on 78, 45 and 33 rpm and including broadcasts and transcriptions dates in addition to commercial recordings. Mind you, having checked titles on First Time FTR 1510, I still can't find a tune called Sterling And Cardinal! Over to you Charles! Nevertheless, this is an excellent addition to the series of big band discographies and here's hoping the good work will continue. - Ian Cosbie

THE STING

MUSIC FROM "THE STING"
published by MCA/Mills, \$3.95

What do you get for your money when you buy this folio of sheet music? First, four pages of photographs from the feature "The Sting", the piano scores to three tunes composed for the sound track

by Marvin Hamlisch, and a simplified arrangement of the old pop standard Little Girl; a couple of good licks there, but nothing really to attract readers of a jazz magazine. Second, Scott Joplin's arrangements of his Gladiolus Rag and Pine Apple Rag, both complete, and of the last two (out of four) strains of Solace; things are looking up there, but you can get these tunes, and a fair amount of other quality ragtime, in the innumerable folios that hit the market as a result of the movie's success. Finally, Gunther Schuller's arrangements of three more Joplin rags, The Ragtime Dance (extended version), The Entertainer, and The Easy Winners; this is the new material, and the success of the collection, musically at least, stands or falls on it.

To Schuller's credit, he does not attempt to simplify Joplin, or to rework his compositions into some new and daring format. Instead, he adds variations or fills to the selections, preserving them as ragtime, in much the same way, I'd guess, as classical composers have published their own impressions of various familiar themes. The Schuller versions are at about the same level of difficulty as the Joplin originals, an easier passage here being often balanced by a trickier figure somewhere else.

The Ragtime Dance stays closest to Joplin's score, adding only a few fills or changes in voicings that, for the most part, work well enough and would make satisfactory alternatives to Joplin's ideas. Schuller's The Entertainer does not, on the whole, seem worth the trouble, being somewhat simplified from Joplin's already fairly easy arrangement. The Easy Winners is the most adventurous, with Joplin's keys being moved up a half-tone into A and D, and a second variation (instead of a repeat) on both of the 3rd and 4th strains; an imaginative and rather successful effort.

So there's something worthwhile here in addition to a movie souvenir. Still, the dedicated ragtime pianist will probably have little trouble these days using the same funds to get a greater quality of good stuff. - Tex Wyndham

MAGAZINES

GUITAR PLAYER

(\$8.00 for one year from Guitar Player Magazine, Box 615, 12333 Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road, Saratoga, California 95080)

Guitar Player is essential reading for guitarists and guitar enthusiasts, while containing enough jazz material to make it worthwhile for the general reader. It is refreshingly free of the usual clichés and the musicians discuss their ideas, techniques and concepts at a level designed to be of value to others who have less ability as musicians. A recent issue, for example, contained a three part discussion between Herb Ellis, Barney Kessel and Charlie Byrd as well as a feature on Bill

Connors.

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

(\$6.00 for one year from POAPW Ltd., P.O. Box 136, Rochester, N.Y. 14601)

Different Drummer is a jazz magazine edited by Harry Abraham. It encourages participation in the form of record reviews from the readers. Unfortunately they seem to prefer the kind of near-jazz which permeates the FM airwaves and editor Abraham's comments on new releases is the closest many important jazz albums come to any discussion. Articles are concise and straightforward but have improved considerably over the past year and so it is apparent that the magazine fills a need. It is, as of this writing, the only national magazine devoted to jazz in the U.S.A.

ASSOCIATION FOR RECORDED SOUND COLLECTIONS JOURNAL is the publication of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections. Annual dues are \$10.00 which includes the magazine. The current issue contains lengthy essays on Documentary recordings in Ethnomusicology, an analysis of the challenges confronting the Rodgers and Hammerstein archives and a lengthy bibliography of discographies published in 1973. This latter section has the most direct relevance to the jazz enthusiast but it is obvious that anyone seriously interested in the documentation of music through recordings should belong to this organisation. Memberships and inquiries from James B. Wright, Association for Recorded Sound Collections, Fine Arts Library, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131, U.S.A.

Traditional jazz, which has become the province of the amateur musician (by that I mean he plays out of avocation rather than regarding it as his profession) is ill-served in the press. Countless mimeographed/offset sheets appear from the numerous societies bent on preserving the reiterated notes handed down from fifty year old recordings. At best, these publications encourage the local fraternity to support their own neighborhood musicians. Rarely do they step beyond this in an attempt at worthwhile writing on the subject of jazz. "Jersey Jazz", the information periodical of the New Jersey Jazz Society (836 W. Inman Avenue, Rahway, N.J. 07065) attempts quite successfully in breaking away from this narrow view. They have been serialising a fascinating discussion with Claude Hopkins of his early career as well as focusing attention on such worthy musicians as Bobby Hackett and Vic Dickenson. There's not too much depth to the writing and the viewpoint is strictly from Dixie, despite the advertisements covering a much wider spectrum of jazz available in the area.

Much more impressive is *The Mississippi Rag*. This is published monthly in newspaper format (like *Rolling Stone* and other alternative newspapers) and views the music from an entirely different per-

spective. It originates in Minneapolis, spawning ground of the Hall Brothers etc., and its viewpoint is strictly authentic. The most recent issue contains a profile of Max Morath by Ron Johnson, excellent book and record reviews (thank you Charlie DeVore for your words on Lee Collins, that much underrated New Orleans trumpeter) and some words from Bud Freeman. It's musician oriented, too, and prints a healthy list of what's happening in the U.S.A. It lives up to its banner as "the voice of traditional jazz and ragtime" and deserves your attention if you follow that direction in jazz. Subscription is \$4.50 per year (\$7.25 foreign) from *The Mississippi Rag*, P.O. Box 19068, Minneapolis, Minn. 55419, U.S.A.

From closer to home comes *Jazz Notes*, an information magazine published by The Calgary Jazz Society - one of the hotbeds of jazz in the West. As an example: can you believe that Dexter Gordon appeared there November 25! How come he didn't make it to the so-called jazz "capitals"? Anyway, *Jazz Notes* is primarily a rallying cry for local jazz buffs. There are short articles and reviews of recent records. If you live in the area they deserve support and it's quite possible that *Jazz Notes* might blossom. Write *Jazz Calgary*, c/o Calgary Sub P.O. 91, 2920 24th Ave. N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4, Canada.

A Bibliography of Jazz Discographies (since 1960) is a published project of the British Institute of Jazz Studies. Essentially it is a listing, by artist, of discographies appearing in magazines as well as special booklets devoted to the artist

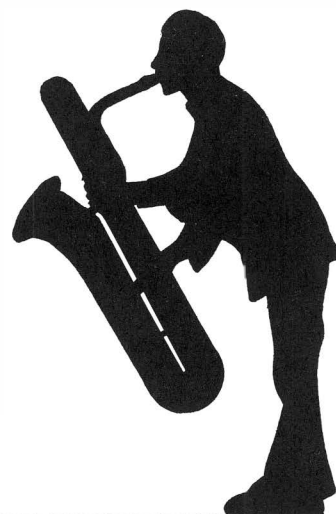
up until 1969. There is also an added section updating and correcting the listings through 1972. In addition there is a "work in progress" listing (obviously out of date). It's a valuable research tool for the serious student of the music and copies are probably still available for 50 pence plus shipping (\$2.00 should cover it) from the British Institute of Jazz Studies, 4 Kenilworth Avenue, South Harrow, Middlesex, England.

Similar information, in mimeographed form, is sent out by the Capitol District Jazz Society, 1218 Second Street, Rensselaer, N.Y. 12144. That's the Albany area, in case you wondered, and they are doing their best to promote the music in their area. Recent activity includes performances by Sam Rivers, Keith Jarrett, Groove Holmes and Larry Coryell. Their sheet contains record reviews, opinion and theory and promotion for the cause. They hold sessions at their own (non-profit) Record Shop (408 East Street, Rensselaer) Tuesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m.

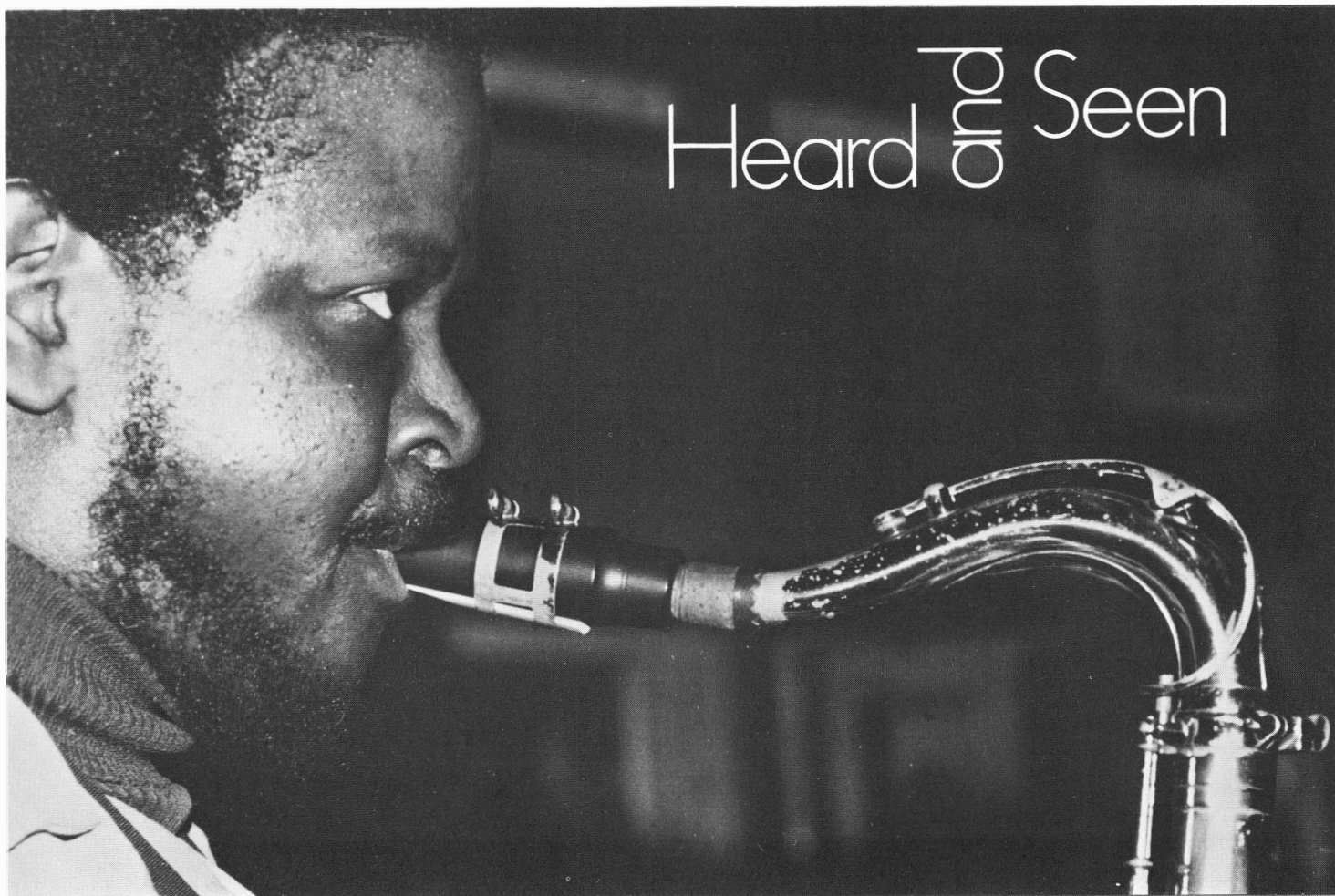
Bells (\$2.00 for six issues from Henry Kuntz Jr., 1921 Walnut, #1, Berkeley, California 94704, U.S.A.) is essential reading for anyone interested in the contemporary directions being taken by the music. The September issue of this newsletter (four pages) contains a thoughtful review of the Anthony Braxton/Derek Bailey concert in London as well as a lengthy review of Leo Smith's booklet "Notes (8 Pieces) Source A New Music World Music: Creative Music". In addition there are reviews of John Coltrane and Bobby Bradford records. - John Norris

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JUNIOR COOK

Bourbon Street, Toronto, December 4, 1974

Sometimes one just goes out to catch a set, catch a set of a Sixties memory perhaps. The memories of the funky bebop style of music that Horace Silver, Art Blakey and numerous and lesser New York bands excited us all with. There were many people in that audience that I had not seen in years, all there to catch that same set, all waiting for the funkiness to begin. A good old feeling. But it was not a one set quickie, not just Cookin' with Junior, Boss, Funky or any other thrown out hip adjective. That would only be a small part definition. We all stayed until we were told to leave.

It all began around nine o'clock, with not that impressive a beginning, but by the last tune of that set we all knew we were in for a fine evening of music. The rhythm section of Gary Williamson (piano), Rick Homme (bass) and Claude Ranger (drums) took the first twenty minutes to settle in under Junior and then the proceedings developed into its personality. Lionel Bart's composition Where Is Love was the turning point, pretty, but not that much, not that much until the set closer of Monk's Straight No Chaser roared into life. Cook stated a quick theme and then dealt a hand that would make most players

in that idiom withdraw their wager. Strong straight-ahead lines swinging like crazy, fat muscular sound making those dining stop chewing their steaks, so happy that the piano solo came as somewhat of a surprise, a massive tension release. Williamson soloed in a more airy manner, not to say improper, just lighter, very fleet. Homme's bass was solid and melodic and the incredible Ranger, Canada's master of percussion dynamics sitting there with his tiny drums providing dialogue at every level necessary. Listening, filling the spaces and all the time providing the propulsion that small groups need to keep their energy levels balanced. Junior Cook sounded out the theme, fooled with it a bit, then out. The audience became an instant spontaneous uproar, and the mood had been set. Time to order the food.

The evening continued at this level for two hours more: What Are You Doing For The Rest Of Your Life, a lovely ballad, a fine medium tempo version of End Of A Love Affair, a tribute to Paul Chambers with Mr. P.C. and a superb rendition of Dizzy's Con Alma. These are the tunes I remember.

The last set brought about another pleasant surprise in the form of local saxophonist Doug Richardson. Someone else I had not seen or heard for many years. His duets with Junior Cook on Blues In Tandem and The Night Has A Thousand Eyes were just fine, but Junior walked off the stage and let him have the

stage for one of the best things I have ever heard a local musician play: Monk's Round Midnight. He treated it and us to so many variations, I began to realize it depends where you are around midnight. Just superb, I feel sorry that I have not been hearing Doug more often in recent years. Where have you been Doug?

The feeling created in the first set never died, the audience and the players responded to each other on a very high level, and I for one am very glad that I chose that night to take my wife out to dinner and catch a set of Sixties memories.

- Bill Smith

MUSIC WORKSHOP

The Altschul/Holland/Braxton Experience
Toronto, December 9, 1974

Three gentle men packed their equipment into a Volkswagen bus and paid some friends a surprise visit on December 8 and 9, the result was the most important event in this year's contemporary music calendar. Barry Altschul, David Holland and Anthony Braxton. Thank you all for many reasons. The first is very simple... if it wasn't for these musicians and how they feel about the people here in Toronto it is conceivable that one of the most adventurous series of concerts in this town might have collapsed. The December 8 "Jazz On A Sunday Afternoon" concert

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was originally scheduled to be a duet performance by Sam Rivers and Barry Altschul, Mr. Rivers cancelled.; two days before the engagement. Hearing of our predicament messrs Braxton, Holland and Altschul decided to help us out.

As the three men walked on the stage there was the feeling among us in the audience that here was a group of friends about to share their creative imaginations and talents with us. The first of two sections to the concert was improvisational ending on a theme this trio had once played together. The second section was several tunes, opening with Impressions

The unique pleasure of listening to a master of any form of music is only surpassed, for this writer, by the experience of playing music with that master. On Monday, December 9 a small group of local music students had the opportunity to perform with three masters at a workshop given at York University's Bethune College under the auspices of Bob Wittmar. Among the participants was this writer and my nine year old step-son Daniel. We had the privilege of participating in this workshop and it has, without compromise, considerably changed and expanded my view and relationship to music. It was the greatest musical experience for my step-son Daniel who has been drumming seriously for five of his nine years. I imagine that not having any expectations going into the workshop helped me to absorb and focus in on the valuable insights offered us.

There were approximately fifty people in attendance at the workshop with roughly one third that number ready to wail with an instrument at their side. The trio loosened things up with a very funky Straight, No Chaser which led into the rap session. The beauty of attending a workshop by these men is that they immediately fill the entire space with a sense of adventure and discovery. They initiated the talk by more or less stating their own approach to their instruments and how they each got off into music. They took us back



to Braxton's polka-playing and Desmond/Konitz days while Altschul explained that there really is some merit and self-discipline to be had from cocktail gigs, shows and weddings, etc.

They talked almost exactly like they played their music...one would state an idea and fill in the sketch while at undesignated intervals the other two would add counterpoint and continue the mood/feeling with his own ideas. They performed verbally like this in interaction with the students' ideas and questions for 90 minutes.

One of the focal themes throughout the afternoon was the importance of self-discipline to musicians and particularly young players forming their work habits. Included in this idea of self-discipline was the fact that no matter who you are or

where or what you play you still have a responsibility to the music and to the musicians you are playing with. To push at your limitations of creativity and communication is the norm. David Holland was to tell us that for himself the question of "free" vs "form" was a fairly basic choice for him. Playing improvised music became much more of an immediate challenge to his whole being, although he still enjoys playing the occasional tune. One of the more lasting comments by Holland was that "whatever you do best is your own worst obstacle toward originality".

After the discussion had run its course preparations were made to begin the ensemble section of the workshop. Holland assembled the bass players together while Altschul aided the percussionists in set-

ting up three sets of drums. Braxton meanwhile was organizing the brass and woodwind sections and laying out for us his set of signals for the day. When all was ready the trio agreed to begin with a tune called Calvin which was based on a fairly complex rhythm figure. Braxton chose me to try and follow the figure and take it into my own world...and an alto and tenor behind me as a chorus. Somehow, I think because of the nature of the piece we just couldn't cut it; we moved on to another figure from which we would take off from. The mechanics of this ensemble were now at work and I could feel the community spirit rising as Braxton would weave in and out of different circles touching certain people on the shoulder to tell them to stop and pointing to others to begin. He called for long soft sounds from the brass to act as a gentle wave of harmonics behind various solos. As a tenor player I had the feeling that the particular sound and timbres that he called for were initially quite simple, but not so, he had us playing notes as long as we could sustain them; something every horn player must practice daily if he is to build any kind of sound. Gathering momentum he allowed the horns to reach the climax together and restricted the frenetic section in relation to the overall sound, the overall effect. As the piece began with the trio Braxton silenced everyone and the trio played once more. As David Holland gently placed the last singing notes on the bridge of his bass the music paused until the next time our friends would visit.

Their music is a finely honed set of techniques, feelings and morals and their communication, joy and honesty have filled us all with inspiration and motivation to create beauty in our world with music.

- Greg Gallagher

CLEO LAINE

Memorial Auditorium, Burlington, Vermont
November 2, 1974

Cleo Laine - long may she sing, and wail, and strut about the stage as she did in Burlington's awful Memorial Auditorium this fall. Cleo Laine and John Dankworth have been making quite a smash in the States of late, and her program and singing were clear evidence why. She offered a varied program - the master songwriters (Gershwin, Arlen, Mercer, Sondheim), current pop, poems she and Dankworth have set to music, jazz goodies, and Dankworth's own work.

Dankworth and the quartet opened each half, and early set the pace with Green Dolphin Street. Each man soloed (Paul Hart on piano and electric piano, Bryan Torff on both basses, drummer Rudy Collins). Dankworth is firmly rooted in that later bop which gave birth to cool. His alto is crisp, clear and hard - but not devoid of feeling.

Cleo Laine's first few songs were nothing to scream about, but not disappointments, either. She looked half-scared and for Any Place I Hang My Hat and The

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Sun The Moon And I (Gilbert and Sullivan), she was getting used to the hall's peculiar acoustics, and warming up. She got going on Gershwin's Certain Feeling and came into her own with two medleys.

The first was some of her favorite poems which Dankworth had arranged. e.e. cummings' Viva Sweet Love and the Shakesperian Shall I Compare Thee were performed straight - as songs. But Laine's years on the stage took over when she did Poet Laureate John Betjman's Fun And Sun and English comic Spike Milligan's English Teeth. The latter is much good fun, and with it Cleo Laine had the audience with her for the bittersweet Noel Coward medley, which included two dreadfully topical numbers, Bad Times Are Just Around The Corner and London Pride. These adaptations from poetry must be demanding to Laine and Dankworth, and challenging. They bring it off very well.

Second half was prime time. Wife and husband demonstrated their musical compatibility on Dankworth's Birdsong, which considers more than feathered Birds. Laine's scatting and Dankworth's alto became blended to a single sound, a perfect wedding of flesh, metal and soul. Laine knew exactly how to work the interesting Fascinating Rhythm, and the medley of oft-requested tunes showed not only Laine's good musical sense, but that of the audiences she's played to. Sondheim's Send In The Clowns, Gimme A Pigfoot, and Come Back To Me were part of this.

The evening's only worthless performance was also a medley. This one alleges to be a collection of mistakes she

has heard other singers make with lyrics. Some sound too far-fetched to be true. True or not, Laine was only working for laughs (which were few), not music, and we all could have done without this mess.

But this isn't satisfactory, this listing of good and poor tunes. The readers want to know in what does Cleo Laine's talent lie. Here's what: a truly fine range, from her alto to a soaring top, aided by a piercing vibrato; a solid rhythmic feel and the ability to project rhythmic nuances; a good choice of material; accompanists who know they are not the stars, but play to their peaks all the same; and a wonderful stage presence - from her acting career and the great English music hall tradition. Cleo Laine must be among the world's finest singers.

- Will Powers

RAGTIME

Toronto, October 19, 1974

Each year in mid-October the Ragtime Society, a Toronto-based organization of ragophiles, throws a party (called "The Bash") for members and their friends. In 1974, for the fourth straight year, the event was held at the Cara Inn, thus providing a home base for the many out-of-towners who attended, and turning the hotel into a ragtime jam session for the whole weekend.

The party, which utilized the entire lower floor of the hotel, formally began at 3:00 p.m. when, acting as co-master of ceremonies with my wife Nancy, I played the first (1897) published rag, Mississippi Rag. From then until about 11:20, less about an hour and a half for dinner and two short breaks, we introduced about 40 musicians to a delighted capacity audience. After that, informal jazz and ragtime performances continued in both meeting rooms, and the connecting hall, until the wee hours.

Guests of honor were Amelia Lamb and Joseph Lamb, Jr., widow and son of one of ragtime's greatest composers; a presentation from the Society to Mrs. Lamb was preceded by a pianistic tribute to Joseph Lamb, featuring solos by Toronto's John Arpin, myself, Detroit's Kerry Price, New York's Dave Jasen, and Wooster's (Ohio) Brian Dykstra. Ragtimers of all ages, covering styles from academic to raunchy, many of them offering their own ragtime compositions, filled out the program - Lou Hooper, active in New York's jazz scene in the 1920's, still turning out solid novelty rag; Gordon Sheard, a teenage shark at the keyboard, whipping off tough stride solos by Eubie or The Lion; Bill Albright, a college music professor, roaring through two Meade "Lux" Lewis boogies; and many more, including some full-time professional musicians who, like all the others, dropped by gratis to pick up on, and contribute to, the ragtime scene.

In short, whatever your ragtime taste, there was something there for you - banjo ragtime, a sheet music-LP-book concession counter, a full jazz band (the Original Charleston Chasers from Niagara Falls).

Not really a concert or a festival in the normal sense, The Bash is a unique happening that never fails to provide plenty of good times and good music. 1974 was no exception.
- Tex Wyndham

SONNY GREENWICH

St. Paul's Annex Theatre, Toronto,
November 24, 1974

Sonny Greenwich is not merely a superlative jazz guitarist; in Toronto he ranks as a cult figure. Nobody else could bring together for his first Toronto concert in almost four years virtually all the same people who attended his every musical move before he temporarily left the scene in 1971. The basis of this phenomenon is the uniqueness of the man's artistry - a personal sound and conception of his instrument and of his music.

Before his lay-off, Sonny was to be heard most often in the company of pianist Don Thompson, drummer Terry Clarke, and bassists Michel Donato or Rick Homme - a long-term liaison that mercifully lapsed before the guitarist's genius was fully lulled into ruts by sympathetic but immutable ensemble feedback and a relatively fixed repertoire revolving around modal free improvisations and a number of Gallic-sounding ballads. (His Sackville album "The Old Man And The Child" is amply illustrative of this phase, although the personnel involved is altered.) Greenwich mounted some of the best performances I've ever heard from him for this triumphal return, in front of a completely reorganized band - saxophonist Michael Stewart, the pianos of Thompson (acoustic) and Doug Riley (electric), Rick Homme's technically extravagant bass, and Claude Ranger. Much of the ongoing metamorphosis sensed in the music played on this afternoon stemmed from two sources. One - the ever-questing maturity of the plectrist himself, more incredibly fleet and serenely lyrical than before in chord-sheet and modal improvisations even at manic tempos, rarely coasting for want of inspiration. Two - the advent of Claude Ranger, indisputably the best drummer on the Canadian scene, a fiery dancer of stick and skin whose dynamic subtlety and rhythmic diversity opened a new set of driving alternatives to the old quartet, where Clarke had been obvious and superobtrusive.

The ensemble sound was engagingly familiar, opening as it did with the sort of extended spiritual improvisation at which Greenwich - of all his would-be peers - is most adept. (Compare the title selection of the Sackville album to, say, Larry Coryell's Call To The Higher Consciousness, or anything from the Mahavishnu cloud.) But the guitarist is no longer alone to carry the full load of inspiration. The sextet functioned on two planes of invention; an upper fusion where Doug Riley's biting use of the electronics, and the more overt Coltrane directions of Michael Stewart's horns, directly extended in several directions the now-malleable metal of the guitar lines with a sympathy of re-

sponse that arose on occasion as if Greenwich were accompanying, counterposing, and answering himself; and a sustained, finely-interlinked chain of rhythm by Thompson, Homme, and Ranger that prodded and often stabbed through into the upper level like a spear. Sonny is still the great flowing interpreter of ballads - hearing him, one cannot help but think of Jacques Brel and Yves Montand; and his sensitivity to the inner rhythmic drive of bossa nova is surely something special. But their predominance in his book has been usurped by originals carrying a sharp modal lyricism of the sort I used to associate only with McCoy Tyner's recent ensembles, and he has enhanced his maturity through a renewed interest in elaborating the sound of his instrument.

Above all, the experience was that of a rich orchestral closeness, like six offspring of the same thought. This is something I've never heard in any of Green-

wich's earlier groups. While Sonny always was a uniquely self-possessed improviser, Don Thompson (for one) has now abandoned the delicacy of his previous creations to move into a level of power more appropriate to his leader's, and for the first time ever the entire Greenwich band exuded a shining assurance that said, "this is our music, this is the way we feel about it, and WE'RE RIGHT." No question of that.

What I cherish from that afternoon is the fascination of the motion of the guitar's sharp-honed lines, romping and rolling with a headstrong momentum that broke on your awareness like a tidal wave - and then the contrast with the clean, lyric swing that underscored everything. This concert was a rare experience - certainly not one mere words, or even recordings, could explain. Sonny Greenwich took a cold, blue Sunday and made it mean something.
- Barry Tepperman

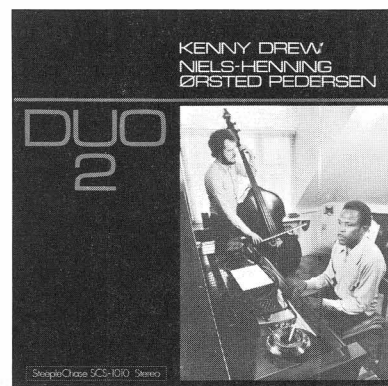
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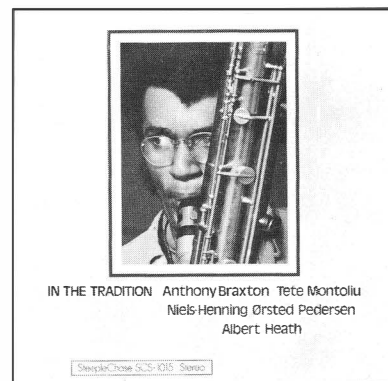


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BOBBY HACKETT/VIC DICKENSON: Live at the Roosevelt Grill (Chiaroscuro)...	6.50
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SONNY TERRY: Robbing the Grave (Blue Labor).....	5.98
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ALBERT AMMONS: Boogie Woogie - ex Blue Note, Mercury etc (Boogie Woogie)..	6.50
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THE ART OF RAGTIME: by William Schafer and Johannes Riedel.....	10.00
THE WORLD OF DUKE ELLINGTON: by Stanley Dance (paper).....	3.25

The above records have been selected from our current stock and the prices include all packing and shipping charges. We can usually supply all recordings listed in the Schwann Catalog as well as British and Continental releases. We will search for out of print recordings on receipt of the information on 3x5 index cards.

BRAXTON
JARMAN
CLANCY

RAGTIME
SYKES

Two Decades of Jazz and Blues



YANK — DELMARK'S FALL FIVE



DS-428

Joseph Jarman - Anthony Braxton: TOGETHER ALONE. Joseph Jarman of the Art Ensemble of Chicago joins saxophone soloist extraordinaire Anthony Braxton in a historic collaboration, recorded in Paris, using the voices of their two horns and actual street sounds in a hymn to the "City of Light." Jarman, known for his two previous Delmark albums, *Song For* and *As If It Were The Seasons*, has recorded nearly a dozen albums with the Art Ensemble. Braxton, whose Delmark LP's *Three Compositions* and *For Alto* have received acclaim in both the jazz and rock press, had not previously recorded with Jarman, and is his perfect foil. Another fine addition to Delmark's award-winning AACM series.

DS-214

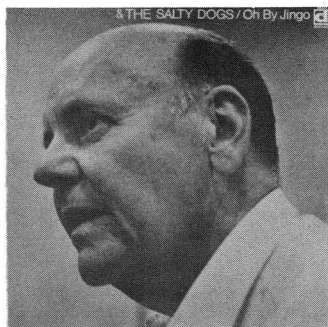
New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra: GRACE AND BEAUTY. Orchestral ragtime should be played by musicians who know the ins and outs of the ragtime beat, and who are better able to handle it than the jazz musicians of New Orleans? Compare Sidney Bechet with Pete Fountain, or Louis Armstrong with Al Hirt, and you'll have an idea of the relationship between the N.O.R.O. and the various Sting-bred ragtime records now on the market. Included are popular titles by Scott Joplin, Joseph Lamb, and James Scott, as well as the mysterious J. Bodewalt Lampe. The N.O.R.O. have appeared at jazz festivals around the world, to rave notices.

(Formerly Pearl PLP-7)



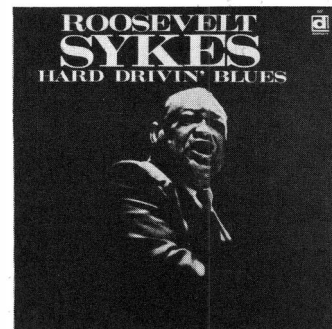
DS-210

Clancy Hayes and the Salty Dogs: OH, BY JINGO!. Clancy Hayes had two gold records to his credit, "Ace in the Hole" and "Silver Dollar," and he was the author of another million seller, "Huggin' and A-Chalkin.'" His smooth Kansas drawl has handled many a tune with special care. Clancy brewed his own personal blend of jazz, blues, and vaudeville, and it found immense popularity during the years he was with Lu Watters, Bob Scobey, and as a single. Banjo in hand, Clancy came to Chicago to work with one of the area's best dixieland groups, the Salty Dogs, and this album, the result of their partnership, shows how much Clancy has been missed since his death in 1971.



Yank Rachell: MANDOLIN BLUES. Blues mandolinist without compare, Yank is here reunited with his long-time buddies Sleepy John Estes and Hammie Nixon, as well as with a young newcomer, Mike Bloomfield (whose first LP session this was). Yank and the group re-create the mood and sound of the black jug and string bands of the '30's. Recorded about the same time as the well-known Kweskin and Even Dozen bands, Yank's LP has survived the test of the time as only a true original can.

Roosevelt Sykes: HARD DRIVIN' BLUES. Though Sykes albums have appeared on the market with disarming regularity in recent years, *Hard Drivin' Blues* remains, for many, the classic Sykes, capturing all his "corruptible" good humor and influential piano technique. Sykes is the king of the blues pianists, and this is the album that shows why. Well-known Chicago guitarist Homesick James Williamson provides sympathetic backup on the double-necked guitar-bass.



DS-606

DS-607.

Delmark Records, 4243 N. Lincoln, Chicago, Ill. 60618 [312] 528-8834