NOVEMBER 1975

ONE DOLLAR

CANADA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE



LEO SMITH

) herbie hancock man-child

FROM COLUMBIA

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I'm Beginning To See The Light, Willow Weep For Me, Blue 'N Boogie, Oh Gee, Things Ain't What They Used To Be, A-Wong Came Herb, Satin Doll.

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Tillie's Twist, Pretty Ditty, Tell Me More, Damzon D'Amor, My Kind Of Gal, Blue Echo.

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Background Blues, Things Ain't What They Used To Be, Jumpin' At The Woodside, The Meeting Place, Blues For Ilean, Lady Be Good, Whisper M & I, Eric's Edge.

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The Texas Twister, Talk Of The Town, Take Me Back Baby, Chicago, Boogie Woogie, Topsy, Gee Baby Ain't I Good To You.





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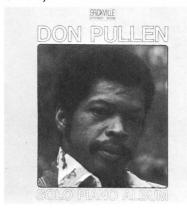
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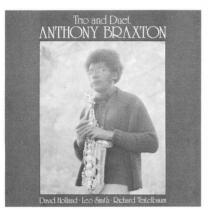
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CEO SMITH

interview by Bill Smith



BILL SMITH: This year, in Chicago, was the tenth anniversary of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Music (A.A.C.M.) which shows that it isn't exactly a new school of thought. Were you involved in the early movement of that school?

LEO SMITH: Well, I consider very early because I got to Chicago in January of '67.

Bill: You're not from Chicago?

Leo: No, I'm from Leland Mississippi. When I arrived there I had just gotten out of the army and met Braxton. A friend of mine who was playing music with me when I was in the army had also spent some time in Korea, where Braxton was stationed, so they knew each other. He gave me Braxton's telephone number, so when I got in town I called him. That was during Braxton's frantic - real frantic period, you couldn't really keep up with him, he'd be moving, darting here and there. He told me about the A.A.C.M.

We played some pieces, some of his pieces, one of my pieces and I had the Ornette Coleman book by Gunther Schuller, but we didn't get regularly started into a group, but we talked about it. Joseph Jarman, Charles Clarke and Thurman Barker did a concert in a coffee house, and at the concert Lester Bowie and Roscoe Mitchell came in and I talked to Roscoe and Roscoe said, "Yeah man, come over Saturday where we're having a meeting, I'llrecommend you to become a member." I had already asked Braxton about becoming a member but it was during a strange period for Braxton, he was a little bit leery, he wasn't sure if he should recommend me, but Roscoe did and I got in the following week. I would say yes I was one of the early members.

<u>Bill:</u> Was Richard Abrams the main motivating force of all that, at that point?

Leo: Well in terms of organization he was and also he had the orchestra, the

AACM orchestra, at that time he was doing all the music, basically. After I got in, it began to switch a little bit. I did a lot of music, Roscoe did a lot of music and Braxton brought a few pieces down, that was the extent of other people's contributions. Sometimes Joseph Jarman would bring his music and try to go through it. He'd take it back the same day.

<u>Bill:</u> It was hard in those days, some of the music that people were conceiving?

Leo: All the music was hard at that time. Joseph wanted almost immediate kinds of action. I could understand what he was after, there would be a few mistakes and he'd say, 'Well let's fold it up''. It was a very good period though, we played a lot of music then when everyone could contribute to the ensemble. Richard Abrams had been asking people to bring music and no one had. So all of a sudden I brought music, Roscoe brought music, everyone had been writing for small en-

sembles. After that got started the bulk of the music that was played by the orchestra was Richard Abrams', Roscoe's and mine. Just before we went to Europe, which was '69, Braxton brought some pieces and he gave the entire orchestra another picture, so we had four distinct forces that were happening and that was the music that we played.

Bill: Did you play in Mississippi before you came to Chicago?

Leo: Oh yes, I don't remember the year, but I've been playing for about eighteen years. I started off, believe it or not, playing drums. The reason I said 'believe it or not" is because I lasted on the drums about two weeks. The teacher, a fellow by the name of Mr. Jones, changed me over to French horn, I played French horn for a couple of months and it just wasn't happening. Mr. Jones was still very dissatisfied with the French horn, he came in one day to give me a lesson and got so frustrated he left and went into the next room to give another friend of mine a trumpet lesson. He got very angry with this fellow because he wasn't making it on the trumpet. So in all that confusion he'd taken the French horn from me and the trumpet from the other fellow and switched us around. That was the best thing he did because the other fellow developed into a very good Frenchhorn player and I developed into a good trumpet player.

This was all part of our school orchestra training, in fact I organized the first jazz orchestra there. This school band was a high school marching and concert band. And that's all we had. Marching music like Sousa, yes those marches, but we had some concert pieces I guess. Death In The Maiden, I forget who that was by. Some European composers that had been broken down for the concert band size. I had been playing trumpet for two months before I started playing in blues bands. You see my stepfather is a recorded musician who plays the blues, he doesn't play actively now, but in those days he was very active. He had his own radio program, his name is Eric Wallace but his professional name was Little Bill. There are a couple of records that he was on during that time. By being in this kind of home I was able to learn the blues very early. Because of the financial condition of my family I was afraid to bring the trumpet home because Ithought that maybe they would feel that it was too expensive to be involved in music. I played the trumpet for about two months and no one knew it, so when I finally got the nerve to bring it home my stepfather began immediately to show me what was happening in the blues. He plays guitar, piano and occasionally drums, he showed me exactly what was happening. A couple of weeks after that I went out and got myself a gig in a blues band because he wouldn't let me play with him to start. I was good, I felt very natural towards the trumpet.

Bill: Do you think that coming from the south has anything to do with the power of the music, as historians wrote about in the books?

Leo: Yes I do. It has been one of the strongest focus points in American musical developments.

Bill: Do you feel there is some kind relationship between the plantation songs and what has happened in jazz?

Leo: I think so, except I tend to be reserved about the category of vocal (artists) music, and instrumental music. I think it very definitely had an effect on it, it was responsible for a lot of the open areas of sound that was happening. It's interesting because I read about the development of the voice, the black voice in spirituals, from a fellow by the name of Harold Johnston, he was one of the early people to write on the spirituals (black person I'm talking about) who also wrote music. This man said that during the times of the development of the spirituals (he traced it down and researched himself), what made that music so powerful was that people would sing outside and develop the voice by singing out in the open space. That has been a strong thing. My tradition coming through the high school system of playing outside for football games, as well as basketball, because in Mississippi it was a little later that they built the basketball gyms, so we often played outside. A new kind of power. No microphones, plus in the blues bands we played things like picnics and different kinds of shows that they would have outside. It was a whole experience. I would say in that sense the entire tradition of music being outside and development of the voice outside is part of the same tradition.

Bill: The school system in the United States is unique really. Other countries do not have this school band system to such a degree. Are the teachers teaching in the schools the right kind of people to discover a special talent?

Leo: I...think so. Later after Mr. Jones left a fellow named Henderson Halbert, a very fantastic trumpet player came to teach. I think that was one of the things that inspired me most about playing trumpet, because he played the trumpet, whereas Mr. Jones was a clarinet-saxophone player, and by this man being able to play the trumpet, he could teach me in a very unique way. He never told me anything about technique, about scales, anything like that. He would often get me from class and say let's play these pieces. I learned from actually playing and not from taking an exercise. I didn't know what exercises were until I went in the army. I didn't know what a key was until I went into the army. Everything that I learned through his teaching was done through actual practice. I could play in all the keys. I could play all the music. I could read the music, but as far as the technical side of what was happening inside the different things, he didn't explain that. It was straight ahead. I would say it was a perfect example of a way to teach this music, by participating in it.

Army bands are incredibly important. The very first important army band was James Reese Europe. His talent was brought in by the federal government, he was signed in a regular contract and put together an orchestra of all black players. This is a long time ago, during the first world war. This man put together one of

the first bands to tour Europe. In fact I'll tell you an interesting story, it's in one of the books I read. When they toured Europe they played in France. French musicians thought that their instruments were made to sound the way they sounded. They didn't believe what was happening out of the instruments so - you know what they did? They switched instruments. After switchinginstruments the Frenchmen produced the same kind of music they were doing and James Reece Europe's band produced the same kind of music they were playing. So they said okay let's change the music, that's the problem. So they changed the music, they were marches, but when they played those marches, they improvised them in different points, they added, they did the number of things that the creative musician did and the French musicians were amazed. It's what they called at the time syncopated music. That's the beginning of the jazz period.

<u>Bill:</u> Then it was jazz? <u>Leo:</u> Very close, I think so because Sidney Bechet played in Europe with Will Marion Cook who was the first person to organize a complete show of all black performers. He wrote all the music and Paul Lawrence Dunbar did the lyrics and text. And they did a performance of "Clorindy, the Origin of the Cake-Walk" in 1898. Those two people, James Reese Europe and William Marion Cook are important links in the development of jazz music, and also the orchestra, because that is what they were dealing in.

Bill: Jim Europe's band originally was an army band?

Leo: Yes it was an army band, but he had selected all the musicians and they were all signed on contract. The same thing happened with that fellow who wrote String Of Pearls, Glenn Miller. Same thing happened with him, he was in the air force, but he had also selected the players that were going to play in organizing this band. The army bands have played a very strong point in this whole tradition.

Bill: A lot of the players learn the conventional techniques of the music too, don't they?

Leo: I think it's more so because of the opportunity to play every day, rather than the technique, because most of them go in there with the thorough knowledge of reading. Myself when I went in I knew this, I just didn't know what was a Bb scale, what was an F scale, and so forth. The army school of music ran, must have been 4 1/2 months, it was in Fort Rining Wood, Mo. They teach regular theory and then I learned what made a particular scale. I found it very interesting. After getting out of the army I went to the conservatory in Chicago (Sherwood School of Music), where I found that the material I'd go over in a year's time I'd already gone over before in the army in four months. The army had a more advanced way of teaching than they did in the conservatory.

We performed in public in the army an awful lot. The most important thing is you get a chance to play every day. That's when I first began to understand the relationship of the newer music that was happening. That's when I heard Ornette Coleman. The same time I bought his book, I put together my own little group with a drummer, bass player, and myself. We worked around through that music, sounding like Ornette Coleman and others.

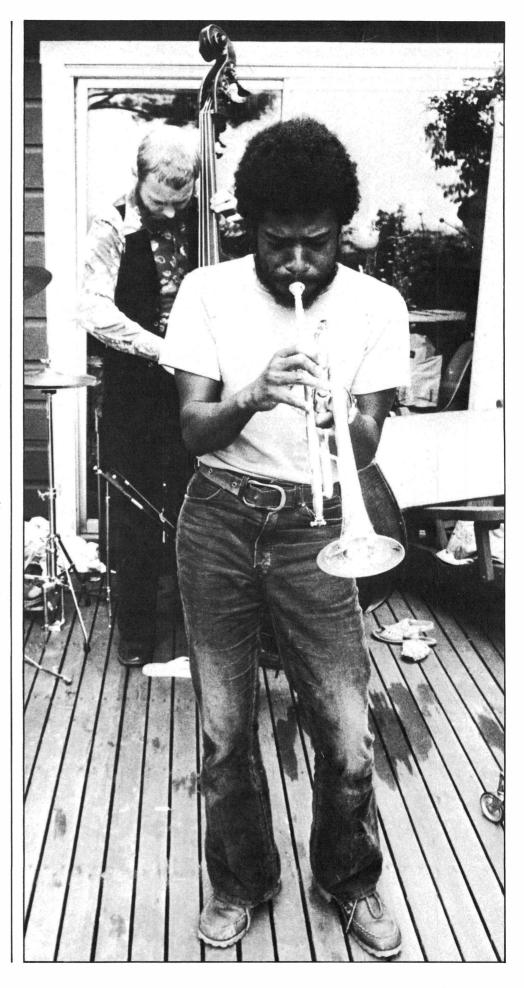
I went to Italy for eleven months. That band was very good. We were a post band, we played dignitary functions, if a senator would come to the country we played those things. We were on a propaganda mission to play in all the villages in Italy. We had a regular season that we would do these things. For five or six months we'd break. I got the chance to hear some of the greatest military bands on earth. I heard the personal band of Nasser. We played the International Military Band Festival. The band there from Egypt was the grandest spectacular thing you'll ever see. Beautiful trumpet players. They improvise in their music while marching. I heard the British International Band of the Queen there, the International band of the Italians, the Germans and Scots. Our band through an error got to participate in that particular performance, which should have gone to the air force band from Heidelberg that represents the United States. They should have gotten that particular performance, not our army band. We played it but we were totally outmatched. They were the best in their country. Our band was good but not the best. It wasn't the best in Europe by far. But it was good. This was in 1963.

<u>Bill:</u> So when you came out of the army that's when you went to Chicago? Did anyone in Chicago at that time consciously know that they were developing an entirely new concept of music?

Leo: I'm sure. In our meetings sometimes we would talk about what was happening in the music. Everybody there was very much aware of what they were doing. Very much aware. Everyone - the music represented a new, when I say new I mean another expression of the level of consciousness about the music. I'm speaking strictly in musical terms. Everyone was conscious of the types of form and types of structures they were using. People were very interested in research. In fact, after Braxton, Leroy Jenkins and I began to play together myself, Joseph Jarman and Braxton formed together a little group, not a musical group, just a little inner group, and once a week we'd meet at Braxton's house on the South side and we would listen to music and analyze it. We talked about things we hoped to develop. We would talk about these things. This was as organized as the whole process of sound, rhythm and silence.

<u>Bill:</u> Is it possible that none of it was accidental, the entire concept of improvised music. Historians write it as though it trickled along, it seems perhaps it didn't.

<u>Leo:</u> No. I read about Joseph Oliver and the Dodds Brothers in a book that Martin Williams did. It considers these people in 1923 and 1924 who had considered themselves, and rightly so, serious artists. The tradition has always been there and I don't think that it happened accidentally. I have a theory of accidentalism.



One thing, I'll go back to this fellow who asked Sidney Bechet how do you do this, and Bechet said everyone should go their own way. That has to be interpreted, it has to be broken down. It's a way of speaking, a code way of speaking, it's esoteric to say that. The esoteric aspect would be to say what you're doing. There are some players now who feel that way, that they should keep whatever they are doing to themselves, just give the most mystical answer that they can, say that I just played it. The critics unfortunately took that to be literally what was said. That needs to be translated.

Bill: The Chicago school is the first school in the last twenty years that seems musically aware of the past. A lot of modern bebop players knew about Louis Armstrong but they certainly didn't know about James Reese Europe and Will Marion Cook - I find that the new players now are much more interested in where it all came from. They read about it, they listen to records, and this seems to be a peculiarity of the energy that came out of Chicago. Is there a reason you think that all this research is going on?

Leo: Yes it was the times mostly, during those times by being such an early period. Incidentally, I have selected a particular date that I consider creative music in America started. It started when the Fisk Jubilee Singers, from Fisk University, went to Europe, which was 1865. They went there as a unit singing spirituals. They conquered, when I say conquered, I mean presented - they presented a black traditon of music that the world had never heard before. So I take that date as being officially the beginning of creative music in America. So we had this entire tradition until 1965 which makes a hundred years. Because of the times no one was actually qualified to write about this particular music and certainly black writers weren't getting published then. Harold Johnston, who I spoke about earlier, wrote about spirituals but didn't get published. I do believe that people like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie had a full understanding of the complete span of the music, in terms historically, of whatever was available at that time, because you know that only in the last ten years has there been a really comprehensive type of research.

<u>Bill</u>: A lot of writers have taken this aproach in the last ten years. Is this a newera?

Leo: It's a newerabut it serves also for confusion, because a lot of people write that are able to put together words and sentences and paragraphs and books who just don't know what they are talking about. It's a beautiful period but the listener and those really interested in knowing about the complete aspects of this music have to read everything and then take the best of it. Because I do that myself. I read everything and I haven't found anything yet that I like. But I read everything!

 $\underline{\operatorname{Bill:}}$ Is it possible then that the old media might perhaps have to be abandoned because they don't appear they can change.

Leo: They have to, if not abandon, at least people shouldn't look to them for answers in terms of journalistic things,

at this time. Usually magazines cover a certain period. When you plant a new seed out in the woods, or on your lawn, the old tree is there, it should still stay there. You shouldn't take it down but let that new tree grow up also. All these people that are around now, let them stay, and if they are able to grow, include the newer aspects into their way of presenting what they think about music, and newer magazines to deal with this particular area of contemporary music, should either come into existence or the older magazines should bring that into their category.

Bill: Well we're an older magazine but we find that you can write about all of it. You shouldn't "periodize" it, say that this is jazz and this isn't, but be left to decide this ourselves. So the magazine doesn't have an editorial policy in that way.

<u>Leo:</u> You don't do that. That's one of the best ways. Some magazines can be very dangerous.

<u>Bill:</u> Is this one of the reasons you've started writing your own philosophies of music and started publishing them?

Leo: This is the very reason. Most of the things I've written, I've done to try to enlighten my people, for this strong reason most of our music has never been exclusively at our disposal. Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton during their early periods, when they reached a certain level in terms of demanding money, immediately were taken out of their neighbourhoods, the black environment in America. So a man here who owns these portions, and controls the clubs, can pay this amount of money, they can easily pull this ensemble, this orchestra, and have it play almost exclusively to white audiences. I think it happened with all of the groups up until the last fifteen years. The same thing can even be said about Ellington. He appeared mostly outside the black community.

There's a socialogical reason for the music being excluded from black people and that, in itself, boils down to economics, and economics boils down to politics, and politics boil down, in this instance, to racism. That word covers a lot of ground, it covers racism of all levels, social and cultural. In America one of the most effective ways of reaching black people has been through live performances. If the musicians are taken out of the black community at large in America, then there's no live performance. The second aspect is the radio has been a very important tool for black people, for all people it's one of the most effective means of communication. From the very beginning everyone owned radios, so what happens, they don't put it on the radio. You get a little bit here, a little bit there, but exclusively it's not on the radio. Every period that's come along. If you can't hear it on the radio or in live performance there's nothing on earth to encourage you to go out and buy a record. The black environment in America has not had the opportunity to grow exclusively along with the music as it has developed, therefore their preference has been rather strange. And that preference is because of the society and not because of the people.

<u>Bill:</u> What happens when you arrive with a situation like Motown? They've managed to take over radio stations in entire areas of the country. Is this a money/power game?

Leo: That aggressiveness in terms of money comes from the same source. People organized in terms of the money treatment. Motown has the opportunity because of the prestige it has gained through promoting the more popular elements of music that they can sell. My theory is you can sell all of this music if you present it right. Through live performance, broadcasts and also recording and published scores. These four elements can sell all the music that's available on earth. If it's done with the energy, intelligence and great love that's required, it can be done, it would enlighten this entire country. If this would happen people would begin to respect music in a way they haven't till now. It's so strange for someone to go to you saying 'I like that piece because it's more melodic or melodious, but the other pieces I couldn't take." That division in that particular person, comes from the person, not from the music. But if they had more published music scores, opportunity to hear it on the radio, see it on television and all the media and also local newspapers covered it, then the person would realize the extent of the growth of the music and wouldn't accept one portion of the music while rejecting what they consider to be not important.

Bill: That's been a predominant thing in the whole of jazz from the listening public's point of view. That's why they've developed schools and periods, the cool period, the bebop period, the swing period, the Dixieland period, and New Orleans, and now they call the music avant garde because categories are easier to put together. You can sell it if you call it something. I hear you or Lester Bowie or Don Cherry (who almost sound like Louis Armstrong) in your own context. What's going to happen now that the music is becoming such a spectrum?

Leo: If this concept of media can be utilized there's a great revolution that has to happen in America for things to go on as a functioning society. The musics that are happening now are direct announcements of the humanityhood that exists whenever these types of changes are made.

Bill: The very period that you people were developing and becoming public was the same period that the media was announcing that jazz was dead. This meant that the old players who were playing improvised-melody forms were dying because they were aged men. Will this take more effort? No one seems to write about it outside of the inner circle of jazz magazines

<u>Leo:</u> The trade magazines. Being in my home now I should be able to pick up the paper if Anthony Braxton or Lester Bowie play within an hundred miles of here. I think in that local daily newspapers there should be a review of creative music along with the classical music. Now we have them extensively in classical music from here and there. But the creative music...we don't find it.

<u>Bill:</u> Earlier today we discussed something about a black writer who wrote just as irresponsibly as a white writer. Why would he not be defending his own culture?

Leo: For the same reason, he has not had the opportunity to grow along with the music. That's important. There are people who have the opportunity but reject it. I know for a fact that he has read my book and tried to talk about it but everything he tried to talk about was to impose his idea that creative music does not change. Black music, but I for one prefer the title creative music, is moving into a world culture now. We're moving into an area where communication and technology has reached the stage that everyone on this globe, every people, can be seen in their daily activities, also their falls and disasters. Immediately on television and in the press, so if this is happening, which I feel it is, we're moving towards a point where the earth is going to polarize all the cultures. A world music will happen. A world art will happen. A world dance will happen. A world philosophy will develop. By this I do not mean a levelling out of all the cultures into one. That is where you kill the human being. Then you don't have the beautiful reality of the African, you don't have the beautiful reality of the Asian, all you have is a motivating force that would control the world culture then by all practical points of reasoning it would be European. Everything else would either be sub-bracketed or smoothed into that area. That's the point of the universality of European standards as a measure for what happens on earth. But European music is very late in the history of music. In fact Africans had developed a very distinct music long before Europe had developed itself as a society. The Chinese and Indians, the people in Bali for example. India had a system, if we speak of early India. Four to five hundred BC the Egyptians had a system of notation called Sent. They would organize the tone or sound aspects of a piece of music. The rhythm was not there, the melody was not there. but the entire piece of music would function within that particular sound. It's something like the ragas of Indian music, something like scales in western music, but it was a little bit different because of the amount of vibrations within each of the tones. They would take that and build all the improvisations of it. They would improvise from that. This was four or five hundred years BC. An extremely long time ago.

<u>Bill</u>: I think one of the predominant things that has made criticism have this standard of European music is because the black music of America became notated and organized in European style.

Leo: It was notated back then. If this system in Egypt began four or five hundred years BC with these particular elements of sound notated then in its essence that is the beginning of notation of musical sounds. I know for a fact the Indians had a notation system long before Europe. To sum up the concept of western notation system, the European being inherits, just as we all now inherit, everything from the past.

And everything in the future is going to inherit not only what we have but everything that came from the past. So this system of notation is one that's gifted from the progress, the evolutionary stage of human kind.

<u>Bill:</u> It should make us bigger, not narrower. But it is because we were clinging to the one before isn't it.

Leo: That causes the confusion, yes. But in terms of growth, I'm saying that Europe....paper was discovered by the Chinese. They began to write things on paper. In Europe paper was manufactured on a very magnificent, beautiful level. It was innovative. Composition had its greatest moments because of paper. Do you know it took two/three hundred years. In its earliest period, Europe started in a significant sense, during the five hundreds and six hundreds after Christ, they had the chants, that period that was a little notation system. Interestingly enough paper wasn't even in there. So therefore the process of writing out every idea of music had a medium for it, paper. And it developed. It just so happened it developed in Europe which is beautiful.

Now we are watching and witnessing another innovation, magnetic tape. Magnetic tape introduces the age of the improviser. Because it's not necessary to write music in its detail whole, it's not necessary to do that. You can structure things, write out what some people call heads, but I tend to call it scores rather than the word head, because the word head to me refers just to the little part. With the score you've got the entire body. You have structure and form. I tend to use the word score. You can score several different elements that you want incorporated inside the improvisation and go into a studio and play into that mike and that magnetic tape picks it up and that is another medium that has come after paper. That's why the most important thing now, not to say that composition is not important, but the most important media for expressing yourself now is magnetic tape. You can go into the studio and just play out of your head. One instrument. And you've got a beautiful piece of music there before you. Technology is a very important development of human kind, it is going to affect everything, it already has affected everything, including the change that's the weapon for change. Also in terms of how to get people to hear more of this music and put it on the different mediums.

Bill: I feel in twenty years from now it should even out - I'm more excited than I've ever been and I've lived through bebop, post bebop into the early avant garde. But now there is an incredible excitement going on. Is it affecting you, are you playing more publicly? Are you getting more work, are people recognizing you? Are you feeling this too? Are musicians feeling this too?

Leo: Just the fact that Anthony Braxton and the Art Ensemble have played in Japan is one realization of that. Another fact is that just recently Braxton has begun to play on different continents. That's an exciting thing. People like Oliver Lake are getting their music recorded. Because

of the excitement people are not afraid to hear solo music, to hear ensemble music and to hear orchestra music, and recognize it as that. Prior to this period of great change, and partly that is now, who would dare play a solo except the piano player? Before Anthony did his double LP of alto saxophone solos who would consider doing all alto saxophone? Roscoe recorded three solos on Congliptious, that was first, and also Marion Brown had recorded a solo piece. But that's not the point I'm trying to make. That period was beginning to enter on so-called instruments that don't play harmony. Braxton plays chords, Iplay chords, Lester Bowie plays chords, Coltrane played chords.... Ornette Coleman. They play chords on so-called single line instruments. I would strongly give Braxton credit for being the person to initiate, in an absolute sense, the concept of solo for the greater improviser and also establishing once and for all that the so-called single line instrument has more possibility for solo work and other areas of expression than people have understood. I'm speaking purely in the solo reference.

<u>Bill:</u> Now it's been done, lots of other people are going to do it aren't they?

Leo: Certainly. Keith Jarrett has several solo albums, a three record set of solo piano music. Roscoe Mitchell has a solo record, I have a solo record and there are other avenues of solo music. The area that I pursue has not been the one-instrument approachbut I approached the solo from the process of the multiinstruments. Not only for texture but because I consider every instrument I play, and those that I may, to be one gigantic instrument. Whatever is being heard is like hearing the high register of the piano that I'm playing on my trumpet, or maybe on my steel form, or my drum, is just one aspect of that entire gigantic instrument. That's the ultimate reason. The secondary reason would be because it gives me a chance to introduce vibrations of the lips which come through the trumpet, the motor action of the arms which vibrate or whatever I'm playing the rhythm on. The metallic aspect of it attracts me. The theatrical element attracts me including not only the drummer but dance. When I move from one instrument to the next I consider that a process of dance. I'm speaking the words to the music. I'm moving through the image of dancing. I'm shaping myself as I move, not in terms of consciousness, but as a result of the music, to play the music. To reach and get my seal horn and blow it is an act of dance. If you notice it was present in the early tradition in the New Orleans aspect of the music. I strongly believe it never left music. When Edward Kennedy Ellington walks on stage and says 'Good afternoon, I love you madly" that is pure theatre, that's beautiful theatre. That's serious theatre like Shakespeare, like Chekhov. Like Leroi Jones, that's drama. Thelonious Monk. Willie the Lion Smith. When they got ready to play there was a whole beauty in it. Those people who would sit at the piano, when they called the piano 'doing tricks', that entire aspect. When



New Dalta Ahkri - Reflectativity Kabell K-2 Leo Smith (trumpet and percussion) Wes Brown (bass) Anthony Davis (piano and flute)

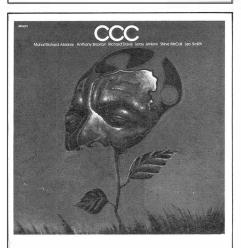
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Creative Construction Company Muse 5071

Leroy Jenkins (Violin, viola, recorder, toy xylophone, harmonica, bicycle horn)

Anthony Braxton (Alto sax, soprano sax, clarinet, flute, contrabass clarinet, orchestral chimes)

Leo Smith (Trumpet, flugelhorn, french horn, seal horn, misc. percussion) Muhal Richard Abrams (piano, cello, clarinet)

Richard Davis (bass)

Steve McCall (drums, misc. percussion)

Side One: Muhal (Part I) Side Two: Muhal (Part II), (Live Spiral), (Total Time) Recorded May 19, 1970.

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one man walks up and tells the other, "Get up son, you're not doing anything. Let me play this." That is part of the tradition. And that's African, by the way. The music is all one and a lot of people are confused by this as well. People have narrowed African music down to riffs and antiphonium setups where one has music placement from several different areas. These aspects have been common property of humankind since they've existed. It is happening in Asia and Europe and Africa. These are not the qualities of African music that I recognize as being foremost priority for me when I listen to it or write in reference to it. The thing that's important to me is the underlying science behind it, the motivating spirituality that's inside of it. Dancing and moving from one instrument to another when playing is one of the qualities in African music, or African culture, that has never left the manifestations of black music in America, black culture in America - it's never left. I feel most strongly that African music is the origin, a scientific way. African music has played the strongest part, if we speak in terms of "newness", that would give it the title of initiating American music. Because if that is so, which is what I feel then the other two elements are Indian and European. We know that the European is probably a little bit stronger than the Indian, but those three elements are there.

<u>Bill:</u> The newer music form has developed past standard techniques, is this an important step in the development?

Leo: When Joseph Oliver comes out and puts a coke bottle in histrumpet, or a hat or someone's coat over it and blows. that altered and dramatically revolutionized the concept of performing on an instrument that had never happened before. The new technique that is being introduced now is compatible to the same degree as in that period. By playing many different instruments now you hear different relationships. When I say relationships I mean how these sounds and how these rhythms fit in an organized way for themselves and manifest as music. The relationships are necessitating a new way of looking at how you play your instrument, where you put your instrument on the stage, how you are going togo from one instrument to the next. That's an entire routine. I have on different occasions structured different directions in which I would go from one instrument to another. Physically I have. I did it on paper. I have structurally mapped out a particular direction I would go in one particular piece. For example let's say I have my steel form and the percussion that hangs from it there and I have the gongs here. I have my commercial instruments, by that I mean the trumpet, on this side and over there we've got some flutes. Okay. There were occasions when I've structured to go from the flute to the trumpet and back to another flute, from flute to the trumpet to the steel form, that's almost like a beat. That's a long angle but it's a short angle. From flute to the trumpet and to the steel form, that's a structure you see. (NB A steel form is the system that Leo Smith places his instruments about himself).

Bill: When I said technique I meant, I know that Clifford Brown, Navarro,Dizzy Gillespie, who are just three of my favourite trumpet players, had chops all over. They extended the range and flexibility of the horn. But they were confined in a system weren't they? I think that you and Lester Bowie and Don Cherry probably have the same kind of chops as well.

<u>Leo:</u> There's another person we shouldn't leave out and I think he's one of the major innovators on the trumpet, Don Ayler.

<u>Bill:</u> Don Ayler created a different attitude towards it and there was another man - Norman Howard - who unfortunately I've never heard in person.

Leo: I've never heard Norman Howard myself but I've heard other people mention his playing abilities. These players that you've mentioned I know their music. It is a different technique but getting back to another point, I don't consider they were confined. They approached it from a different angle. They made the trumpet more fluent, more dextrous, I've never heard any music anywhere that could enclose the technique or technical proficiency of Navarro, Clifford Brown, Gillespie, Armstrong or Parker just to name a few. Thelonious Monk. Navarro. This man had a natural technique, I don't think he developed it from studying with a teacher. But just on the opposite side you have Clifford Brown and Booker Little who studied extensively; they also advanced the instrument. Now with Don Ayler, Don Cherry, Lester Bowie and myself, and other people, we've all attacked the instrument from a different angle, and have gotten some of the same results from attacking it from different angles, but each of us has gone different ways to present that problem, and as a result there's new technique. On my solo record, the small piece in it for the trumpet, which sounded like air sounds, basically, but that's not the whole story of that. That piece utilized a different technique, takes the entire process of music making and turns it around a different way. When I played that piece, the lip did not vibrate as normal for the trumpet. In this instance, which happened during a period when I was looking for things to do once a week that I hadn't done in another period of my musical life. I would sit in the practice room and never play anything on that particular day unless I could think of something I didn't do before. This particular piece and other similar techniques came out of that particular experience. So how that music is made, the process that manifests that music, is that the tongue vibrates rather than the lip, and the tongue is utilized inside the cup of the mouthpiece, not inside my mouth. Not only do you blow the tongue inside the mouth but inside the mouthpiece. That's what gives that sound. I carve and shape the sound with my tongue. That gives the particular intervals. If I want to go from a low to a medium to a high register, I use a different shape of my tongue to carve the air or put more pressure inside the cup. The sound produced comes from the tip of the tongue vibrating.

 $\underline{\text{Bill:}}$ Do you think you're playing jazz?

Leo: No, I look at it in terms of periods. I look at it as when we look at the Baroque period, the Classical period, or the Romantic period. Therefore for me there's the spirituals, the other areas I'm not considering in this particular analysis because of the occupation they are in as their field and shout songs. That was during a very strange period of captivity. I take spirituals, the syncopated music, from there into blues into jazz. Ragtime and the related piano music, stride and boogie woogie. Those periods I collect in the different years. Ragtime came along the same time as the spirituals. Long before Joplin did his pieces, ragtime was in existence for a long time. In fact ragtime was not just the piano, it was played by anyone who played music. It developed into a piano music, it became a piano music, but it was not a piano music. From ragtime into blues to jazz. After jazz, swing, then the newer period until we get to contemporary music. I for one have decided to call all this music creative music, for myself, that's the way to talk to people in relationship as creative musicians. I should explain that term and why I use it. Creative music means to me improvisers. Whether they do an absolute pure improvisation where there's no problem of anything but that you get there intuitively and consciously, you do it collectively, and play a beautiful piece of music. There have been masterpieces done like that. Or you structure some elements which may be done in a verbal way, or you notate, which is done in the way of a score. Being that as it is, these three different elements, the thing that determines whether it is creative music or something else is if it's predominantly improvised, if it is predominantly improvised to me it's creative music. The players are creative musicians and the form that they use is improvisation. The predominant aspect of the music is improvised. On the other side of the coin we have classical music, composers and interpreters, these people being creative also. Someone asks don't you think classical music is creative? No, but creative music is the title like classical music. In the negative sense it means that other musics are not classical music. In the positive sense that music which has derived itself out of Europe from the greatest masters is classical music. That music which has the improvisers as the greatest masters, is creative music. Even inside. The different periods are only incidental. I would rather not have the periods just blanket classical and creative music.

<u>Bill</u>: There are a lot of attitudes which say or feel what's happening in black improvised or contemporary music is that it is utilizing a lot of the structures of avant garde white music. Do you feel this?

Leo: No. That's one of the culturist propagandas. As a music there is a tradition that people have looked towards, the Third Stream tradition is a term that comes to mind. Even inside that was not what it was meant to be. The man that got all the publicity and put the philosophy of it was



Gunther Schuller, who was a composer. If we listen to that music, that music was essentially composed and incidentally improvised. He had classical musicians there and he had creative musicians there. The creative musicians would function as improvisers and the classical musicians would function as interpreters. That is something which means neither of the two understood each other's music. It sounded that way, certainly. There are several examples of very good music which came out of that period. The Modern Jazz Quartet for example have produced very authentic improvised music, some of the most influential music that you can imagine. It has influenced me and some of the people that others have been influenced by have been affected by that process.

I would say in music the fundamental laws of each music are the same. The improviser, all he does is organize sound, rhythm, silence and space instantaneously, as it is happening. The composer does the same thing on a slower process. His function often being initially inspired, is over a period of time, craftsmanship. It's impossible to tell me that a composer is inspired over a piece of music for twelve years, one composition for twelve years, that becomes a taskwork of craftsmanship. What I will recognize is that each time that composer works on that piece that he's inspired in the contribution that he contributes to the piece that day. Other than that - those are things that I can see as

common, the fundamental laws. There are people that are actually influenced by each other. Gunther Schuller is one who is influenced by this music or Luciano Berio, the Italian composer, John Cage at various moments in his music - he once said he hated jazz, but interestingly enough the first tape pieces he made were the taping of a lot of creative jazz records, that was the first electronic tape piece he did. His entire change music process was not instigated by the I Ching book or the Chinese culture as it is, that is a rigid system or philosophy. His process of change, of having events happen very often and on a very creative level which he was after, came out of the improvising tradition, that was already initiated here.

Bill: I was thinking of pecple that you were associated with, Richard Teitelbaum, Garrett List, they seem to be involving themselves with musicians like Anthony Braxton and David Holland and so on, and Anthony and others seem to be involving themselves with them. (That's what I meant by interchange.) (As performers together.)

Leo: (Interms of performance) Richard Teitelbaum I consider an improviser not a composer, now he may disagree with the term, I consider Braxton an improviser not a composer. I consider Ornette Coleman an improviser not a composer. Based on the fundamental laws I feel that I know about the two different musics, the thing that they do most well attracts me as being that point which makes them what

they are. If a person lives outside all the time mostly, and only lives inside once, then that person is considered an outside person, he lives outside.

One way toteach this music is the way I learned how to play marches, by participating in it. Then by utilizing some of the technical books that have been written since 1908. Scott Joplin wrote a book called Six Exercises In Ragtime, an exercise book to give people an insight into the rhythmic structure and development of ragtime piano music. After 1906 or 1908, the most important things that have happened interms of technical knowledge have come from George Russell. That book "The Tonal Organization of..." (we have to read the title) is a very important book. I've read the book, I haven't studied it, which I am going to do. I'm interested in everyone's contribution and I feel in that sense he has contributed vastly. Ornette Coleman is working on a theory book I understand. Last year I completed an exercise book in rhythm that covers every instrument including the voice. The different exercises are written so one person can play the same exercises on any

<u>Bill:</u> Do you intend to stay here in Connecticut and develop all that?

Leo: Yes, I don't know if I'll teach it on a school basis, because I've had such problems trying to do that on an academic level, but I'll do it individually with people. Several months ago I did a session called "The Art Of The Improviser". For eight weeks I taught the formal aspects of blues, based on actuality of blues, and my feeling that was actually being said into it, because I feel that blues is a very misunderstood music and I think that it covers two categories: instrumental/vocal music and it's also an instrumental music. Fletcher Henderson plays The Gold Coast Blues, that was an instrumental blues and the way they played it pertained exclusively to instruments. If you hear Robert Johnson or Joe Turner or Big Joe Williams sing the blues and play the guitar along with it, that's the blues instrumental and vocal. I think it's highly misunderstood.

<u>Bill:</u> Do you feel inclined to do what is traditional for jazz musicians to do and that is go out on the road. Are you involved in that thought?

Leo: I am very much, except I haven't had very much opportunity to do that. I've had a few concerts and I do have New Delta Akri, for which I organized the concept in 1970, and it still exists. I've had two European residences rather than tours. we went there to live and play, we played the Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival of 1972 and several other small places we've played, mostly on the East Coast and New York. We are inclined to travel. The current trio, Anthony Davis on piano and Wes Brown on bass. That particular combination was not in the European residence. The first time it was Henry Threadgill, myself and Leonard Jones. The second time was just Leonard Jones and I. After that is when I organized here in Connecticut with Anthony Davis and a bass player.

Bill: The original trio as I understand

was with Leroy Jenkins and Anthony Braxton.

<u>Leo:</u> That group was originally called the Creative Construction Co.

<u>Bill:</u> That group actually made a lot of records with Anthony Braxton, Leroy Jenkins and yourself.

Leo: That group was very important in the development of this music, and when all the pieces are out people shall really see another side of what was happening, along with everything else that was going on then. The group recorded Three New Compositions of jazz on Delmark Records and did two records on the BYG label. Alan Bates has just released one called "Silence". That was done in 1969, in America, just before we went to Europe. The first concert we played in New York after returning is going to be released, just half of it, another half of it is due to be released. If I'm not mistaken, Leroy Jenkins has the master tape of something we did in the studio. A radio performance was also taped.

<u>Bill:</u> You've just released a new record of the trio. How are you going about letting people know of it?

Leo: I've decided to have reviews on this one because I guess I shouldn't impose my own rigid concept on the people in the group. I personally don't particularly believe in reviews, but there is Anthony and Wes, and I don't think I have a right to impose it on them. I would do that for my solo music but when there are other people involved I think it's impossible to do that, it's like being a king and I'm not a king I'm a worker.

 $\underline{\underline{\operatorname{Bill:}}}$ Do you find this a better method than knocking on doors of record companies?

Leo: Most certainly. I've decided for myself, as long as I'm alive, Kabell Records will be active. Ive set for myself to try to release at least one record a year, now that I've gotten everything really off the ground. I've had my record company since 1971 and I've got two records, that's our solo record and "Reflectativity". I have four master tapes here of other materials I plan to release periodically, they are all different instrumentation. I have the master tape of the performance we did at Ann Arbor. That was part of the agreement. I have a radio performance that we did in March with New Dalta Ahkri, with Oliver Lake added. I have that master tape which is good and a couple other tapes of duos that are in my catalogue. I also have another solo performance which I'm going to release.

Bill: So we've got fifty years of Leo Smith music to come.

Leo: On Kabell. I've decided that's going to be my avenue, I'm not going to go to the man at Impulse or the man at Atlantic records or whatever the entire brackets of the people are because I can do it. Eventually it will bring in some kind of income so that I can continue to produce records and put them out. I hope to eventually start releasing my old material through other companies. Give them rights to release for three years, with lease contracts but not an out and out sell. I would never get rid of the masters of any

of my music. It would always be limited to a certain geographical area. For example if someone in Europe released them they would have only Europe and only those areas they could work in within certain set time periods however many years they would handle that material.

 $\underline{\text{Bill:}}$ Do you feel suspicious of the establishment?

Leo: No. I want to do it this way. If I can do it this way and really make a break-through in this entire crust. There have been many musicians before me that have had these ideas, and I've gained from their ideas, the thing that makes my idea different from theirs is I'm not holding out. I did not make the record to hold out and say, when the man comes along to pay me the money I think I'm worth, I'll let him have the master tapes. I didn't do it for that. I'm not in competition with any recording company, whether it's large or small, it's for documentation reasons, and also a much wider area. I want to influence people through my music. I want people to hear the music, be influenced by it, learn from it to make their lives better. I am speaking in absolute sense when I say influence, I mean in terms of musicians, listeners and other artists, even politicians if they could hear. I would like to change people's lives through my music by having the influence on their psyche of the music.

DISCOGRAPHY

Muhal Richard Abrams Young at Heart, Wise in Time (Delmark 423)

Maurice McIntyre Humility in the Light of the Creator (Delmark 419)

Anthony Braxton 3 Compositions of New Jazz (Delmark 415)

Anthony Braxton (Byg 529.315)

Anthony Braxton
This Time.... (Byg 529.347)

Anthony Braxton Trio and Duet (Sackville 3007)

Anthony Braxton Silence (Freedom 40123)

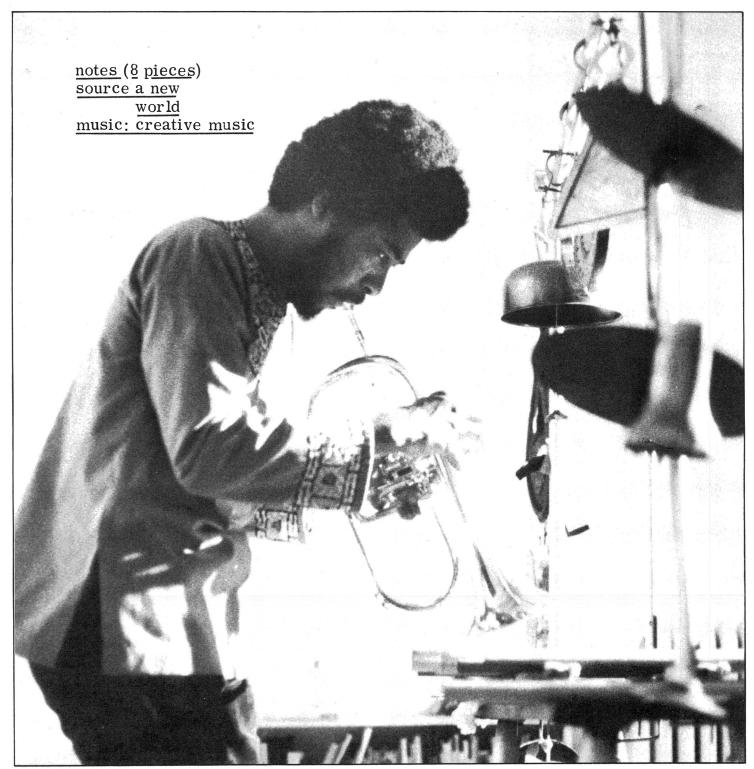
Marion Brown Geechee Recollections (Impulse AS-9252)

Leo Smith
Creative Music-1 (six solo improvisations)
(Kabell K-1)

New Dalta Ahkri Reflectativity (Kabell K-2)

Creative Construction Company (Muse MR 5071)

Bill Smith would like to thank Gerry Rogero for transcribing the original tape of this interview.



Mambo Minkisi: The Mind and Music of Leo Smith

The names of some of the innovating groups in great black music are known - the AACM, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, New Delta Akhri, the Black Artists Group, The Human Arts Ensemble, the Revolutionary Ensemble - but their motions seem planetary and mysterious. A musician, say, Leroy Jenkins, may wander out of the AACM and into the Anthony Braxton trio, then into the formation of his own group and never leave in spirit his origins. The Art Ensemble of Chicago, forged in practical and mystic strengths, record separ-

ately and together, scatter to diverse places (Mitchell to Michigan, Bowie to Jamaica and New York, Fawors and Jarman in Chicago) and then suddenly coalesce brilliantly without warning to conquer New York in the early autumn of 1975. And all the while Leo Smith and his New Delta Akri have transformed tough segments of the university population of New Haven into one of the more knowledgable audiences for new creative music.

While America slumbered, rock-sedated, these musicians parted and joined, parted and joined, on several continents. In the process, men like Anthony Braxton and Marion Brown out-Joyced Joyce in a sense: the Irish man of words proudly signed <u>Ulysses</u> with his points of creativity - "Trieste -Zurich -Paris". But black creators of the seventies depart and return from exile constantly without geographic self-consciousness, eg. Marion Brown - New York-Soest, Holland-New York - Munich - Wurtzburg - Brunswick, Maine-Boston-Middletown-and-many-other-towns-and-cities. The journey and the search.

What this means is this: black musicians of the vanguard are deliberately dissolving all manner of restrictions upon

their creativity. Their travels are indices to the fact that back-home roots and European exposure and New York competition and academic teaching and writing, plus many other experiences, are all grist to the mills of liberation. When Anthony Braxton signs a title of a piece with numerals, dotted lines, and an asterisk, he is saying "I mean to be taken seriously here are summaries of our creativity in code". The code may someday be broken but what is being coded is indestructible: a potent combination of manhood, humility, extreme intelligence, mystic savoring of all depths, and what LeoSmith calls 'first point love". You hear this in the new music. You hear this in the striking elliptical quality to so many titles of the new sound.

One step towards the understanding of new black music is to beginwith the titles, the power of name. Thus Leo Smith's book,

notes (8 pieces)
source a new
world
music: creative music

is in itself a manifesto-poem. You can hear it like some of the star-scattering passages on his horn, ie. as brilliant pinpoints of vocable and silence. But you can also probe it for the rich meaning of mind behind the sound. Leo has been kind enough to share this much of his code:

"Notes is a key word for noting music and the meaning of music. Eight is a number referring to the pieces plus one, ie. 8+my name = 9. Nine is the symbol of the circle, the emblem of universal consciousness which is One. Pieces: "all improvised passages of music are called pieces and that is the proper word. Written compositions are called works. The source? a new world. I'm not talking about America. I'm talking about a new music of distinction, a science of improvisation, given name and the name is: creative music."

If we run his words in fast-motion the title becomes: notations of eight improvised sequences, eight improvisations plus my name, the universal and the particular together, all aimed at the source of a new world, our own creative music.

Leo Smith is really a philosopher, one of the finest that I know. Music and exegetical statements about music frame the basis of his thought. The triumph of his words, music, and wisdom will sweep away so much pretension from the land. When this happens, he will take credit for none of it. He will simply have fulfilled part of his mission, a mission that goes back to and beyond the day in Mississippi when his grandfather turned to him and said: Leo, as far ahead as you go, that's how far back you must go.

Black people have always handled extremes with genius. Good. Baaad. Hot. Cool. Down. High. It was part of the code. Grandfather had laid upon him another portion of his wisdom, go out, far out, but come back, with equal intelligence, far in. Yes, discovering accurate information about African heritage and black classical music. Yes, breaking into the mainstream of world historical happening at the same time. This is the priv-

ilege which the mind and writing and music of Leo Smith lead us to: back-home philosophy, mysticism in the world of real happening. Liberation double deep, leaving spaces for hanging out in the interstices of hard-won social justice.

Leo Smith puts the truth on this nation with a pure-tone book, the one whose title we have just examined. He published it himself in 1973. I read and reread this precious text and found myself transported back to Haiti when a black priest of vodun near Leogane dealt me spades from a pack of Western playing cards. Only it wasn't spades. The cards were code. It was Erzulie, goddess of love, a sign of love. Another person watched a Haitian cultivator scatter tomato seeds in a random pattern in the soil and arrogantly assumed the man did not know what he was doing. But he did. He was an expert cultivator but he wasn't planting. He was giving his friend and master, the black god of cultivation, Zaca, "a little taste". I thought of this episode, too, and then I wondered: how many sacred acts by black persons have not been seen for what they were? The gift, as Archie Shepp once called jazz.

This is where Leo Smith comes in, mambo minkisi, the healing words of the medicines of God. He guards his medicines and his philosophy with a realistic assessment of the world. He is tough. He calls upon his brothers and sisters in his book ''to take upon ourselves the process of recording our own history" and so this book is a vital step in the building of an archive of the insights of improvisation by black men and women who brought this tradition from the classical civilizations of tropical Africa to the Americas. The Biblical ring to the pronouncement, unto ourselves, invoking Scripture of many kinds, is a way of marking the seriousness of what he says. Leo saves conversations, LP's, books, insights, dreams - everything towards the building of black creative history.

Much of his book can be read, if your conscience is not clear, as a total condemnation of all jazz criticism. But what he is really saying is let everyone move to a higher plane of expositions: a new art of writing about music. This dovetails with the demand that jazz and black creative music must be recognized spiritually. Leo continues: "now with all this information (words) the critics were bound to fail. Level of consciousness was never awakened as to the essence of composition. Even the musicians are lost and divided on what is, in essence, creative music; and that shows sadly the real and drastic effect of false interpretation". He is not saying creative music cannot be taken into words. He is saying this: create with equal intensity and respect in the art by which you verbally remember what you hear our music saying and we shall welcome you as comrade.

His music, particularly the splendid LP Reflectativity, reviewed elsewhere in these pages, increases itself into modern consciousness. But it is not to be used. Leo wisely controls rights to his recordings and his writings and the affairs of his performances. Legally protected from

the world, his energies are liberated. He can concentrate on being generous. Black musicians call him up and seek his counsel. And a rising black painter and his poetess wife, and a white street existentialist with a Dolphy LP under his arm, and a young black medical student, and a professor in black studies, and many other persons come to him to learn. To learn in which ways Ellington's Such Sweet Thunder provided a new approach to the orchestra, or to jot down titles from Leo's wide-ranging readings in music and philosophy, plus exquisitely selected LP's in great black music, or absorb his raps on instrumentation: "piccolotrumpet - a different feeling of velocity, because it is so small". These are facets of a man who says: "life is not so petty as to give you but a single opportunity."

That kind of strength informs a sample insight from his book: "the result of this creative exchange (between creative musician and creative listener) immediately revitalizes the essence of the individual ie. philosophically speaking, it takes the human, earth-being, back to the point of reasoning, feeling, beginning in absoluteness. This creates, within the contemporary maze of confusion, a balance of understanding, first point love".

Granted. Creative music is possession by higher force. It ought to be rendered in philosophical terms. Both musician and creative listener change together in the process of coming together. You move beyond common parlance while using the words of the streets. You are never afraid to grow. So Leo lays the truth on us, persuading us to aim high, to become philosophers of jazz and creative black music.

His book is not just about music, in other words. It calls for a respiritualization of mind and attitude in relation to music which is improvised. The calling is clear: "this new musician is termed creative musician, a sensitive being who feels a higher calling and responds by seeking to enter into proper attunement with mind and body - the mind is not confined to body".

I should hope that the fine edge of mysticism which openly (it was always there) pervades the new black music might continuously be noted. Sun Ra and Coltrane are to this truth as Malcolm was to the politics of black manhood and Malcolm himself found liberation following an indelible black thread of spiritual conviction. Black music today demands its listeners steep themselves in Ewe multi-metrics, Mississippi fife-and-drum, Babinga polyphony, Sufism, astrology (a volume remains to be written in jazz theories of signs and compatibilities in the making of viable ensembles), in Mississippi baptist mornings, in the medicines (minkisi) of Kongo.

"It is what makes my life complete" Leo says. The attitude to the great classical traditions of African and Afro-American music-art-life-styles is the spirit in which these gifts will be given or not seen. Leo himself comes to the dense multimetrics of Black Africa, for example, with a pure and reverent eye:

"In African classical art music there is a string music, a percussion music, a vocal music, a different music of wind instruments (ivory trumpets, for example). No matter what size the ensembles are, all the instruments are given equal importance, and with equal importance they are given their autonomy in relation to time (no unison in time)" - (my emphasis).

This is a refreshing way to come to multi-metrics, for he goes to the grain of the egalitarian impulse embedded in such happening since the dawn of creative sound in paleolithic Africa. Taking no credit for his brilliance or his genius, he scatters gem after gem in the course of his exposition. After all, this is his music and he is concerned with spiritual essence and moral meaning. When Leo says to check out the "many flourishing-lines of equal independence" in black classical music I hear him leading us into the center of moral-creative happening.

In the action ethics of the black aesthetic mode, good must be as good as baaad to sanctify without a loss of ecstasy. Thus bends the black musician the technical perfection of his instrument with textures, verbal viscosities, and socially supportive interruptions. There is okra in the harpsichord. Mind is made delicious and body is stamped with intellect. Such strategems, building instant community the moment the music goes around, seem realistic binding forces, unlike many visions of utopia in the West which, somehow, at the end, factor out the plain folks, leaving no space for hangin' out.

Those who are convinced they have the answers will ignore this book, not even know that it exists. But those who are open to the search will learn, by implication, that philosophy is also poised between East and West, philosophy south, south of the railroad tracks, south of the Sahara, south of the East-West axis of military arrogance, south of the Chicago Statler-Hilton, south of everything we have been taught is real and most important, and will be specially enriched.

In the last portion of the book Leo takes the time to offer self-exegesis of his own LP, "Creative Music - 1". This will lessen degree of misunderstanding. He shows us how to consider this LP on its own terms, the solo music of a multiinstrumentalist (conjuring relation to the multi-form, multi-metric music of Africa). His piece, Nine Stones On A Mountain of course recalls the universal number and the notion of perdurance (nine stones). But we are also guided into noting "the form is structured open and the events which occur singly or overlappingly are termed color-modulations". Fascination with color brilliance is exposed. Historians of black creativity will therefore be set in the right direction, towards noting as well, for instance, that in Improvisation #4: "the significant point is that the \mbox{rhythm} is held together through \mbox{color} points, ie. color-rhythm-textures made possible through the use of different types of materials with which to produce the rhythm". The idea of rhythm being held together by color-points is superbly metaphoric. I think of the royal kente cloth of the Akan of Ghana, wherein blue or gold or red or orange color-points bind the meter of the textile patterning together as it flows, while still maintaining, in microanalytic shiftings and minor modulations, spontaneity and surprise answering to the imperatives of life. Ideological puritans will fail to see the relevance of this but the fact that Leo's words are capable of recalling the logic behind the flash upon a textile which an Akan ruler wraps about his body, giving warmth and status and dignity, tells us something, I think, about the deeper social relevance of his mode of thought.

Leo Smith will not waste his energies on petty matters brought to his attention by the lazy and insecure. Instead he challenges us to match his positive embodiment of spiritual conviction in creativity with our own attempts to positively embody what we have been taught and know is really right. Once we are prepared to respect what is really going on here to that extent we will see what is going on. We shall see that within great black music there is ranking and aesthetic criticism, a strong sense of what is moving and what is not. Smith allows part of this hard-won hierarchy to show:

"in free-music we have many forms: structured forms that supply a beginning leading into improvisations; link form, whereby several predetermined elements are linked together to form improvisation and, at its highest level, improvisation created entirely within the improvisor at the moment of improvisation without any prior structuring."

The rise from structure to immediate improvisation parallels the ascending stages by which the ultimate gift of spirit-possession is acquired in some of the traditional religions of Africa and the Black Americas. First there is the stage which Afro-Cubans call bozal, inchoate, where a non-initiate thrashes, as the spirit hits him, in uncontrolled spasms on the floor. (This could be compared to the first trial playing of a musician with his peers, where he "sits in" and finds his skills not yet brought off and is told to leave the band-stand until he can make music).

Then comes formal initiation, often in a forest grove. The black devotee learns how to shape the trembling aura so that it leads smoothly to a higher plane where the face freezes into a mask, an intensely glowing realized mien that announces the visitation of a god. (This is literal woodshedding, worked out in the forest, recalling the idiom by which black musicians refer to absenting themselves until they find their phrasing).

Now the possession is formalized, both in spiritual and performance terms. There follows a rise in the structuring power of the priest or priestess. The day comes when he or she can pass directly from one world to the next, without a trembling preamble, immediately, at will. One moment you are talking to a person. The next moment you are confronted by a god.

The highest levels of spirit possession in black religion compare, I think, with the highest manifestations of improvisation

in creative black music. The reason: both gather strengths of the spirit, and the always increasing power of the gathering leads to ultimate equilibrium.

Men and women in the possession state have prestige; they are powerful sources of divinatory insights into social happening. People in a state of insecurity apply to them and rediscover the ordering segments of the cosmos and see their problems outlined with a clarity they never knew existed. The clarity depends, however, upon their generosity because, if they are not sharing, people will not know them and hence friendship-mediated accurate opinion will not reach the ears of the oracle and judgement will be impurely rendered. From the Piedmont to the tidewater creeks, there is more of this going on than mainline America ever pictured and certain great black musicians are in the middle of it wherever they might be.

To the social theorists who can ingeniously (ie. with humility) learn from the immediate group-producing impact of great black music and discover ways of striking through to liberation without asceticism, a "sensuous revolution" simultaneously proclaimed in tough Jamaican reggae, my prayers. In the meantime, our sanity is protected by men like Leo Smith.

Creative musics are minkisi (sacred medicines). They bring fire within ice to heal. Example: The Fred Anderson Quartet at Ida Noyes Hall on May 18, 1975 at the University of Chicago, bowing to the East, asking in silence the permission of the Creator, plunging into a series of densely-textured improvisations, get-down velocities from Anderson on his sax under ululations by Iqua under equal lines of sound, precisely as Leo describes them as egalitarian force. Fred Anderson and his men perambulated near the end, New Orleans style, only this was Chicago, an extreme city briefly made good as the spirit of the AACM fell across the room, bringing light and thought.

Example number two: The Art Ensemble of Chicago at the Five Spot in New York on September 2, 1975. The face-painted (save Bowie and Mitchell), instrumentation-flaunting, intelligence-demanding Art Ensemble. Moye tending his bells with the air of a doctor mixing herbs, touching with practiced hands gongs and snares, the proper medicines; and Favors, clown at the center of the hurricane, a man so profound and wise he must actually conceal, or so it seemed, the total power of his swing, lest those chicken-hearted (in the audience) recognize the lion-hearted (on the stand) and flee, miscomprehending these terrible seekers and finders of divine all-out energy. Jarman conjuring a private storm with a sheet of shining metal and playing his flute into the leeward of this privately created storm. Lester Bowie, sprawled in a chair, x-raying his trumpet by blowing around as well as within the cup. Roscoe Mitchell transforming his instrument into a fiery particle, like a golden shining volute, within the mansions of the Lord.

These men and women are playing the pages of Leo's book.

- Robert Farris Thompson



FLIP PHILLIPS

Flip in Florida Onyx 214

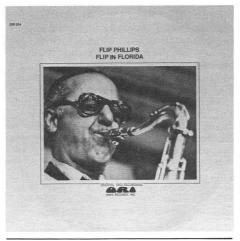
Among my earliest jazz memories is the night back in the early 1950's in Detroit when I attended my first Jazz At The Philharmonic concert and was knocked out by the wild honking tenor battle between Flip Phillips and Illinois Jacquet. Later as my taste matured I had the image of Phillips as a limited tenor player of vulgar taste ingrained in my mind. It wasn't until some years later that I discovered that the JATP segment of Flip's career was not representative of his playing in other contexts.

The album under review here was recorded in 1963 and has Flip with a Florida rhythm section. He now resides in that state and has been living there for the past fifteen years. This record was originally released on the Sue label but received little attention and has been unavailable for some time now. It is nice to have it with us again as it features some good playing by Flip and associates. Phillips would seem to be one of the players who falls somewhere between the light floating style of Lester Young on the one hand, and the fuller toned four to the bar playing of Coleman Hawkins on the other side with a dash of Ben Webster thrown in for good measure. Most of the time he appears to be closer to the Hawkins-Webster camp, but on I Remember Lester he obviously plays in the style of Pres and contributes his best playing on the LP. There are also three tracks where Flip plays the bass clarinet. Tenor is his main horn though, and this record is certainly worth having for the rare opportunity of hearing a player rarely preserved on vinyl these days. - P.F.

BILLY ROBINSON

Evolution's Blend Radio Canada International 375

Tenor saxophonist Billy Robinson is a new name to these ears. Prior to placing this record on my turntable, I noticed on the liner notes that he is from Fort Worth, Texas but currently residing in Montreal. I immediately had visions of that long line of Texas tenor men such as Illinois Jacquet, Arnett Cobb, Buddy Tate, Fathead Newman, James Clay, Booker Ervin and Billy Harper. Well, I'm afraid it is going to take more evidence than this recording



to qualify Robinson for membership in that fraternity.

This LP is just not very good. First, there is a weak rhythm section. Second, six uninteresting tunes all written by Robinson. His tenor playing shows the by now standard middle-period Coltrane influence on side one of this record. On side two he moves into more avant-garde directions. Both sides however turn out to be just plain dull.

In fact the best solo work on this album belongs to guitar player Peter Leitch who only gets solo space on some of the tracks. The terrible front cover art work which sinks to a new low for a jazz album is even worse than the music on this rather poor LP.

- P.F.

RED RODNEY

Bird Lives Muse 5034

CECIL PAYNE & DUKE

JORDON

Brooklyn Brothers Muse 5015

The boppers have returned. These two fine albums mark the reappearance on record after many years of two outstanding representatives of the bebop era. Would you believe that for Red Rodney it has been more than fourteen years since he last made a record, while in Duke Jordan's case it is eleven years that we have had to wait! It would be more than appropriate at this point to go into a lengthy diatribe regarding all the jive music recorded under the rubric of jazz during the long period that these two superior artists lan-

guished on the sidelines. I would prefer however to use my space to extol the virtues of these two pleasure-filled albums.

Rodney is joined on his LP by a perfect set of musical colleagues. I have praised Charles McPherson and especially Barry Harris enough times in Coda to have clearly established my view that they are among the handful of musicians who are truly jazz masters on their chosen instruments. With that buildup it only need be said that they are in top form on this outing as are Sam Jones and Roy Brooks who make up one of the most groovy rhythm sections anywhere.

While technically it is possible to fault Rodney in a few places, his creative ability and spirited attack more than compensate. The choice of tunes could not be improved upon. One jazz standard, two tunes penned by Thelonious Monk, and three by Charlie Parker. Just place your stylus on 52nd Street Theme and dig Red's long lined up-tempo solo that bristles with the essence of bebop.

The Cecil Payne-Duke Jordan album starts right off wailing with all participants taking a no-nonsense approach to the music. Jordan's keyboard artistry jumps right out and grabs you with an abundance of melodic, harmonic and rhythmic richness. Cecil Payne and Jordan have recorded together a number of times before and I have copies of all their previous collaborations. As good as their past recordings together have been, my vote would go to this LP as their best record together to date. They have both developed a maturity that somehow has enhanced their playing and raised it to a higher level.

Both Payne and Jordan have demonstrated their skill as writers as well as being quality improvisors. Each contributes three worthy compositions to this record which is filled out by a Billy Eckstine tune and a standard.

No small measure of credit for the success of this album is due the solid support laid down by bassist Sam Jones and drummer Al Foster. Jones role here is more prominent than on the Rodney LP.

There is not one poor track on either of these two recordings. Producer Don Schlitten once again must be commended for bringing us the listening treats to be found in these two highly recommended albums.

- P.F.

PHAROAH SANDERS

Village Of The Pharoahs Impulse AS-9254 The Name Guarantees Satisfaction

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Don Erown: JAZZMAN RECORD SHOP 3323 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, California 90405, U.S.A. When John Coltrane died in 1967 there were at least three tenor saxophonists who - each in their own way - carried his work on: Albert Ayler, Archie Shepp and Pharoah Sanders. Of the three Sanders was the one who had worked and recorded extensively with Coltrane and most directly followed his musical path. These recordings and Sanders' two or three previous Impulse albums as well prove that he has come to a critical point in his musical career.

Village Of The Pharoahs, in three parts, and the short vocal Myth is a continuous side one and has Sanders playing soprano over a six-piece rhythm and percussion section with, among others, Joe Bonner on piano, shakuhashi, flute and percussion, Calvin Hill on bass, and Kylo Kylo on tamboura and percussion. I find this background more interesting than Sanders' soprano which is rather limited. The risk of monotony and stereotype is there, in both Sanders' own playing and in the percussion behind him. Side one was recorded in September 1973, as was the only tenor track, Went Like It Came. This piece, with its r&b character with screams and all, may be a joke from the band, an attempt to sell the record (remember Ayler's New Grass?) or, most likely, it is another symptom of the crisis in Sanders'art. Whatever it is, the result is disappointing and meaningless.

There are two more tracks. Mansion Worlds is from December 1971 and Sanders sounds better here, but most outstanding is the beautiful bass work by Cecil McBee and Stanley Clarke turning out into a bass duet. The two basses are featured again with some remarkable playing on Memories Of Lee Morgan, a pretty, melodic piece played straightforward by Sanders and Arthur Webb on flute.

Maybe Sanders needs a pause. To find him at his best you have to go back to his early Impulse albums or his playing with Coltrane and Cherry. - R.B.

SONNY ROLLINS

Vol. 1 The Bridge Vol. 2 Sonny Meets Hawk RCA Victor 741074/075

French RCA Victor has seen fit to reissue two Sonny Rollins LP's in this double set and we are the richer for that decision. Volume 1 is the 1962 version of the Rollins Quartet and was his first record after a self-imposed two year retirement. During his period of separation from the scene Rollins would at times practice at night on the Williamsburg bridge connecting Brooklyn and Manhattan giving rise to the title of the original release.

One thing is certain. Listening to this music twelve years after it was recorded, it has lost none of its vitality and artistic virtue. This is in fact a superior Rollins record with the title track a classic in its own right. Sonny is joined by Jim Hall on guitar who demonstrates what careful listening to one's musical associates is all about. In both solo and support roles he performs in an exemplary manner. Bob

Cranshaw handles the bass chores beautifully and prompts metowish he would lay aside the electric bass he has favoured on his most recent recordings and return to the acoustic instrument that offers a tonal quality and emotional impact rarely achieved in the electrified version of the instrument

Volume 2 is quite different from Volume 1. Here Sonny is joined by Coleman Hawkins on the front line. Pianist Paul Bley replaces Jim Hall to add still another dimension. They play five standards plus a blues, probably due to a lack of rehearsal and a lack of experience playing together as a group. Both horn men play well with both of them sounding slightly more modern (a bit further out) than was typical of them in 1963 when the session was recorded. Bley was perhaps not the most logical choice for a piano player and may be at least partially responsible for the slight avant garde atmosphere that shows up at times.

I believe that this is the only time that these two tenor giants recorded together and it is an interesting lesson in tenor saxophone styles and development for the listener. While each man is clearly an individual on his horn, it is also true that Rollins was influenced by Hawkins and perhaps even vice-versa as well.

This two-record set has aged well. I urge those of you who don't already own copies of the original release to rectify that situation forthwith.

- P.F.

PEG LEG SAM

Medicine Show Man Trix 3302

In terms of sheer joyous entertainment this is without any doubt the most enjoyable country blues LP released in 1973/74. Pete Lowry recorded the material for this gem throughout 1972 and released it in the latter part of 1973. It features the unheralded East Coast harmonica virtuoso, Peg Leg Sam (Arthur Jackson), in a series of lengthy soloharpinstrumentals, soloharp accompanied vocals, unaccompanied narratives, and harp/guitar/vocal duets with either the late Baby Tate or the late Henry Johnson on guitar and second vocals. While Sam is definitely the star performer, the instrumental, vocal and spiritual contribution of the two guitarists certainly adds to the success of this LP.

All three artists are or were members of the East Coast Regional Blues fraternity. Sam has a long history of street corner gigs and for a long time was a member of various medicine shows. At one time he played with the relatively famous bluesman, Pink Anderson.

The music on this particular set is played and sung with a constant spirit and vitality that are so rarely heard today. Sam is one of the few harp players who can get away with long solo harp-accompanied vocals and solo harp instrumentals without making them tired-sounding or boring. He keeps them together and flowing with an unparalleled smoothness.

Peg Leg Sam's material comes from

diverse and varied sources. There are songs like Who's That Left Here 'While Ago and Irene Tell Me, Who Do You Love, both of which are usually associated with urban bluesmen. On the traditional side there is Reuben, the double entendre Greasy Greens, Skinny Woman Blues, and Peg's Fox Chase. Other pieces include Lost John (a solo harp composition upon the familiar "Talking Harmonica" theme), Ain't But One Thing Give A Man The Blues, Easy Ridin' Buggy, Before You Give It Away, Fast Freight Blues and Nasty Old Train. These titles are fairly self explanatory. On the narrative side there are two interesting ditties from Sam's medicine show days - Ode To Bad Bill and Born In Bad Luck. Both are humourous informal poems that transcend the usual comic narrative.

Like the first Eddie Kirkland LP on Trix, this one is a first rate country blues release. Peg Leg Sam sure as hell wasn't recorded for historical or academic reasons. He was recorded because he is one damn entertaining bluesman. Again, one of the more significant country blues releases of late.

If by chance you like what you hear on this LP give Henry Johnson's LP -'The Union County Flash''(Trix 3304), or Baby Tate's single - Late In The Evening/See What You Done Done (Trix 4502), a listen. Pete Lowry offers this exceptional music on good quality recordings and provides the LP's with detailed and informative liner notes. The LP's can be obtained for \$6.00 and the single for \$1.00 from Trix Records, P.O. Box 750, New Platz, New York 12561, U.S.A. - D.L.

SEA ENSEMBLE

We Move Together ESP - 3018

Donald and Zussan Garrett make some of the most original and off-beat music I have heard in some time.

Donald Garrett, 42, has long been known as a jazz bassist, having played with such giants as Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Archie Shepp, and Roland Kirk (to name but a few). His wife Zussan, 27, sings and plays the piano, cello and flute; she has studied Javanese vocal music, African ewe percussion, South Indian Mrdangam, and Turkish oud.

Collaborators since 1971, they call themselves the Sea Ensemble, and their music incorporates the vast backgrounds of both of them - Jazz, African, Arabic, Japanese, Chinese, Indian and European. They use only acoustic instruments, many of which they made themselves. The total sound, whether an improvised piano-clarinet duet, a cello-bass duet, or a percussion-string-reed piece, embraces virtually all of the world's cultures and comes across with all of the moods, from pensive and dreamy, to angry, to ebullient.

Side One features four moods: Ride Tiger To Mountain, Wave Hands Like Clouds, Snake Creeps Down, and Needle Of The Sea Bottom. Each piece is as odd and as strangely moving as its title, combining the atmosphere of nature with the vibrations of exotic cultures and sleeping dreams.

Side Two is a single cut, almost twenty minutes long, which features Donald's topnotch bass playing and Zussan's vocal improvisations. Although Zussan is technically behind Cathy Berberian or Tim Buckley (check out Buckley's "Starsailor" album), she nevertheless follows in their footsteps, fully exploring her range of vocal sounds and effects. Rather than using her voice simply as a vehicle to impart verbal concepts, she unleashes it as an unlimited instrument.

The Sea Ensemble's impact is far greater than their duo structure might suggest. The two of them release more music and create more moods than many other groups of four or five musicians. A truly interesting album with many moments of genuine excitement. - L.U.

DAVE SHAW

Themes
Radio Canada International 381

A bland commercial album featuring arrangements by leader Shaw of eleven television and movie themes. The short length of each track prohibits much in the way of solos. From what solos we do get to hear there don't seem to be any important voices in the group. The arrangements are adequate but nothing more than that as none of tunes seem to come alive and hold your interest beyond the recognition of the television series or film it was taken from originally. I'd suggest you pass this one by

- P.F.

JOHNNY SHINES

And Company Biograph BLP 12048

This is certainly a mixed bag for Delta stylist Johnny Shines. It is a mixture of solo country blues, small group country blues, and hip white ragtime blues produced back in late 1973 or early 1974 by the multi-instrumental folkster, David Bromberg. When Shines is not allowed to solo he is surrounded by a variety of instruments including second electric or acoustic guitars, mandolin, violin, piano assorted horns, bass and drums. On top of this there is a hip choir and a string section that mingles in on occasion. The results are not Delta or Chicago. They are by and large Bromberg and Company. Yessiree friends, here we go again, another attempt to make blues palatable to the musical tastes of the nouveaux hip white sub-culture.

Don't get me wrong, Johnny Shines' presence is felt. He is heard vocally on nine of the ten cuts with the tenth being basically an uptempo instrumental workout for the band. Shines also alternates on acoustic or electric guitars. Both vocally and instrumentally Shines is heard to the best advantage on the more intimate blues

cuts - Little Wolf, Lost Love Letter Blues, I'm Getting Older, Mother's Place, and Jim String. On these particular cuts Shines is allowed to solo or is backed in an unobtrusive manner. Of these the solo country blues Little Wolf and the talking blues epic Jim String catch Shines at his rural best. Jim String is an extremely interesting narrative with a sung chorus laid down on a steady travelling acoustic guitar line with subtle strings filtering through in the background for that added dramatic effect. It tells the story of a Bingham Tennessee (?), pimp who wastes his main woman, attempts an escape to the north, is caught by the man, and receives a ninety-nine year sentence. The lyrics are included on the back of the LP. For many people this cut alone may be worth the price of the LP.

Blues fans should stick with Shines' material on Vanguard, Black and Blue, Advent, Testament, and on an earler Biograph release. The intensity, involvement and sheer power of Johnny Shines' blues has been captured to a much greater degree on this material. However if your tastes are much broader and include a wider spectrum of American folk styles then this present set may prove quite rewarding. There is some quite good backing on several cuts with things only getting cluttered on occasion. Pianist Lou Terricciano should receive special mention, for he especially provides some exceptional backing and lead runs. Recording quality etc. all seem to be high on the scale. Definitely good for those who like this sort of thing.

- D. L.

LARS SJOSTEN

Gutar! Philips 6316 016

I first became aware of pianist Lars Sjosten as a result of his performance as a sideman on the late Brew Moore's last date, "Brew's Stockholm Dew" (SonetSNTF 624). His impressive solo work led me then to the conclusion that we would be hearing more from the talented Mr. Sjosten. I am happy to be able to report that not only do we get an album under the leadership of Sjosten, but it turns out to be a lovely record indeed.

The liner notes are written in Swedish so I can't relate the meaning of the album title - Gutar! - nor any details as to the background of Lars Sjosten. I do note however that all ten pieces are by Swedish composers including two by the leader, two by baritone saxophonist Lars Gullin and one by tenor sax man Carl Henrik Norin. I suspect the others are Swedish folk melodies as that is the impression I get from many hearings.

One track features attractive baritone sax work from Gunnar Bergsten, and a vocal group appears sparingly and with good taste on three tunes. The spotlite clearly shines throughout on pianist Sjosten who receives perfect support from bassist Sture Nordin and drummer Fredrik Noren. The words I find most suitable to describe Sjosten's approach to the piano are lyrical

and sensitive. He has a light touch and certainly heard Bill Evans. His style is his own though and it is one I shall be looking forward to hearing many more times in the future. A highly recommended record for those who still believe that jazz can be rich in beauty.

- P.F.

SPHERE

Inside Ourselves Strata SRI 103-74

Sphere is a Detroit quintet featuring Larry Nozero, saxophones; Eddie Nuccilli, trumpet and flugelhorn; Keith Vreeland, electric piano; Jimmy Peluso, drums; and John Dana, bass. The band's music on this album - recorded live in 1970 at the Detroit Institute of Arts - features pleasant, attractive themes used as a springboard for individual solos - in other words, the classic "jazz" format. Nozero's tenor sax is very strong on the ballad Alicia and Vreeland's compositions Lonely Girl and Where. His style is a bit of a faceless, impersonal combination of all currently hip tenor talk, but he uses what he knows to construct intelligent improvisational statements. Drummer Peluso sometimes lays back too much, but when Nozero is moving he follows with considerable taste. The other members of the band don't particularly stand out. All in all, "Inside Ourselves" is an acceptable recording by musicians who have no doubt grown in ability since its recording.

S.M.E.

SME For CND For Peace For You To Share A--001

Several years ago, when I heard the Spontaneous Music Ensemble's initial manifesto of totally interactive improvisation by collective creation, the nuclear artists of the experience were John Stevens. Evan Parker, Trevor Watts, and Derek Bailey. Since the days of "Karyobin" (reviewed in Coda, June 1969), Parker and Bailey have left the SME interaction into ferociously personal outgrowths of that creative form (for example, 'The Topography Of The Lungs", Incus 1, reviewed in Coda, February 1972), leaving Watts and Stevens as an active core moving toward expanding the total collectivity of the Spontaneous Music impulse. What that core demonstrates here is that the creative stream they espouse is not one limited to its creators of the moment, but rather one into which each human being is capable of entering - to his benefit. This they do by utilizing the one universal sound form silence and its variants - as the medium for improvisation. As John Cage points out in his book so titled, "Silence" is an unattainable absolute, because even in a perfectly anechoic chamber - environmental acoustic death - one inevitably hears two soft sounds of his own generation - one low (circulation) and one high (nervous system) pitch. Instead of perfect silence, we each carry heartbeat and cerebration;

OGUN



S.O.S., Ogun Stereo OG400:

Alan Skidmore (tenor sax, drums, percussion), Mike Osborne (alto sax, percussion), John Surman (bass clarinet, baritone, soprano sax, synthesizers):

Side One: Country Dance, Wherever I Am, Chordary, Where's Junior, Cycle Motion.

Side Two: 1st, Goliath, Calypso. Recorded January & February, 1975.

Mike Osborne Trio, Ogun Stereo OG300 Mike Osborne (alto sax), Harry Miller (bass), Louis Moholo (drums):

Side One: Ken's Tune, Stop And Start, Awakening Spirit, 1st.

Side Two: Animation, Riff, Border Crossing.

Recorded September 28th, 1974.

Harry Miller - Children at Play, Ogun Stereo OG200:

Harry Miller (double bass, flute, percussion effects):

Side One: H And H, Children At Play (Phase I and II), Homeboy.

Side Two: Foregone Conclusion, Children At Play (Phase III). Recorded 1974.

Chris McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath - Live at Willisau, Ogun Stereo OG 100:

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

Side One: Do It, Restless, Kongis' Theme.

Side Two: Tungis' Song, Ismite Is Right, The Serpents Kindly Eye.

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and these are the only essentials that need be brought to the performance or perception of the music on this recording.

Let me explain. This is a recording by an expanded Spontaneous Music Ensemble, whose nucleus consists of Watts (soprano saxophone) and Stevens (drums); some twenty to thirty other people - who might be anyone - some sing, some play instruments - are to be heard at all times collectively organizing the tones, colours and textures out of which the central two spin. Rather than a complete shell between the musician and the audience, there is a subtle gradation in concentric spirals - core music: peripheral music: participating audience: perceiving audience. The only forms all four levels share are those of silence, and their organization in it. "For You To Share", recorded in three conceptual segments in May 1970, deals with three separate solutions to the problems of mass collectivity. Click Piece - "You make as small a sound as possible... You repeat your own sound at your own pace as perfectly as you can - not particularly in relationship to anyone else and what they are doing, as they will be in their own pace. You just click and try to repeat your click, and if it grows together at all, you'll find that the empathy that there is will attract people to form the click together." Thus individual impulse becomes communal will, and the clicks elasticize as they slowly shift - and WattStevens spin through them - into Sustained Piece. (or Peace - the entire experience of this and the third segment sustain a mantra-like harmony very conducive to contemplative activity for those in sympathy.) "You inhale as deeply as possible, then play or sing sustained on the exhale. You then inhale deeply again and repeat the process. not necessarily with the same note, but allowing yourself to adjust for comfort of pace. The sustained quality comes out of some people having longer or shorter breath lengths - a naturalness of pace that people get into as individuals. It's like a drone and we are together in that drone in another type of togetherness which is not only a turn on musically for initiated musicians - it can incorporate anybody." In essence, an expression is developed through the combined wills of a large number of people that is able to remain cohesive because each person - aiming to the same artistic end - is given ample room to exercise the fundament of his individual creative impulse without any net disruption of the experience; each person finds fulfilment in a united community, a manifesto for collective will far more compelling than any words of Marx. The creative listener finds the same satisfaction. The quicksanding colours gradually shift into the slow theme "If You Want To See A Vision", floating over percussion to chant of the certainty of wisdom to those who will have it, again at individual paces that gradually assume unison proportions by sheer process of empathy at the level of silence. And John Stevens and Trevor Watts see their vision.

The second recording here, "Park Piece", lives in the same realms of expanded unison through the medium of quickly-repeated quietly evolving motifs that slowly, slowly move to and fro among the individuals involved.

The large SME, as recorded here, was a remarkable phenomenon creating visionary music indeed. It died because it could not survive, because not all life is quite this perfect. Yet the insightful peace they generated, memorialized in the wellrecorded mono tapes (now 4 1/2 years old) that led to this self-produced album, is all that remains of a project that all - for the sake of their sanity - might try to emulate. That, and the original core musicians, still moving for solutions. It seems only fitting, as part of the larger social solution "For You To Share" hints at in microcosm, that all proceeds from its sales are being donated to the Committee For Nuclear Disarmament. Thank you, John, Trevor, and all. - B.T. (Available from A Records, 14 Blakesley Avenue, London W5, England.)

SONNY STITT

12! Muse 5006

When Sonny Stitt comes on bristling, bustling and bursting to play it is impossible not to be swept along by the tide of invention released from his horn. This is another in the fine series of Stitt small group recordings made under the sympathetic stewardship of Don Schlitten who knows how to get Sonny to tick (and that doesn't mean a Mr. Bojangles setting). Here Stitt has the services of the 1960 Cannonball Adderley rhythm section - Barry Harris (piano), Sam Jones (bass), Louis Hayes (drums) - who recorded as a trio for Riverside. For 12! they were 12 years older and 12 years better!

Stitt displays his mastery of both alto and tenor on this December 1972 set. He also demonstrates his ability to swing at any tempo, to get to the heart of Ellington, Basie and Dameron compositions, to illuminate standards like I Never Knew and The Night Has A Thousand Eyes, and to cook the blues (12! and Blues At This Tempo) crisply.

The tenor treats are 12!, I Never Knew (at a heady tempo), The Night Has A Thousand Eyes, Blues At This Tempo and Every Tub. The alto aces are I Got It Bad and Our Delight. There is no varitone, no string section, no lame "hits", no putrid "window dressing" to lumber the saxophonist. Result: he plays himself without constraints or bullshit of any kind.

As usual, the contributions of Barry Harris are a greatly enhancing factor. Sam Jones takes some pithy solos (he always does the job so beautifully one tends to take him for granted) and Louis Hayes is hard to fault, although he doesn't quite possess the rapport that Roy Brooks shared with Sonny on "Constellation" and "The Champ" - a pair of albums you should have on your shelves, along with "Tune-Up"!

Gary Giddins makes a telling point when he writes that Sonny "does not merely play bop, but instead, uses the vocabulary of bop to play himself". That's a neat and accurate summary of what Stitt has been into all these years. To still compare him with Charlie Parker is absurd and manifestly unfair to a living artist of great individuality and ability. Onrecordings like this Sonny is unquestionably one of the masters.

- M.G.

Mr. Bojangles Cadet CA 50026

Here is the perfect example of how <u>not</u> to present Sonny Stitt. The format is a <u>large</u> orchestra (seven violins, two cellos, assorted percussion, French horn, harp, electric guitar, piano and bass) with slurpy arrangements by the ubiquitous Don Sebesky. You are bound to love the phony Spanish and Italian effects on Killing Me Softly With His Song (yes, yes, yes!) the Arabic-cum-Isaac Hayes touches of Blue Monsoon, to Mention but two. That is if you are insensible.

Stitt grinds his way through these deadly proceedings with mechanical, reflex professionalism. He is never stretched, never even faintly inspired. It was a means of earning a fee, and Sonny makes that perfectly clear by the ordinary quality of his playing.

The handout that accompanies this trash has to be read to be believed...'Mr. Bojangles is also pure, wondrous Stitt''. Pure what? Wondrous to whom?

After a dose of 'Mr. Bojangles' I hastened to his Cobblestone and Muse albums to remind myself of how magnificently Sonny can play without the dubious presence of shoals of strings or any of the other nonsense that pollutes these grooves.

It is certainly no coincidence that the only track of average interest if Fifty Per Cent on which Stitt plays tenor - he is on alto elsewhere - with just the rhythm section. Even here Stitt is coasting, putting in the amount of effort that the title suggests. Forget this one.

- M.G.

SUN RA

Supersonic Sounds Impulse AS-9271

Fate In A Pleasant Mood (1959) Impulse AS-9270

These welcome reissues from the rarely obtainable Saturn catalogue certainly sustain the claim that Sun Ra is a jazz composer and arranger to rank with Ellington and Gil Evans. There are myriads of delightful strokes in the orchestration of these pieces for eight to ten piece groups: for instance, the pedal tymps on Kingdom Of Not (1956); the rattles and other percussion, which are now monotonous commonplaces; the strummed and bowed bass of Ronnie Boykins (1959); and the exquisite flute-playing of Marshall Allen (1959). And who else was using electric piano and electric bass (and with discretion) in 1956?

The highlight of the album is Lights Of A Satellite (1959) which shares an exotic feeling with many of the pieces, but is far more intense; here there is beautiful scor-

ing for flute, clarinet and bass clarinet, excitingly dissonant trumpet lines, and some lovely piano configurations to end. The 1959 album swings more than that of 1956 - how about the nice triplet feel on The Others In Their World, with Edward Skinner on percussion. It also represents a considerable advance, with far more use of dissonant harmonies and counterlines, and with John Gilmore (tenor) showing signs of parallelling the development of the formative Coltrane of the period.

Gilmore also shares some of his tone colours with Coltrane, but on the other hand his 1956 solos are far less adventurous than Trane's contemporaneous efforts. Gilmore may well have been an important influence on Trane, but on the evidence of these LP's and other material from 55-61, the effect must have been to strengthen and expand the hard bop elements of Coltrane's work prior to the developments which reached their climax in 61-64.

The members of the 1956 band are all strong hard boppers: particularly Art Hoyle (trumpet) and Charles Davis (baritone), but Pat Patrick (alto, baritone) had already extended somewhat (hear him on El Is A Sound Of Joy).

Sun Ra's own playing was clearly less sophisticated than Cecil Taylor's in 1956 (compare their solo piano recordings from the time; Ra's Advice To Medics is downright sentimental), and the early compositions were not very advanced. However by 1959 Ra had become a very progressive bandleader, as he still is.

Incidentally, the 1959 album, though more interesting, has little more than half the playing time of the other. I refrain from comment on the extra-terrestrial verbosity on the sleeve of "Supersonic Sounds". The two albums are fascinating and important documents of modern jazz.

- R.D.

SONNY TERRY

Robbin' The Grave Blue Labor Bl 101

Sonny Terry is without Brownie McGee on this collection but still playing in a familiar setting. Sonny is joined by two blues interpreters: Bob Malenky on acoustic guitar and Michael Rura on piano with the overall result being quite enjoyable. There is no attempt to upstage the master bluesman on the part of the two accompanists. They tend to fall in behind Sonny and work with and around Sonny's harp and vocal work. It may be somewhat inaccurate to refer to Malenky and Rura as accompanists for Malenky takes the vocal on two cuts One Woman Man and Black Night Road and joins Sonny for a vocal duet (in the Terry/McGee tradition) on another cut -Feel Like Robbin' The Grave. And upon the request of Sonny, pianist Rura offers an interesting but short solo boogie to bring Side Two to a spirited finale.

Sonny himself leads off one instrumental entitled Playing With The Thing backed only by Malenky and offers five solo vocal numbers - Selling Out, That Train And My Woman, Cut Off From My Baby,

Mean Old Woman, and Cold Wind Blowing.

The material throughout is fresh with the majority written or claimed by Malenky and co-producer Kent Cooper. There is variety and plenty of Sonny Terry whoops, hoots, and mean harp blowing. Especially note Malenky's bottleneck piece - Black Night Road - where Sonny's harp is utilized to its fullest. Exceptional bit of harp mastery.

This Sonny Terry release is said to be the beginning of an artist-oriented jazz and blues series an the newly emergent NYC label, Blues Labor. It appears that co-founders Kent Cooper and Heinler Stadler consider blues to be a multi-cultural form of artistic and social expression. Therefore the acceptance or rejection of Blue Labor releases will depend on the individual attitudes of listeners.

Keeping this aside, the LP is characterized by enjoyable, spirited, and technically fit music, with quality pressing, sound reproduction, and exceptional stereo separation. The major shortcoming lies in the LP's brevity. The ten cuts tend to be short and comprise atotal playing time of under thirty-three minutes. This sure is not good dollar value unless the LP is to be in a budget line.

- D.L.

AL VIOLA

Alone Again Legend LGS-1002

Whether or not Al Viola can be classified as a jazz soloist is probably debatable. Frankly, I don't particularly care how anyonecategoriseshim. All I know is that he is a superb instrumentalist and that it is wonderful to hear unamplified guitar played so delicately and movingly as on this gentle collection.

To make a no doubt comfortable living, Viola has been buried in bands behind singers like Sinatra, Torme, Peggy Lee, Andy Williams, etc. for most of his career. Nice for those vocalists, but a loss to the listening audience as this recital clearly shows in most engaging fashion.

Here Viola is concerned with songs of today, but one couldn't conceive of less commercial interpretations - calm, understated, immensely musical. Here is a man who aims for perfection and fre-

quently achieves it. He has plumbed the depths of the guitar and unlocked many of its secrets.

Twelve performances, none of more than 3 1/2 minutes duration, are presented eloquently by Al who mostly elects to play out of tempo, carefully shading some of the better melodies by contemporary composers. Often wistful, occasionally exhibiting touches of whimsy, always sounding supremely professional, Al Viola's nimble fingers remind us how the guitar was supposed to be played but so seldom is. Reach for this infinitely tender offering if you should spy it; don't let it pass you by.

JAN WALLGREN

Steel Bend Rock Atlaxeras ALPS-101

This eight-piece European band is a funky and tight unit, playing simple rocky arrangements with some nice harmonic touches. But Steel Bend Rock is a close relative of Lee Morgan's Sidewinder, Disponent Solvent even has similarities to tracks on Birth Of The Cool, and none of the material is particularly imaginative.

There is some excellent bass-playing (Gosta Walivaara and Ivar Lindell), including a fine duet on Steel Bend, and all the soloists are competent. The leader, Jan Wallgren, is a melodious pianist, but none of the players have a personalised style. Still, it's pleasant enough. - R.D.

MAL WALDRON

Up Popped The Devil Enja 2034

In the past, Waldron has nearly always been submerged by the powerful soloists (such as Coltrane and Dolphy) he has accompanied. But recently he has emerged with a series of small group recordings on which his talents are more evident. The present record was made in New York on December 28, 1973.

The material is all by pianist Waldron and it has plenty of character and allows great harmonic flexibility during the solos. Even so, Waldron tends to adopt mainly

McCoy Tyner's fourths for his left hand accompaniments, thus partially obscuring harmonic tensions. And his right hand seems to function with limited velocity; this is of course no fault in itself, but sometimes it leads him to rhythmically monotonous melodic statements.

Reggie Workman (bass) turns in one fine solo, and some very apt arco playing (on the title track). With Billy Higgins (drums) he provides more rhythmic stimulus than Waldron seems to want. Thus, the theme statements are the most consistently forceful parts of the LP, although there are plenty of powerful moments in the improvisations. Carla Poole plays flute on Space Walk only, but makes no great impact.

This is probably one of Waldron's best performances: I shall continue to enjoy it.
- R.D.

CEDAR WALTON

A Night At Boomer's, Volume 2 Muse MR 5022

Some time ago, at the "Coda" offices, I was given the choice of reviewing either Chick Corea's "Bliss" or Volume One of Cedar Walton and Clifford Jordan at Boomer's, both on Muse. I'm usually ambivalent about the outcome of such decisions, but if the quality of the music on this set has any similarity to that on the first Boomer's volume, I made the right decision when I chose the Corea album instead (see Coda, October 1974). In some respects the two Walton-Jordan discs are akin to a Blue Note double set for Freddie Hubbard of some years ago called "The Night Of The Cookers"; there's nothing tangibly Wrong with the music, it's just that there's nothing particularly Right either. Disappointment comes with anticipation.

Sam Jones and Louis Hayes have been paired since Cannonball Adderley days over a decade ago, and when they're in form still make up one of the firmest, most springingly swinging bass/drum duos in their area of the music. But it's hard to tell exactly what they're up to at this session. Sound quality is sufficiently muddy at the bottom that, although one can distinguish Jones' pizzicato notes here and

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there, exact pitches are hard to discern and - significantly in Stella By Starlight, where he shares the head statement with Walton - the bassist's big fat breathy tone comes out sounding like a plucked rubber band. Hayes, conversely, is brought too far out front by the engineer's balance, and at times - even when accompanying at reasonably low dynamic levels - assumes a recorded prominence that obscures Walton or Jordan. His I'll Remember April solo and chase choruses are authoritative and well-constructed models of drum intonation and rhythm form.

Walton himself is to be heard in a rather "down" setting here. He is, of course, a pianist out of the great Bud Powell-and-successors heritage of the past three decades. In that lineage, his chief distinction is the way he merges several of the very disparate styles the keyboard is given to, to derive a very familiarsounding personality - a gift for thoughtfully spacing his lines over rhythm, for harmonies walking thin tightropes between various keys and modes, for a lightningfast right hand drive when he chooses, and no small degree of well-framed filigree. The way he and his colleagues feel about each tune determines the precise balance between each of these resources brought to that interpretation. The problem I see here is the choice of material for this album. The titles are all standards; with the exception of Blue Monk, all ballads; and with the exception of All The Way, well-visited jazzman's saws - Naima, Stella..., ... April. It is difficult to find a really original conception to bring to such material. Perfecting the mellow ballad means an inordinate amount of twohanded circumlocution, and Walton in fact never really opens up until he reaches the latinesque transformation of I'll Remember April (with an Un Poco Loco introduction and brilliantly swinging right hand runs that say "Bud was here first") and Blue Monk. Again, recording sound quality and a piano much in need of tuning means that much of the detail of his lines is obscured.

Clifford Jordan strikes me as a man who has accepted his meat as well as his mind. Since well before his 1964 European tour with Mingus and Dolphy his style has remained remarkably predetermined; that he has undergone so little musical evolution may well mean, of course, that his original idiom still satisfies his expressive needs. While the shrillness of each note brings a tension that threatens to split the mechanical bounds of his instrument, his tenor lines on the whole are well-subdued entities. His harmonic adventure exceeds that of most hard-bop tenors, and at times almost equal the anticipative acuity of Sonny Rollins, his premier inspiration and a spirit still felt in the sparse spacing of Jordan's lines. But while Rollins relaxes his lines as would a dancer, Jordan shoves insistently ahead of the beat. As before, the tenorist enjoys interpolating his lines with quotable quotes; in this set, despite amiable accompaniment from the trio, he doesn't quite find the fires (which Mingus and Richmond gave him) needed to elevate such devices above the trite. His Stella solo is refreshingly unexpected in many of the twists he gives his lines, abrupt leaps and asymmetrical phrasing, but not inspired enough to be truly exciting. April and Blue Monk are both adequate readings by the tenorist, but basically he gives them little more than the same due so many others of his peers have.

That, I'm sorry to say, summarizes my reactions to this date. The band is well-integrated and consistent, and true to the forms they've established for themselves. While their interpretations are inevitably unique, they lack that certain spark, that driving genius that all art must possess to be great. Perhaps you don't ask greatness. "In our hands the music is ours, we do with it what we please," the liners say. The question is whether doing "what we please", and having it presented in this manner, indeed pleases them.

- B.T.

RICHARD ZIMMERMAN

Scott Joplin: His Complete Works Murray Hill 931079

This 5-LP boxed set contains solo piano versions of all of Scott Joplin's music that had been discovered as of the July 1974 date of the sessions - every one of the rags, waltzes, marches, pop tunes, etc., plus a full side devoted to extracts from the opera "Treemonisha". An accompanying booklet includes pictures, reproductions of sheet music covers, notes on each selection, background data on ragtime and Joplin, and a bibliography. In short, it's the complete job.

The musical results are fully up to the level of ambition implied by such a project. Dick Zimmerman has been immersed in ragtime for years as a principal administrator of the Maple Leaf Club, a Los Angeles-based organization dedicated to ragtime, giving him the knowledge and empathy needed for proper interpretation of the material. As a pianist, his technique is most impressive - clean, accurate, confident and based on a light-but-no-nonsense striding left hand.

Dick's basic orientation leans toward keeping things on the bright, rhythmic side, which works quite well, rendering a lengthy program more enjoyable for extended listening, but he uses restraint where called for, as in the passionate Heliotrope Bouquet, the moving Solace, the gentle Weeping Willow and the smoothly flowing Leola. Tempo, volume and mood of each number is usually established at the outset and carried through without change. Heavily-scored solos are followed rather faithfully, while other numbers are embellished somewhat with various fills and runs. These additions generally enhance and build the performances without introducing major changes to Joplin's arrangements, with the possible exceptions of the loose and undignified readings of Lily Queen and Sensation.

Zimmerman's judgement in manner of presentation is nearly impeccable (allowing for Antoinette and Searchlight Rag, which sound rushed), bringing out the best features of the titles, showing you new delights even in some of the familiar numbers, and leaving you with renewed appreciation of Joplin's genius - and Zimmerman's skill. Everything a serious student of Joplin could want is here. Outstanding.

- T.W.

EBERHARD WEBER

The Colors of Chloe ECM 1042

This is an extremely fine, moving album, a record that above all sounds different than everything else happening. The mood isn't an especially energetic one, it's not a record that will pin anybody against a wall, but it's music that lingers and is beautiful because it's beautiful, not because anybody decided to make a beautiful record and chose 16 favorite pretty melodies to play.

Albums where the bass is really the main solo voice often don't work for some strange reason. They should, because the bass (the acoustic one) has an incredible range and an equally incredible sound and in the right hands (Mingus, Garrison, Mc-Bee, Holland) can provide an unforgettable experience for those lucky enough to hear. Eberhard Weber is not a player of this stature as of yet, but on this album he has put together music which complements and adorns the sound of his bass or cello in a strikingly original fashion. The roots of

the album are a straight trio setting with pianist Rainer Bruninghaus and drummer Peter Giger, plus the additional drums of Ralf Hubner and fluegelhornist Ack Van Rooyen added on occasion. To this, Weber adds a two-voice choir (Weber and Gizela Schauble) and a cello section of the Stuttgart Sudfunk Symphony Orchestra. These strings are used in great floating blocks of sound (reminiscent in a way of Marvin Gaye's beautiful work) that are all at once above, under and inside the music. And when Weber steps forward...well, the feeling can't be described.

All the players here make their own contributions, Bruninghaus' occasional dabs of synthesizer especially noteworthy. "The Colours of Chloe" is important because it points out clearly once again that improvised music can and should flow in thousands of different directions without conforming to any one pundit's idea of the New Direction.

- E.C.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Toe-Tappin' Ragtime Folkways RBF 25

This compilation offers fifteen sides, almost all recorded in the mid-twenties, by various dance and jazz groups playing rags or ragtime-flavored tunes. Except for Cataract Rag Blues by Hitch's Happy Harmonists (1925), all are "big bands" rather than small combos and they lay down the tunes in the dance or jazz style of the period, rather than as pure ragtime.

Subject to that qualification, there is a surprising and interesting variety among

the performances. Full orchestral versions (Herb Wiedoft's bouncy vo-do-de-o Maple Leaf Rag) contrast with tracks that are essentially accompanied solos (Harry Reser's banjo on Lolly Pops); hot, cooking jazz (Cannon Ball Rag by Guy Lombardo no fooling!) vies with over-arranged, oddball stuff that won't detain Coda readers for long (Ginger Snaps by Rosario Bourdon); and familiar names (Bennie Moten's band on the red-hot Goofy Dust) are here along with ultra-obscurities (Eddie Ward, piano, with the Arcadia Peacock Orchestra, going for the all-time speed record on Dog On The Piano).

Ragtimers will be particularly attracted to several tracks that feature pianists. Gene Rodemich acquits himself nicely on Tenth Interval Rag, for example, and Clarence Jones puts a biting rhythm into Fred Rose's fine novelty rag, The Arm Breaker. On either side of these ragtime solos, we have Vincent Lopez' twinkling, lacy rendition of the Nola-like Gloria, and Bob Zurke's unbelievable, searing stride work on Hobson Street Blues.

So, though basically for the nostalgia addicts or hot dance buffs, there's a little something here for everyone whose tastes cover traditional jazz and related music. If your interests are highly specialized, or if you don't have many of the items that have previously appeared on LP (Pianoflage by Fate Marable, Springtime Rag by Vic Meyers, and Carolina Shout by Jimmy Johnson's Jazz Boys fall into this bag along with some others mentioned above), you'll find it yet a better buy.

Esoteric reissues such as this are usually produced by dedicated disciples of the music, often in their spare time and with little hope of profit. Thus, perhaps collectors shouldn't expect absolute perfection, and in any event they should be willing to forgive Folkways up to a certain point, in light of the large catalogue of rarities that the firm has kept on the market for years. Nevertheless, I would be suspicious of investing in a product that exhibits inexcusable carelessness. With those statements in mind, let it be recorded that Cataract Rag Blues appears twice on this LP - once in its assigned slot, and again on the immediately preceding track, which is supposed to be Nightingale Rag Blues, the flip side of the original 78 rpm issue. - T.W.

Central Avenue Breakdown, Volume 1 Onyx 212

Vintage bebop from California from four different sessions recorded in the middle forties. The first group has Teddy Edwards on tenor, Herbie Harper, trombone and Hampton Hawes on piano as the solo voices. All three are heard to good advantage on the four tracks on which they appear. The second group, which is the weakest, is led by vocalist-bassist Vivian Garry who makes a rather early bid for women's liberation in jazz circles. It is her husband, guitarist Arvin Garrison, along with pianist George Handy who give these tracks their jazz appeal. You may recall that Garrison recorded with Charlie

Parker in March 1946 for the Dial label.

The other two groups are led by Dodo Marmarosa. One has the added attraction of some excellent tenor playing by Lucky Thompson who really burns on How High The Moon. Dodo's marvelous piano playing is a knockout on Mellow Mood, as he weaves a musical web in which I was happy to be caught. Lucky returns for a splendid version of I Surrender Dear followed by a trio rendition of Dodo's Blues which has a Ray Brown bass solo which should cause you to sit up and take notice.

The final two tracks have Dodo joined by Barney Kessel on guitar plus a bass player. These two can't come up to the the superior level of the quartet tracks but are worth hearing nonetheless.

All told, this is a record that delivers both historical and musical value. - P.F.

Columbia Records Collectors' Series

Louis Armstrong - Satchmo the Great JCL 1077

Hank Garland - Jazz Winds From a New Direction JCS 8372

Johnny Hodges - Hodge Podge JEE 22001

Gene Krupa's Sidekicks JCL 641

Lambert, Hendricks & Ross Sing Ellington JCS 8310

If collectors may be defined as those who seek outstanding specimens, as distinct from the everyday varieties, then only two of these records deserve the accolade Columbia has bestowed upon them. The L, H & R tracks, with their vocal interpretations of Ellington recordings, are skillful and musicianly novelties; cute and amusing as some found them a decade or more back, these items can now be seen more clearly than ever to pall beside the originals, to whom it may be hoped they guided some of their large but ephemeral audience. "Satchmo The Great" bears the stamp of show business more grievously still, thanks mainly to the intervention of Ed Murrow, one of the two producers of the film bearing the same name. Flashes of brilliance there are in some sterling trumpet flourishes, but the general approach is characterised by the fulsome sleeve note, which contrives to mention Princess Margaret, Kwame Nkrumah, Hannibal, W.C. Handy and last, though presumably not least, Leonard Bernstein. Lovers of the bizarre will cherish the record for St. Louis Blues, where all 88 members of the Lewisohn Stadium Orchestra make their presence felt, sounding for all the world like Tarantula in wellington boots. Such grotesque episodes are absent from the Hank Garland album, which betrays little or nothing of the leader's Nashville connections. Doubtless it might have been more lively had it done so, but calm and poise are maintained throughout, with



CONCORD JAZZ



CJ-9 BARNEY PLAYS KESSEL Barney Kessel (guitar), Chuck Domanico (bass), Vic Feldman (vibes), Jake Hanna (drums), Milt Holland (percussion), Jimmy Rowles (keyboards), Herbie Steward (reeds and flute)

CJ-8 THE L.A. FOUR SCORES Laurindo Almeida (guitar), Bud Shank (flute and saxophones), Ray Brown (bass), Shelly Manne (percussion).

CJ-7 SALUTES RODGERS AND HART Ruby Braff/George Barnes Quartet

CJ-6 AFTER YOU'VE GONE... Ray Brown (bass), Jake Hanna (drums), Plas Johnson (tenor sax), Herb Ellis (guitar), Harry "Sweets" Edison (trumpet), George Duke (piano).

CJ-5 PLAYS GERSHWIN

Ruby Braff (trumpet), George Barnes (guitar), Wayne Wright (rhythm) and Michael Moore (bass)

CJ-4 GREAT GUITARS

Charles Byrd (guitar), Barney Kessel (guitar), Herb Ellis (guitar), Joe Byrd (bass) and John Rae (drums)

CJ-3 SOFT SHOE Herb Ellis and Ray Brown

CJ-2 SEVEN, COME ELEVEN Herb Ellis and Joe Pass

CJ-1 JAZZ/CONCORD Herb Ellis and Joe Pass

Available from CODA PUBLICATIONS Box 87, Station J, Toronto, ONTARIO M4J, 4X8, CANADA. \$6.98 Postpaid. Joe Morello and Joe Benjamin setting up a smooth and uneventful beat for fleet guitar and vibraharp solos. The latter are played by a very young Gary Burton, still at that time in the shadow of Lionel Hampton. The chief drawback of his contributions is their stolidly symmetrical nature, revealed most graphically in Move, where he merely skates over the surface of Denzil Best's fine composition.

With ''Hodge Podge'', an ironic title in the present context, we are back inside the pantheon. A selection of sixteen small band recordings by a contingent from the Ellington band of 1938/39, it represents combo jazz of that era at or near its polished and incisive best. As a manipulator of tone Hodges must be ranked with Bechet or Chaloff, and Cootie Williams, who also makes numerous contributions, stands not far behind; but it is not just the solos by thesetwo, or by Lawrence Brown or Harry Carney, that sets these tracks so far above the common run, but the astute equipoise between improvisation and ensemble, a fine balance in which Ellington, who plays piano on all tracks but two, probably had a major hand. The wealth of imagination which fostered such masterpieces of the style as Good Gal Blues and Dooji Wooji is little short of staggering, whilst Finesse and I'm In Another World are models of melodic perception. In comparison with this album 'Gene Krupa's Sidekicks' seems less than consistent, but its finest moments are memorable indeed. Even Eldridge can rarely have matched the tremendous verve he unleashes in Rockin' Chair, whilst Red Rodney's exuberant half-chorus in How High The Moon complements Mulligan's arrangement to perfection. The essential elements here, though, are the surging ensembles and the crisp drumming which constantly propels them. Even period vocals like Helen Ward's in One More Dream are partially rescued by these qualities, whilst Anita O'Day's rendition of Hoagy Carmichael's Skylark, a superior performance, and Benny Carter's Symphony In Riffs, especially notable for its saxophone scoring, gain substantially from them.

- M.J.

Electric Connections

The Joe Goldberg axiom states that "unusual instruments begin to dominate a jazz style at the approach of the style's sterility". But unusual instruments are only one of the signs of sterility in the current glut of electric connections. Lack of imagination is another. Men who seemed on the brink of finding their own distinctive voices a few years ago now blend indistinguishably into the pot of percussion and amplification. Worse than that, almost any track on any of the seven records reviewed here could be inserted into any one of the other records with no great problem.

Amplification is almost certainly here to stay, although it will be less central after the current novelty wanes. When it is no longer an end in itself, it may even prove to be the stimulus for an interesting new development in the music, as a lot of listeners (myself included) predicted it would be by now. But it will be approached

with more craft and less ornament before that happens. In the meantime, the marketplace is stuffed with more slickaphonics than listeners can hope to keep up with. Herewith a sampler of some of the best and worst:

Michael White. ''Go With The Flow'' (Impulse ASD-9281) features the feathery sound of White's violin as well as occasional snatches of his tambourine, ashtray synthesizer and small percussion. This new group, called the Magic Music Company, retains Ed Kelly on keyboards from the old group and adds guitar, bass, percussion and drums by younger players. White is more repetitious than ever, but his smooth tone rescues the record from complete loss for the first few spins. Herbie Hancock, "Thrust" (Columbia PC-32965) continues the slither into oblivion of the most promising young pianist of a few years ago. Hancock remains groovy, but at the expense of everything else. Eddie Henderson and Julian Priester are gone from the old Mwandishi group (in fact, no Swahili word appears anywhere) but Bennie Maupin remains. Alone, he cannot hold back the synthesizers, even if he wants to. This smaller group has some advantages. Actual Proof is as close to an extended piano piece as Hancock has come in a long time. No one will deny that he sure can play that Fender. A lot of us can wish that he would play it more often. Michal Urbaniak, "Atma" (Columbia KC-33184) sets a Polish group into a New York studio. It must have been a strain on a lot of Columbia executives whoknew what they wanted but couldn't tell whether they were getting it or not. The most interesting tracks (Mazurka, New York Batsa) fuse folk melodies and boogaloo rhythms. Urbaniak himself sounds like a busker who runs on batteries. His violin is fast and folksy at its best (as on Largo). Usually, however, he plays second fiddle to the vocalizing of his wife, Ursula Dudziak. The group style is obviously derived from the sound that Flora Purim got with Chick Corea, but the Urbaniaks are much rougher both at the edges and at the core.

Alice Coltrane/Carlos Santana, "Illuminations" (Columbia PC 32900) starts out like yet another attempt to grow wings in a recording studio. The eighteen strings play lush chords to levitate Coltrane, Santana, and occasionally Jules Broussard (on soprano) and Tom Coster (on acoustic piano). Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette are also listed among the personnel. On a backward blindfold test, they would be among the very first you would guess were not on this record. However, when the strings pack up and go home, the tempo and the solo space pick up considerably (on Angel Of Sunlight). Interesting as it is to hear Alice Coltrane in some other mood. it will hardly be a recommendation to any but her most devoted fans.

Freddie Hubbard, "High Energy" (Columbia KC 33048) reveals just enough of the trumpeter's technical facility to satisfy many jazz fans. The record is not made for them in particular, however. Hubbard is crowded by strings, a medium sized band, synthesizers and miscellaneous percussionists. Most tracks fade away into

silence instead of stopping. All of this overproduction does not prevent Hubbard from playing a lyrical flugelhorn chorus on Black Maybe, or from moving briskly through Crisis. It does prevent him, though, from rising above his banal surroundings everywhere else. Ebony Moonbeams, for example, is a cliche from start to finish, and Hubbard has to share a lot of the blame.

Mahavishnu, "Apocalypse" (Columbia KC-32957) shares with most other third stream music the fallacy of absoluteness. In trying to make a music beyond category, Mahavishnu and the London Symphony have only succeeded in grafting together two uneasy idioms. The result is seldom dull, if you are willing to adjust your head for the band at one moment and the symphony at the next. Few will be willing, and it should not have been necessary anyway. Michael Gibbs, after all, wrote the orchestrations. He is an arranger of taste and imagination in his own milieu, and you have to think that he should have been able to smooth the graft. Jean-Luc Ponty and John McLaughlin, the principal instrumentalists, play fast or play shrill, with no middle ground. Maybe acid rock and romantic concerti are just plain incompatible. Whether or not they are, their compatibility is not enhanced at all by producer George Martin, the fifth Beatle, who salted the master with half a dozen obvious tape splices lest we should forget that his wizardry was behind it all.

Chick Corea, "Where Have I Known You Before" (Polydor 2310 354) is the newer, smaller Return To Forever (Al DiMeola (guitar), Stanley Clarke, Lenny White, Corea). It is also the most limited group to bear that name so far. Only its volume has increased. Corea is apparently aware of its limitations, because he intersperses short takes of unaccompanied acoustic piano for relief (Where Have I Loved / Danced With /Seen You Before). The music is solid within its limits. The arrangements are tricky, as always, and their execution precise. On this album, and on all six albums above, the bassists' role is sharply defined. He determines the mode and keeps the time. That is a stifling role for anyone, but it is a notable waste for someone like Stanley Clarke. To hear him repeat a five note run for almost seven minutes on The Shadow Of Lo is like watching Fergie Jenkins pitch batting practice. Clarke, along with Holland and a lot of other bassists, cannot carry on forever in a musical style that offers them so little freedom. - J.C.

Impulse Twofers

Duke Ellington Ellingtonia, Volume Two Impulse! ASH-9285-2

John Coltrane His Greatest Years, Volume Three Impulse! ASH-9278-2

Milt Jackson The Impulse Years Impulse! ASH-9282-2

Brothers and Sisters! Are you prepared for the second coming of the entire Impulse catalogue? The Impulse reissue program has been clandestinely active for well over a year as I write this (11/74), without fanfare - especially as most of the original recordings from which the reissue sets are cut-and-pasted were theoretically never removed from the active catalog. Rather than repackage and reissue the original discs, Impulse is undertaking a pseudocomprehensive reorganization of material by subject. Thus one gets collections centered around various artists (the ''Impulse Years" and "Reevaluations" series, and the continuing Coltrane "Greatest Years" sets, instrument boxes ("The Saxophone", "The Bass"), and even historical examinations of stylistic trends ("Energy Essentials"). Such a process has its advantages and disadvantages. Good, I suppose, is the cohesive organization around themes for specific interest study and exploration (or it would be if the intention were fully realized; see my comments on ''The Bass''). Bad is the redundancy you'll find between what you will already have on your shelves and what's to be found in the new sets. To a certain degree, you'll find yourself either kicking yourself for not having picked up on the original issue of disc X, or being unhappy over being saddled with several selections of dubious distinction that you had successfully evaded in the original.

Of these four sets, the best to my ears is ''Ellingtonia, Volume Two'', a tribute to Duke drawn from the period 1961 to 1972 that includes two selections by small groups with Ellington himself (from the Ellington/Coltrane and the Ellington/Coleman Hawkins sessions), and is made up in the remainder by his compositions, played by his contemporaries (Hines, Hampton, Pee Wee Russell), his past or present bandsmen (Hodges, Brown, Gonsalves, Webster, Bellson), or those otherwise beholden to him for inspiration (Shepp, Mingus, Tyner). Given the musicianship present for each selection and the intrinsically superior material they play, you would expect uniformly superlative performances. That expectation is fulfilled, and at a remarkably sustained level of inspiration throughout (all the more surprising when you consider just how tired the smallband mainstream idiom has become in recent years). Even so, a few titles stand out above the others. Ben Webster's A Single Petal Of A Rose is the single most affecting ballad performance I've yet heard: yet it comes from a time when it seemed that nobody was listening to him anymore. Archie Shepp and Joe Lee Wilson realize in their large-ensemble version of Come Sunday a prayerful longing that far exceeds the mere lip service so many younger men pay to Ellington's mastery, and haunts you for days after hearing it; only its originals, Johnny Hodges and Mahalia Jackson were able to equal the soulfulness of this recording - and both versions are strictly true to the performers. Two of the most vividly independent figures in jazz of diff-

erent eras - Pee Wee Russell and John Coltrane - meet the Ducal spirit and find themselves fused in it with sympathy and grace. The one questionable inclusion is the "amazing cross-interpretive recreation" of East St. Louis Toodle-oo by the rock band "Steely Dan" with fuzz, wa-wa, and synthesizer. Although it's a reasonably accurate verbatim account, it takes some rather pretzelled logic indeed to see how it merits this heavy company. Even in the face of that, the entire enterprise smacks of a sincere attempt at tribute (the liners even advise you to accept Steely Dan as only "a substitute until the real thing comes along''). Jon Hendricks' liner notes are a delightful recollection of the Fllington wit - almost as enjoyable as the two discs.

Milt Jackson is that A&R man's dream an adept musician who, after years of performing in all settings and circumstances, can put up a decent show even when he doesn't mean a single note he's playing. The titles on the vibist's set are taken from a 1956 session with Quincy Jones for ABC, and his own dates for Impulse from 1961, 1964, and 1969 - nine titles from 1969 as compared to six from all the other sessions together. Which is a shame, because there is a large gap between the real musical virtues of the earlier selections and those less tangible of 1969 - particularly in the rocking big-band recordings of that date - a hiatus of inspiration, with an evergrowing dependency on soulless technique and pet catch-all phrases. The contrast between the contrivedly precious funk-for-its-own-sake of the later One Mint Julep and the unpretentiously inspired soulfulness of the 1956 Sermonette (with Lucky Thompson, Mingus, Art Farmer, and Gene Quill joining Jackson in Quincy Jones' band) is truly educational in view of this artistic tragedy. Jackson is certainly inhibited in the large orchestral setting; and while none of the late quintet titles are less than attractively performed (Jackson, Teddy Edwards, Ray Brown), the early six pieces are the gems that make this set worthy of any attention. Leave the big band for the dancers and strippers. I'd advise you to look for the earlier original Impulse issues (AS-14 "Statements", AS-70 ''Jazz'n'Samba'') if you're a Jackson fan, and join me in hoping that the Quincy Jones dates (''Quincy Jones'', ABCX 782-2; "This Is How I Feel About Jazz", ABC-149) will be dredged up from the depths of the Impulse vaults and be put back on full issue again soon.

The "John Coltrane's Greatest Years" series represents, to me, a misguided and rather wasteful reissue program. If any recordings were ever adequately conceived and packaged, they were the original chronicles of Coltrane's musical odyssey on Impulse, totally in accordance with the stature of the artist and the thoughtfulness of the producer Bob Thiele. The "Greatest Years" series pretends, with each volume, to give an adequate cross-sectional sampling of John Coltrane's musics, but in fact none of them are balanced with respect to the make-up of his ensembles or the various epoch-making evolutions he brought to his instruments. This, the most recent

of these haphazard collections, seems the best of the lot, striking as it does a fair balance between the years leading to and from the flood tide of "A Love Supreme". It emphasizes with certainty much exceeding that of prior volumes the personally invigorating challenges of his music - from Chasin' The Trane (1961), a first revolutionary manifesto far more immediately compelling than those of Lenin or Mao, to the impassioned resolve of Expression (1967), his last earthly word to us. In between lies a fair documentation of all his steps and moods - Crescent, Dear Lord, Welcome, Nature Boy notably tracing the most significant of all the transitions he made, the 1964-65 years moving toward commitment to the future. Also fascinating in this microcosmal compression is the way in which the tumultuous final three years of his musical life mirrored the five stages Elizabeth Kubler-Ross has outlined in the psychology of dying. Only one of Alice Coltrane's egregriously - doctored posthumous releases is included. My quibble is not with the content - which should be well-known to readers - but with the haphazard manner of its assembly. Coltrane's stature and influence in the music of the past fifteen years - and probably the next twenty - is such that, reissue being necessary, the corporations involved have the responsibility of an authoritative undertaking - chronologically, with outtakes, alternate and incomplete takes, and unissuedtitles integrated into the material already on issue, with no "sweetening", with detailedly analytical annotation (except in the few cases, such as "A Love Supreme", where the creator says all that need be said in any case). The man's impact upon the heritage of a people is so great that this is the only appropriate way of paying him - or them - his due. The "Greatest Years" series has gone beyond being just a sampler or a basic collation for the uninitiated listener; whether it can proceed onward in its present form is doubtful.

I think that Elvin Jones' recordings since his departure from the classic Coltrane quartet in 1966 have borne out my original thesis that his impact on the drum world came as much from his being an inheritor of Coltrane's charismatic mantle as from what innovation he did himself. The recordings in his "Impulse Years" set made away from ensembles dominated by Coltrane or a similarly powerful horn figure find him in more self-indulgent (something he has been very given to since forming his first Trio in 1968) and generally inferior form compared to the titles recorded in the interactive shadow of Ohnedareuth in full cataclysmic flight. Fortunately, most titles chosen for this set are drawn from those ensembles, and constitute at least as good a sampling of Coltrane's Impulse output as the 'Greatest Years, Volume Three" set did. The high points of this collection are: from the earlier Coltrane ensembles, Impressions, the session-mate to Chasin' The Trane and (as ever) either an unusual or an edited version for the absence of Eric Dolphy, who usually shared stands and solo intensity in the quintet of that day; and, from

the later years, when Coltrane was coming to the full acceptance of drums not as accompaniment but on an equal interactive role with his own horn, the ferocious tenor-drum duet Vigil from the "Kulu Se Mama" date, reaching a textural power and diversity that was not to be excelled until Rashied Ali's fullest involvement in the last quintet. Anomalously, Impulse saw fit to omit Jones' single best solo away from the Coltrane setting - East Broadway Run-Down, alongside Sonny Rollins. The four non-Coltrane selections include one lesser endeavour from that Rollins session, and three compositions recorded under Jones' own leadership between 1963 and 1968; none find him stimulated to the same invention. I am somewhat dismayed by the practice of excerpting - especially when it involved dismantling Pursuance from "A Love Supreme" and Serenity from ''Meditations'', two of Coltrane's most fulfillingly complete performances. The liner notes are eruditely analytical, especially of interest to drummers enchanted by Jones' technique; as with the "Greatest Years" sets, annotators seem to have difficulty telling tenor and soprano saxophones apart.

There's no doubt that the Impulse catalog contains many of the finest moments the past generation of jazz has offered; also a few of the most prominently-promoted turkeys. The reissues are slipshod, seem more intent on clogging the market than on disseminating the music in an approachable way to the audience escaping from rock. This music is fine; but production makes three of these four albums eminently Resistable Impulses. Ed Michel, the latest of ABC-Impulse's chief producers, should rethink his packaging policies and aims.

— B.T.

77 Records

Bernard Addison High In A Basement 77 LA 12/8

Pete Brown Pete's Last Date 77 SEU 12/52

Phil Seaman Phil On Drums 77 SEU 12/53

Dick Wellstood Walkin' With Wellstood 77 SEU 12/51

One of the earliest and most durable of the English "indie" labels is Doug Dobell's 77 Records, run from that world-wide famous address in Charing Cross Road. Dobell has consistently marketed quality jazz by neglected players on the British scene, as well as American musicians whom he felt deserved exposure. As a result, 77 has built up an impressive catalogue. The records are kept available and not cut out at the drop of an accountant's pen or a computer's instruction.

This latest bunch from 77 is typical of the offbeat and interesting albums that are the Dobell trademark. One, "High In A Basement", was actually issued more than 10 years ago but it is still in stock and I am reviewing it because it is a companion to the new "Pete's Last Date" set.

The music on both records stems from a session that Dobell himself supervised in New York on October 21, 1961 during a visit to the States. Doug was concerned that many of the musicians he admired were getting older and recording opportunities enjoyed by them were few and far between. So he recruited guitarist Bernard Addison as leader with Pete Brown (alto), Johnny Letman (trumpet), Hayes Alvis (bass) and Sonny Greer (drums).

The wisdom of Dobell's decision and choice has been endorsed by time. Pete Brown and Hayes Alvis are now dead, and this was Brown's last session. The date may have its weaknesses and occasional fluffs, but considering this was a hastily arranged, impromptu affair, the music is very good indeed. Brown, at 55, showed he still had plenty to say while Letman was a powerful, if sometimes inaccurate, partner. Addison is a tower of strength and you hardly notice the absence of a piano.

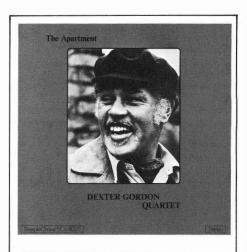
This is warm, flowing, non-competitive mainstream jazz played by five men in musical accord. The tunes are what you would expect at such a gathering - Lady Be Good, Ain't She Sweet, Cherry, I Want A Little Girl, Them There Eyes, I Surrender Dear, Please Don't Talk About Me..., plus a couple of originals. And there isn't a bum track amongst them.

Pete's Last Date amplifies the session. Some of the material is duplicated but included are three alternate takes - of Lady Be Good, Them There Eyes and I Surrender Dear - and a previously unreleased track, Sometimes I'm Happy. So between the two records we have the session in its entirety. Also the reissue has the benefit of stereo recording while the first LP was only issued in mono.

I know there are many listeners who dispute the release of alternates but personally I maintain that they increase our knowledge of the art of improvisation. Brown was a superb saxophonist who never played the same solotwice so these extras are to be welcomed. Both LPs should be added to your collection without delay.

The same goes for Dick Wellstood's set, taped at Ronnie Scott's Club before an invited audience during a brief visit to Britain by this versatile pianist in January 1974. I am familiar with several Wellstood solo piano albums but this one tops them all. It shows that Dick's scope extends a long way beyond ragtime and stride. Here we find, for example, a superb medley tribute to Duke Ellington in the form of Prelude To A Kiss, Sophisticated Lady and Caravan. There are also sensitive performances of a couple of Cole Porter tunes, So In Love and Miss Otis Regrets.

Walkin' With Watney's is a splendid ad lib blues, dedicated to a popular British brew, but for me the outstanding number is a delightful meander through the chord changes of Rubber Duck. I must endorse Eric Townley's view that this is Wellstood's best solo record to date - and that will be recommendation enough for anyone



Dexter Gordon (tenor sax) Kenny Drew (piano) NHOP (bass) Albert Heath (drums)

Side One:

The Apartment, Wee-Dot, Old Folks. Side Two:

Strollin', Candlelight Lady, Antabus. Recorded September 8, 1974 and May 24, 1974 (Old Folks).

Available from Coda Publications, Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8, CANADA. \$6.98 postpaid.



Graeme Bell (piano)
Bob Erwig (cornet)
Bruce Bakewell (clarinet)
Geoff Holmes (trombone)
Mike Walmsley (banjo/guitar)
Jack Vincken (bass)
Al Mayers (drums/vocal)

Side One:

Swanee River, Memphis Blues, Malloney's Boogie, Black And Blue, Tishomingo Blues.

Side Two:

I Want A Little Girl, Muskat Ramble, Grenville Street Blues, China Boy, Yellow Dog Blues. Recorded June 28, 1975.

Available from Coda Publications, Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8, CANADA. \$5.98 postpaid.

who has sampled this talented pianist's previous efforts.

Phil Seaman was widely regarded as the best drummer England has produced but the propulsive thrust of his playing was rarely properly captured on record. Phil seemed to be one of those jazzmen who functioned better in front of an audience. Listening to "Phil On Drums" brought back a host of memories - the way he drove a soloist without becoming over-dominant.

This session was taped at Hampstead Country Club in December 1971 and it found Phil at the helm of a nine-piece band packed with individualists. I don't know if it was actually Phil's gig but he certainly held it all together. The line-up comprises Ray Crane and Gerry Salisbury (trumpets), Keith Christie and Johnny Picard (trombones), Sandy Brown (clarinet), Tommy Whittle (tenor), Brian Lemon (piano) and Lennie Bush (bass).

All the soloists are on form but Brown's spiky clarinet and Whittle's Al Cohn-inspired tenor particularly catch the ear. But if you took Philaway and substituted any of his English contemporaries the session's sparkle would be missing. Seaman, you see, was an inspiration to those around him.

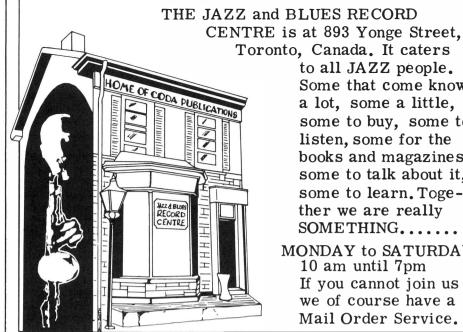
The numbers are fine fare for jam session blowing - Allen's Alley, It's A Wonderful World, When Sonny Gets Blue, Just Squeeze Me. Great stuff from an important and historically unique meeting of British jazzers. It will never happen again now that Phil has gone. - M.G.

AMALGAM

Play Blackwell and Higgins A 002

Trevor Watts and John Stevens are the center of two of the most vital ensembles on the European New Music scene - Spontaneous Music Ensemble and Amalgam. This double role does not imply redundancy of creative efforts because - as Watts explains it - each ensemble has its own character. Inall its various permutations, the SME has been an entity unto itself in the traditions of improvised music, uniquely dedicated to that level of collective involvement in creation at which not only the whole experience, but each isolated enunciation becomes the product of mutually sympathetic interaction. Conversely, Amalgam exists much more within the bounds of the established 'free' AfroAmerican heritage. The overlap in personnel, time span, and basic improvisational conceptions of the two groups also suggests that the difference is to some degree post facto, varying with individual circumstance and the whims of the moment as much as anything else.

Blackwell and Higgins are compositions by drummer Stevens, dedicated to the two original percussionists of the Ornette Coleman Quartets circa 1961 and the role of polyrhythmic awareness they played in the unfolding of Coleman's music. Both are extended, vigorous trio improvisations vividly emotional and eagerly reminiscent of the early Ornette (up to "Chapp-



on alto saxophone (an uncommon instance on record), shows the same highly-charged drive and vocality that characterized his lines back in the first SME recordings (''The Challenge'', 1966). The two compositions are minimal harmonic/melodic material derived for exploration of rhythmic figures, developed intricately by fragmentation and perturbation of individual phrases and their substructures. Watts is a naturally lyrical melodist after Ornette, but his lines move in a more vigorously vocal manner than (certainly) Coleman's recent work would suggest (Again, see Amalgam's role as an independent extension within existing orthodoxies). If Coleman were playing like this now, it would be considered a very, very superior performance on his part over most of his recordings of the past five years; and now that Ornette's music has grown not mature but middle-aged - lazy, paunchy, and selfsatisfied - it's particularly vital for some-

one (like Watts in this setting) to extend

the validity of the original heritage.

aqua Suite''). Trevor Watts, heard here

Coleman's music has always been very responsive to the nature of the rhythmic drive beneath him (consider the difference in flow of his lines with Blackwell/Higgins/Moffett under him on one hand, as compared to movement in recordings alongside Elvin Jones or Ornette Jr.). One would expect John Stevens to be playing an essential role in the unravelling of these two compositions, and this is in fact the Stevens' elaborate polyrhythmic filigree pulses and bubbles beneath the alto, cemented through the basses of Ron Herman or Jeff Clyne. The accents probe the gaps in Watts' lines, igniting uncounted harmonic and rhythmic potentials with every ictus. The empathy of the band is impressive, but Stevens-Watts function inseparably from each other, and really independently of whomever else may be present.

As Watts says, this music is right

to all JAZZ people. Some that come know a lot, some a little. some to buy, some to listen, some for the books and magazines. some to talk about it. some to learn. Together we are really SOMETHING.....

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because it feels right. Both selections are abruptly cut off, and I would have preferred to hear each performance in toto. This is a well-produced (independently) recording whose musical beauties are just too great to be passed over merely because it's hard to get a copy. Try ordering it from "A" Records, Flat 4, 14 Blakesley Avenue, London W5 England.

CHET BAKER

She Was Too Good To Me CTI 6050 S1

Chet Baker is back. It was 1968, a long time ago now, when he quit to cure an addiction and (not coincidentally) to have his remaining teeth pulled. So when he turned up at Bourbon Street in Toronto for two weeks back in January 1974 he was as unexpected as Hamlet's father. And a lot more like Hamlet's father than like the prince himself. The boyish good looks that won him the role of a picaresque woodsman in a B movie during his glory days are obscured now. The face is the roadmap of a lousy trip.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. He still screws the microphone up to his lips to murmur maudlin lyrics. He still plays the trumpet sitting down with his legs tightly crossed, and he still knocks out effortless little melodies that are simultaneously inspired and insipid.

This record captures the maudlin and the insipid more than adequately. The three songs (She Was Too Good To Me. With A Song In My Heart, What'll I Do) are very fey. The four instrumental tracks (two with Paul Desmond, one with Hubert Laws, one alone with rhythm) barely scratch the surface of the melodies. All in all, it is more like an old resumption than a new start. - J.C.

CRYSTAL CLEAR



Generally, Rex Stewart is considered to have taken those famous 36 bars on the five well-known versions - one on Brunswick (reissued on Ace of Hearts), two on RCA (reissued on various LPs on RCA), one on Columbia (reissued in the Fletcher Henderson Story on CBS) and one on Crown (reissued on Swedish Jazz Panorama and American Savoy). While discussing his activities with Fletcher Henderson in 1949. Rex remarked that he was not sure that he was the soloist on all versions of Sugar Foot Stomp. He thought that while he (Rex) was in the band when all the various Sugar Foot Stomps were recorded, Bobby Stark took the three 12-bar choruses in a few of them.

Listening to all the records mentioned in the fifties, I couldn't (yet) hear what Rex had pointed out to me. I was still too obsessed by the years-long habit of believing that all these trumpet solos were most typical for Rex and the idea that the performer could be Bobby Stark didn't enter but my mind - not my ear.

On his last but one visit to Europe (1966), Rex and I listened to Fletcher's five Sugar Feet together and he clearly identified the trumpet soloist on the five above mentioned versions as follows: Brunswick/Bobby Stark/open (this I had found out in the meantime myself because this solo is, indeed, very typical of Bobby for several reasons: the choice of certain notes on a chord (which Rex called 'rather

weird ideas" - which was not a negative judgement but an apt description of what he heard and how he felt), the tone and the unique phrasing of the very original Bobby Stark. The two RCAs: Rex/muted, sticking rather close to King Oliver's original creation. Columbia: Rex/muted, again playing much closer to Joe Oliver's famous creation than Bobby Stark. Crown: Bobby Stark / plunger. This came as a surprise to me but Rex told me to play Fletcher's House Of David Blues as a comparison and while listening to it, I saw the light, ie. the very special and personal use Bobby made of the plunger. Very unlike Rex.

Since this memorable afternoon with Rex, I have heard Chick Webb's Sugar Foot Stomps (Polydor and, especially, First Time on Records - a much clearer recording and an LP which any way you look at it everybody should have: there are some tracks which, in my opinion, show Chick Webb, his orchestra and the tremendous impact he had on and over his band to greater advantage and truer to an in person performance, Iimagine, than anything we've ever got on record by the unsurpassable Chick Webb and his orchestra, with the possible exception of Harlem Congo) and there is no doubt that the trumpet soloist is the same as on Fletcher Henderson's Crown version: Bobby Stark. Do your own bit of listening and decide whether you can agree. I think you will.

And the conclusion? This is only one case in hundreds where a solo identification - made many, many years ago wasn't re-checked any more by any writing people (there are a lot of guys who have never written one line but who have excellent ears...it would be an error to imagine that "the critics" are necessarily the best connoisseurs...farfromit). This long-ago-taken "evaluation" was considered a truism. And, as already said, it's not the only one.

The clarinet player in Chick Webb's Jungle Mama

In the middle fifties I used to correspond with the late tenor saxophone player, Elmer "Tone" Williams who during the (at least) last six years of his life was confined to a wheelchair. (Diabetes had made it necessary that both of Elmer's legs were amputated. It was admirable how this handicap and the great suffering which he occasionally briefly mentioned didn't break his spirit at all; rarely did Elmer complain. His letters were radiating optimism and he once or twice remarked that he was lucky to be alive. His mother in Red Bank took care of him until his passing in 1962 and she saw to it that he could continue to play his saxophone on weekend gigs, sitting in his wheelchair, accompanied by a few musician pals in

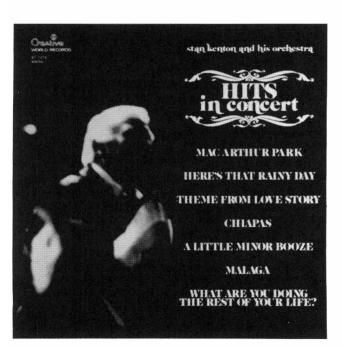
Red Bank, New Jersey). I never met Elmer Williams in person but I called him in 1956 and '61 and remember both telephone conversations as hilarious affairs! Despite all the hardships, Elmer had stayed the man 'full of fun' his friends had described.

On my second call, I asked him if he remembered some of the men who had played on Dog Bottom and Jungle Mama, Chick Webb's very first recordings (made under the nom de plume, The Jungle Band). Elmer named several musicians whom I knewwere on the record, f.i. Robert Mack Horton, Ward Pinkett, Don Kirkpatrick, Hilton Jefferson and John Trueheart. I then mentioned the name of Louis Jordan who has been a regular feature of all discographies and record sleeves, when it comes to Jungle Mama and Dog Bottom. I could tell from the silence which followed my question that Elmer was really surprised. Then he explained that Louis Jordan had joined the Webb band only after he (Elmer) had left in 1936 (maybe late 1935 but not earlier because Elmer is still heard on several Webb records of the October 12, 1935 date) to join Fletcher Henderson. Elmer went into further detail to point out that Louis Jordan hadn't even moved to Philadelphia yet in 1929 and was "still somewhere in the South at that time." As I have found out later - thanks to John Chilton's "Who's who" - all this was true. On the telephone I also asked whether there was perhaps another Louis Jordan

who had antedated the famous singer/alto player as an active musician on the New York scene? But before Elmer could say an emphatic ''No'', Bass Hill who was following the conversation, had shaken his head. Two such categorical 'Nos" from two men who knew the New York Negro jazz scene inside out were enough for me. I was certain that the name of "Louis Jordan" was in that personnel by error and that it was about time to forget about it. To my surprise, Elmer said that the third reed-man on the date was Joe Garland and to my question: "Two tenors?", he replied, "Joe played all the saxophones from the soprano to the bass saxophone." Bass Hill, on the second receiver, nodded approval. A few nights later, I met Gene Mikell, alto and clarinet man and he told me that he (too!) had played with Chick in 1929 and thought ''to be on a record date''. Later on, listening to the two "takes" of Wild Waves by the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, I discovered that the clarinet solos resembled very much the clarinet solo on Jungle Mama, recorded three years earlier. For a long time I had a tendency to think that - despite his surety - Elmer Williams had mixed up Garland and Mikell (who both worked for years with the MBRB later on) and the clarinetist on Jungle Mama was Mikell (who seemed less certain, though, about his own presence on the Webb session). This was a mistake. Re-listening recently to all my records by the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, I realized

that Charlie Holmes was - as most discographies indicate - still with the band on the Wild Waves date (he can be heard on Rhythm Spasm, White Lightning and Wild Waves) and that Eugene Mikell replaced him from the following session only. The saxophone section on the MBRB date of May 12, 1932 consisted therefore of Crawford Wethington, Charlie Holmes and Joe Garland. To make sure, however, that the last link in this endless chain of doubts and suppositions would be found, I asked my faithful correspondent for many years, Rudy Powell whether he would ask Gene Mikell who had played the clarinet solos with the MBRB. Gene's reply was positive: "Before I joined the MBRB, all clarinet solos were played by Joe Garland. When I came in the band, Joe and I got the clarinet solos about 50/50. After Buster Bailev came in the band, it was 80% for Buster and 10/10 for Joe and me." Consequence: Elmer Williams was certainly right: the clarinet player on Jungle Mama and Wild Waves is Joe Garland. It would be nice if in future discographies, "Louis Jordan" would make room for Joe Garland in the personnel of Jungle Mama and Dog Bottom. Incidentally, the clarinet solo in Jungle Mama is superb, the ones in the two Wild Waves scarcely less successful! (Jungle Mama was reissued on German Brunswick 87533, Chick Webb and his Orchestra 1931 (!!!) - 1936, Wild Waves, take 1 on C3L33, The Sound of Harlem, take 2 on Jazz Panorama LP-3, Sweden). - Johnny Simmen





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BILLIES BLUES

by John Chilton Quartet Books, London

The extensive bibliography of books and magazines in the back of this book will give the reader some idea of the tenacity with which John Chilton approaches his role as jazz historian. The technique of reshaping quotations from previously published articles has long been the forte of European writers, divorced as they are from the centre of the scene. But I believe that this is the first time an entire book has been assembled in this manner. "Billie's Blues" is a narrative account of Billie Holiday's career from her first recordings in 1935 to her death in 1959. The focus is on Billie Holiday the musician (singer) rather than sensational revelations of a personal nature. This alone is a refreshing change, for Billie Holiday's life style has continued to be a "cause celebre" long after her death.

"Billie's Blues" is low keyed and sober in its approach. Sometimes there's almost a matter-of-fact dryness to the narration. Author Chilton makes judicious use of the quotations available to him they often succeed in bringing the subject matter to life. The account of Billie's life takes 200 pages to tell and should give anyone with any curiosity about the realities (as opposed to the fantasies) a better perspective of the trials and tribulations which haunted her life. Missing, though, are the kind of personal reminiscences and new facts which could have been forthcoming if it had been possible for Chilton to personally do research in the United States.

The second section of the book contains Chilton's analysis of Billie Holiday's recordings. The perceptive comments are enhanced by Chilton's musical understanding (he's a trumpet player of some repute in England) and his sensitive observations of the supporting musicians gives a lot of guidance to listeners wishing to have a greater understanding of the relative merits of each recording. Chilton generally adhers to the concept that there is a gradual decline in Billie's voice from the middle 1940s but he does admit to an occasional glimmer of greatness in the Norman Granz sessions for Clef/Verve. Notwithstanding Chilton's scathing dismissal of those "hear how she suffers" fans, it seems to me that more detailed analysis is needed of these later recordings - especially as they have now been reissued in chronological order in England. No reference is made of the 1946 concert performances while the dismissal of the material originally issued as "Songs For Distingue Lovers' seems a little perverse. Even stranger is Chilton's failure to mention the Commodore recording of Fine And Mellow - surely one of Billie's great recordings. Approval of this title, of course, would be contrary to Chilton's theory that Billie Holiday's blues singing was mechanical and uninspired. Discussion and assessment of the relative merits of Lady Day's recordings will not end with this book. It's a pity that a discography wasn't included. It would have been a big bonus.

"Billie's Blues" is a solid rather than spectacular addition to the rapidly growing flood of books on jazz. - John Norris

THE JAZZ BOOK

by Joachim Berendt, translated by Dan Morgenstern Lawrence Hill & Co., New York, 1975

"The Jazz Book - New Orleans to Rock and Free Jazz" is the latest incarnation of the magnum opus Joachim Berendt has been rewriting since 1953. Only a select few - Berendt, Leonard Feather, and Hughes Panassie, as "internationally recognized authorities on jazz" - could qualify to write such sweeping overviews, for which there is never the less a market.

Books like this seem to be directed at the ill-informed newcomer to the music who seeks answers to basic questions he has yet to form. My question is, whether after reading 'The Jazz Book' the tyro listener will be better informed or just misinformed. I say this not because I disagree with Berendt's views, even though a number of his basic assertions (such as the importance he gives to electric jazz and jazz-rock) irk me; to do so would be bad criticism on my part. The problem is that there are certain literary traps for the unwary author of this kind of book inaccuracy, dogmatism, oversimplification, overclassification - and Berendt shuffles blissfully into them all.

The matter of inaccuracy is most easily dealt with. In the opening two sections of this book there is a predictable minimum of one factual error every two or three pages - errors that would be trivial if they weren't so frequent or so jarringly obvious. It's a matter of knowing which label Miles Davis recorded for in the mid-1960s (hint: not Blue Note), how many years elapsed between 1950 and 1959 (not seven), when Coltrane recorded India and Impressions (1961, not 1963), or that Paul Horn preceded Eric Dolphy in the Chico Hamilton Quintets. Accurate basic research is invaluable.

The remaining difficulties all fall under the general heading of pedantism. In any work attempting to summarize a large area of human endeavour, a certain amount of dogmatism is inevitable simply because of space considerations. Which isn't to say that it's desirable. In the sciences, where everything at least smacks of being objectively provable, dogma is objectionable; how much more so here, where the only standards are subjective? The last thing I would want to see encouraged in a newcomer to as alive (and thus errorprone) an art as jazz is blissful acceptance. But by not stimulating questioning, and by avoiding or disputing every viewpoint other than his own, this is exactly what Berendt does.

Oversimplification is a secondary problem. After all, if you're laying down the Articles of True Faith you have to draw them at a least common denominator. Thus an exemplary section on the nature of improvisation is preceded by a statement that the sole valid distinctions between jazz and symphonic music are sound and phrasing. Another factor here is that the author keeps carefully to the surface of issues. He outlines the evolution of the music in successive decadic cycles of revolution and stasis, vaguely citing social background for each stage but never speaks of the underlying sociopolitical forces this manner of development might represent. Perhaps he feels that as a European he would be overstepping his experience to do so; but his discussion is devoid of motivational factors when he leaves it as vauge as it is. In a similar vein is his statement that symphonic music is aesthetic while jazz is emotive, without pausing to think that the emotive drive in itself dictates an evolving aesthetic which is consistent for any one individual, and that ensemble sympathy in jazz is a function of parallel functioning areas in the aesthetics of the individuals involved. I was occasionally amazed at the magnitude of statement this simplistic approach allowed him to make, even when dealing with intangibles: "Free jazz melody is basically just a conventional jazz melody, over free harmonies, plus wild ecstasy, often with none of those hardly-perceivable, subtle nuances that the cool-jazz people loved." (page 159)

Overclassification is the child of dogmatism and superficiality, one which Berendt takes great pains to disclaim in his discussions of electric jazz/jazzrock. If he avoids it there, it's only because we are still too near to that era for perspective to facilitate comfortable pigeonholing of artists, minds, and implications; he seems quite satisfied to do so elsewhere. And while the classifications and subdivisions are valid to him. I question a number of them - for example, his vague citation of essential differences between "white jazz" and 'black jazz'' (although considerably deemphasized from earlier editions), the unproductive slicing of Ellington's oeuvre into four styles, or a rigid division of jazz singers into parallel "song" and 'blues" orientations.

Finally regarding style, it should be noted that the translators (Dan Morgenstern, Helmut and Barbara Bredigkeit) have in several places retained idiomatic German rather than English sentence and clause structures. A few passages would be quite difficult for a non-German speaker to follow. Basic syntax - tenses, cases, numbers - is followed inconsistently.

ently. "The Jazz Book" does contain some reasonable factual material. The author's perspective, as a European detached from the immediate drudgery and daily crises of artistic evolution, is noteworthy for American listeners. And even if the obligatory biographies of some "greats" are as blindly laudatory as anything out of fan magazines, the style of the articles is refreshingly earnest. Their lack of chronological consistency is occasionally dismaying (a recurring feature of this text); but the parallel biographies of Parker and Gillespie point up their individual dissimilarities more radically than any other presentation of the same well-trodden material I've yet seen (as intended), and makes their 1940s revolution in sound seem even that much more of an improbable accident. Annoying though they are to wade through, the stylistic problems I've noted fail to detract from a most lucid dissertion on the rudiments of jazz, an unusually enjoyable and tangible one. Though awkward, his ultimate definition of jazz is a uniquely viable one that seems to cover all the necessary ground in a rational manner. The other obligatory sections - styles/periods, instruments, vocalists, large and small combos, and the European scene (which is perhaps unduly emphasized from an American standpoint in view of the unavailability of appropriate recordings) are cursory but reasonably lucid. There are relatively few significant omissions (Charles Lloyd not given his due in the pre-1970s evolution of electric jazz-rock) or misplacements (Ian Underwood as clarinetist rather than as soprano saxophonist; the lack of chronology in the tenor saxophone and vocalist sections). Oversimplification to the point of aphorism is rampant (Warne Marsh is dismissed as "tenorized Lee Konitz", notwithstanding the stylistic dissimilarities between Konitz' own tenor playing and Marsh's music; Chico Hamilton becomes 'West Coast Jo Jones''), and the occasional name is incorrect ("Bob Altschul" among drummers). There is one sinfully major misjudgment. The big band section speaks with great detail and enthusiasm of the works of Frank Zappa (??!!?!?), but mentions the many contributions of Charles Mingus only in passing. Berendt has evidently never heard "The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady", or his priorities are in urgent need of overhaul. Most annoying in these discussions, though, is their organization. Because by creating an ideal model out of one musician or coterie for each generation of an instrument or organization (Eric Dolphy for - of all things - contemporary clarinet; or Elvin Jones-Tony Williams-Sunny MurrayBilly Cobham for current drum practices), and attempting to fit all others into that mold, the author is able to cram a devastating number of slights and put-downs into each square inch of page space.

Finally, there is a discography of recommended recordings by Achim Hebgen and Dan Morgenstern. Most entries are thoughtful, useful choices, despite the fact that more than a few are deleted or not readily available on this side of the Atlantic. A few, however (Ayler's "Last Album", for instance) do a disservice to the artist when so many better examples of his creation are available.

This, then, is The Book with all The Answers. Depending on the reader, many of the answers will be wrong; I sincerely doubt that anyone other than J.E. Berendt could buy unequivocally everything said here. But for all my criticisms, most of the faults of 'The Jazz Book' are generic problems - having to do with the nature of the work, and not the author. Certainly nobody else's attempts at general survey source books to jazz have been more perfect.

- Barry Tepperman

STORYVILLE NEW ORLEANS

by Al Rose University of Alabama Press \$17.50

One of the greatest legends in jazz history is the role played by Storyville in the history of jazz. It is in keeping with the unsavory image which American Society has perpetrated as an integral part of jazz music. An inability to come to terms with the creativity and importance of jazz music has constantly relegated it to a position outside of their society. And when the principal city of the music's emergence

also played host to the United States' only legalised red light district you can understand that many prurient interests are aroused. These people may well be disappointed with "Storyville New Orleans" for Al Rose has dug deep to come up with a factual document of lasting value. Fortunately he had the foresight to gather information before the mists of time had eliminated all the evidence.

This book is not a narrative document of the rise and fall of The District as such but rather a series of essays which examine in some detail different aspects of the activities, personalities and buildings contained in Storvville. Only information which has been corroborated is included and the picture emerges of a community which lived hard - but enjoyed themselves immensely. It also advocates, however obliquely, that the legalisation and licensing of prostitution was beneficial to the community; its activities were confined to one area and in the twenty years of its existence the numbers of active participants declined. Perhaps there's a moral somewhere. A street by street rundown of the various establishments showed that jazz musicians were employed but to suggest that jazz grew out of Storvville is as absurd as saying that prostitution was invented in New Orleans. Al Rose perceptively points to the real role played by the music and the musicians in the District and it is significant that in the interview with various ladies who once worked there that only occasional references are made to the music

The book is generously illustrated with photographs of many of the buildings as well as many of the surviving photographic portraits of the "ladies of the night" by Ernest Belloc. Its documentary value is high but it's also enjoyable reading.

- John Norris

JAZZ BOOKS

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TORONTO

Toronto can ill afford the demise of jazz establishments and so it is with particular regret that we have to inform you that two establishments closed their doors within the last month. Both, in their separate ways, were providing a forum for musicians who wished to stretch out in an informal vet conducive atmosphere. First to go was The Saphire. The place was padlocked and musicians and bar employees were left high and dry. Then, in mid-October came the news that the management of Egerton's had changed hands and the late night weekend sessions under Alvinn Pall's leadership (please note the correct spelling of the saxophonist's name something we've been guilty of for some time) came to an abrupt halt.

Some of the slack may be picked up by The 4th Dimension, the latest brainchild of Doug Cole. It's situated above Bourbon Street and Joe Williams opens the club the week of November 4. He is followed by Helen Humes on November 10 who will be supported by Jim Galloway and friends (including Helen's own pianist from New York). Jackie & Roy are in residence early in December (8-13) and Jodi Drake holds forth over the Christmas season. Then, in January, Jim Galloway's quartet take up residence in what could be a continuation of their Saphire philosophy.

Mose Allison returned to Toronto after too long an absence for a week's appearance at the Colonial. Sounding as good as ever, he ran through his repertoire of originals and standards much to the pleasure of those who dig the subtle wit, effective piano stylings and generally funky feeling which emanates from this musical bard. The only distraction, and a heavy one at that, was the idiot noise masquerading as music which the club sees fit to assault our ear drums with during intermission. It is a tasteless intrusion on our sensibilities and almost guarantees a one set visit.

Strange things went down at El Mocambo. Louisiana Red, a blues singer who established his reputation some ten years ago with a Roulette album, has hit the comeback trail with a startling recording for Blue Labor (#104 "Sweet Blood Call"). He was booked into El Mocambo for a week and by the time we got around to the club (on Wednesday) he had been removed. Management remains tight lipped about the whole affair.

A Space continues its presentation of

arresting new music and the winter concert series got off to a magnificent start with guitarist Eugene Chadbourne and Roscoe Mitchell's group. With Roscoe was Muhal Richard Abrams, a legend of the Chicago scene, trombonist George Lewis who captured everyone's imagination with his remarkable conception, ideas and execution. Guitarist Spencer Barefield was kept in check for the most part but is obvicusly a musician of talent. A more detailed report of this and other A Space concerts will be found elsewhere in this and succeeding issues of Coda.

Guitarist Barney Kessel drew capacity audiences to Bourbon Street. The audience, a mixture of his old fans and eager young guitarists, waxed enthusiastic about his performances. The impact of "Guitar Player" magazine on young guitarists is developing a whole new audience for the masters of that craft. It is encouraging to find a magazine which generates positive vibrations.

Bassist Gene Perla, who is also guiding light of PM Records was in Toronto for a week recording Doug Riley's quartet at George's Spaghetti House. PM Records now has a Canadian office and are manufacturing the records in Canada. With Doug Riley were Michael Stewart (saxophones), Don Thompson (bass) and Claude Ranger (drums). By the end of the week there was sufficient music of quality for an interesting album. Gene Perla also told us that he will be releasing commercially the trio album which Bernie Senensky recorded originally for the CBC.

There will be changes in jazz listeners' habits at the CBC it seems. The very popular Saturday afternoon CBC-FM show from Winnipeg is being replaced by a re-run of Jazz Radio Canada in the near future. While Gren Marsh and Lee Major were often garrulous and inaccurate in their information, their choice of music was usually excellent and sufficiently different to other jazz radio shows to make it worthwhile listening. Jazz Radio Canada, despite its heavy commitment to recording (the same) Canadian music, is a much weaker production and contains a much higher proportion of outrageous opinions and statements.

The summer season slid quietly away at Ontario Place with a capacity audience for Ella Fitzgerald and somewhat less than that for the Dukes of Dixieland, who were a replacement for Woody Herman.

The Art Gallery of Ontario gave a showing of Bert Stern's somewhat dated movie "Jazz On A Summer's Day" as well as an

evening of historic clips from Joe Showler's collection. Lack of advance publicity meant that many people missed this show. - John Norris

THE SCENE

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Dec. 1-20 - Joe Venuti, Carol Britto, Michel Donato, Don Vickory CHEZ MOI - 30 Hayden Street

Silverleaf Jazzmen - Saturday afternoon COLONIAL TAVERN -201 Yonge Street

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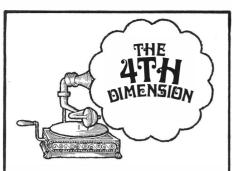
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QUINTET

MONTREAL

There is nothing better than a happy surprise. In the past month Montreal's crowd of jazz seekers scored pretty well and the best happening of all was last night - just before the deadline of this column - the rejuvenation of an old hand and a legend in his own lifetime. "Mrs. Blakey's one and only son Arturo''(Art Abdullah Ibn Buhania Blakey). This founder and leader of the Jazz Messengers, arrived for a surprise week at "In Concert" (Howlin' Wolf cancelled his week due to ill-health) unannounced in the press. With him came a new band whose performance was one of the most outstanding since the founding of "In Concert". A hot, fresh and harddriving bunch of players reviving memories of something of '54 in Birdland: a menu of non-nostalgic jazz for those who were too young to be there (and that includes half of the band as well). Art Blakey (who will celebrate his 56th birthday during his week long stay at the club) was as young as his new tenor sax player David Schnitter (in his early twenties) and Art seemed to be wild with the joy he got out of David's juicy tone and extraordinary technical and innovative playing. "This tenor player is something else" was one's immediate reaction after hearing the first

bar he blew and for the rest of the night he was a constant supplier of new eyeopeners. He has a full-bodied tone in the full length of the tenor sax register and you could see he got a great kick out of his improvising of long legato diving and spiralling lines. Along with his colleague in the "front line" trumpet player Bill Hartman they are about the "hottest" melody makers ever seen as a pair on the stage of In Concert. Blakey, visibly very pleased with their hard job, laughingly directed his eyes toward the ceiling and guided them with his renowned power leaving the very good Ronnie Mathews on piano and Yoshio Chin Suzuki on bass slightly in the shadow of their less powerful instruments.

It was an unforgettable evening and more's the pity that the general public had no way of knowing about this great opportunity.

- Henry J. Kahenek

LOS ANGELES

Unlike her contemporaries Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, Carmen McRae and Nina Simone, songstress Betty Carter has never had a hit record. At age 45, however, and after 27 uncompromising years in the business, she is still one of the most captivating, original and musically relevant improvisational vocalists ever to handle a microphone. Her three-night stint at Howard Rumsey's Concerts By The Sea in Redondo Beach proved a smashing success. It was her first L.A. appearance since 1968. Even on a Wednesday night the house was packed with fans both young and old. She is known as a bebop singer and a "cult" figure, terms that completely fail to do justice to her smouldering style, her volcanic improvisational creativity or herfirst-rate material. After pianist John Hicks, bassist Stafford James and drummer Chick Lyle played a warm-up set, they then returned to accompany Ms. Carter through 11 songs, including This Dream, I Can't Help It, On Our Way Up (Sister Candy) and Tight, from her latest LP, The Betty Carter Album, released on her own label, Bet-Car Stereo (MK1002), and privately distributed through Bet-Car Productions, 117 St. Felix Street, Brooklyn, New York, 11217. She also performed several standards, including a brief and lightning fast 4/4 version of My Favorite Things, a breathy Spring Will Hang You Up The Most, and a medley of Just Friends, All The Things You Are, and I Didn't Know What Time It Was, topped by a tip of the hat to her old friends and co-workers Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker in a scat chorus of Night In Tunisia. Betty Carter infuses every word with personal passion, melodically zooms from the basement to the rooftops in startling leaps, often leaves lingering spaces between intimate phrases. She consistently entrances with her sophisticated, sometimes refreshingly bizarre harmonic conceptions. If you've heard her already, you're undoubtedly a seasoned fan. If you haven't, don't miss her when she appears in your area.

As predicted in this column numerous times during the last year, improvisational singer and songwriter Al Jarreau is now

hitting the big time after years of scuffling around L.A. in smaller supper clubs and suburban bars. While his debut Warner Brothers LP, "We Got By", emphasizes his extraordinary talents as a songwriter, Jarreau's first headliner appearance at Hollywood's Troubadour emphasized his abilities as a "scat" singer, for want of a better word. Jarreau utilizes his own syllables and sounds which, far from being mere gimmicks, are musically integral to his sparklingly positive emotional content. Backed by Tom Canning (piano), Paul Stalworth (bass) and Joe de Carrero (drums). the 35-year-old singer opened with Letter Perfect and received a whopping ovation from the standing room only crowd. With his fingers flowing like a guitarist's, he sailed into a vocal simulation of a bass riff, was joined by the bassist, built the energy slowly but steadily to a high point, then leaped into a rousing performance of Spirit. It was an emotional rollercoaster ride, from the opening whisper to the fullout, joyous peak, then back to the whisper. Audience response was overwhelming. Jarreau continued to build the set's momentum with Susan, a Satie-like love song to his lady, Desmond's Take Five, You Don't See Me, and his album title-tune, We Got By, in which he had the crowd harmonizing while he improvised over the top. A goosebumper performance by a very special talent whose creativity truly transcends the commercial limitations of industrial categories. While he may well be embraced by the pop crowd, he is in fact a first rate improvisational jazz singer. On tour now through December, Jarreau is another don't miss performer.

One of the major clubs in Hollywood is the Roxy Theater, which varies its musical fare - sometimes rock acts, sometimes musicals, sometimes folkies, and other times jazz. Mr. Communicate-With-A-Wider-Audience, Herbie Hancock, opened to a full house recently, again pleasing the funkers while disappointing the more cerebrally oriented connoisseurs. At its worst, Hancock's music is commercial trash; at its best, it is almost as schizoid as Frank Zappa's offerings. You have to separate the music from the standardizedharmonic/rhythmic soul format, and that, needless to say, is a chore. Herbie often plays some dazzlingly intricate lines over the Headhunters' smoking bottom rhythms, and Bennie Maupin's tenor sax solos often build to a frenzy of egregious cacophony, but when all is said and done, H.H. remains a quasi-AM radio artist whose most enduring work to date lies in his past, notably his "Sextant", "Mwandishi", "Prisoner" and "Maiden Voyage" LPs. Hopefully, Herbie's Funk Period will evolve into something a bit more nourishing for those of us who like roquefort on our salads. Seems doubtful, however.

In spite of the relatively poor turnout, Concerts At The Grove continues to present jazz on a regular basis, recently hosting Freddie Hubbard, another jazz master gone funk. The most exciting moment of his set, which featured songs from his recent Columbia LP, "Liquid Love", was when he swaggered on stage wearing

a new straw hat, brim turned down. Cute. With Buck Clarke on congas, Carl Bennett on drums, Carl Randall Jr. on sax, George Cables on keyboards, Henry Franklin on bass and newcomer Al Hall on trombone, Hubbard proceeded to bore everyone to distraction, including this disappointed writer, who left before the set's conclusion. Like many other respectable jazz artists, Hubbard is simply too sophisticated to play funk well. He had better return to his bebop roots or move on ahead to the next stage, or he will disappear, which would indeed be a loss for those of us who have heard him in better musical days.

Dave Liebman, formerly a Miles Davis sideman, appeared at Rudy Onderwyzer's Lighthouse with Lookout Farm - Richard Bierach, acoustic and electric pianos; Frank Tusa, bass; Jeff Williams, drums; Badal Roy, tablas; and newcomer Don Alias, congas. Featuring tunes from his ECM album, "Drum Ode", and from his A&M Horizon LP, "Sweet Hands", Liebman controlled the set both musically and charismatically, often contorting his body sideways and backwards while playing comet-stream lines on his soprano or tenor sax. Badal Roy's combination tabla-vocal solo on Satya Dhwani (True Sound) was a highlight, as were Bierach's unaccompanied acoustic piano solo and Liebman's unaccompanied tenor solo on Monk's classic Round About Midnight. Liebman is a master of bombast, silence, and controlled tension - a top notch addition to contemporary jazz.

Chuck Mangione's appearance at the Roxy Theater was a complete success. The Quartet is playing much more energetically and forcefully than in the past, a welcome change from the too-sweet quality that previously characterized Mangione's performances. Giving lots of solo room to reed and percussion man Gerry Niewood, bassist Chip Jackson, and drummer Joe LaBarbera, Chuck led his aggregation through a two-hour set that ranged from Dance Of The Wind Up Toy from his new A&M LP, 'Bella Via', through several Chase The Clouds Away tunes, to very early material from his "Together" and "Land Of Make Believe" LPs. Vocalist Ester Satterfield appeared for the second half of the show. Like Mangione and Niewood, Satterfield has also improved tremendously in the last year. While she still has difficulty hitting the center of any given note, and while her upper ranges grate and screech like bats, she nevertheless manages to put a song across with undeniable impact. The fact that she can't sing has little to do with her Nefertiti-like presence, her spirit of love, and her ability to communicate with an audience.

The also playeds: Lighthouse - Sonny Stitt, Helen Humes, Ronnie Laws...Concerts By The Sea - Toshiko-Tabackin Big Band, Jimmy Smith, Ron Carter...Donte's - Irene Kral with the Alan Broadbent Trio, Pete Christlieb and Charlie Shoemake, Francois Vaz, Don Menza Quartet...The Times Restaurant - Baroque Jazz Ensemble featuring Dorothy Ashby, Frank Strazzeri, Craig Hundley...The Baked Potato - Harry Sweets Edison, Lee Ritenour, Don Randi. - Lee Underwood



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ODDS &

Jack Bradley, artistic creator and prime mctivator of the New York Jazz Museum, resigned officially from the New York Jazz Museum in late September although he had not been involved with the now decaying museum for several months. In a surprising show of solidarity the following members of the board of directors resigned at the same time: Chris Albertson, Mrs. Louis Armstrong, George Avakian, Red Balaban, Stanley Dance, John Hammond, Ira Gitler, Phoebe Jacobs, David Stone Martin, Clement Meadmore, Artie Shaw and Don Schlitten. They further put on notice "that liability for the Executive Director's (Howard Fischer's) future conduct regarding the Jazz Museum and its assets will rest solely with Howard Fischer and the remaining board members."

New York's club activity continues unabated according to the listings supplied by Jazz Interactions. Joe Pass and Oscar Peterson gave a duo concert at Carnegie Hall September 30 and NYU Loeb Student Center presented, on October 1, a concert entitled "Highlights of Jazz" with Phil Woods, Thad Jones, Ron Carter, Bill Watrous, Connie Kay, Hank Jones and Red Rodney.

On the Coast, Roger Jamieson's New Orleanians were featured September 21 at the Beverly Caverns and a special memorial benefit concert for Warren "Smitty" Smith was organised by Joe Darensbourg to be held October 26 at Local #47's auditorium in Hollywood. The lineup is a who's who of traditional jazz talent from the area and among those appearing are Teddy Buckner, Dick Cary, Johnny Lucas, Pete Daily and Joe Darensbourg. Contributions

to the fund can be sent c/o Joe Darensbourg, 12763 Magnolia Boulevard, North Hollywood, California 91607...the National Association of Jazz Educators has set their next annual convention for January 22-25 at California State University, Northridge, California. For more information write Matt Betton, Box 724, Manhattan, Kansas 66502

"Rhythm 'N Motion" was the title of a two day festival September 26 and 27 cosponsored by Alameda Neighbourhood Arts Program and Laney College. Taking part were Dave Alexander, the Gospel Clouds, Marvin Holmes and Justice, Infinite Sound and the Raymond Sawyer Dance Experience.

Gary Burton's quartet shared the stand with the Nick Brignola - Frank Stagnita Quartet on September 21 at the Golden Fox Steak House in Albany, N.Y....A special salute to the contributions of Art Blakey took place October 18 at the Fine Arts Center Concert Hall of the University of Massachusetts. Trumpeters Woody Shaw and Bill Hardman, Jackie McLean and Hank Mobley (reeds), Walter Davis Jr. and Harold Mabern (piano), Curtis Fuller (trombone) and Jymie Merritt and Reggie Workman (bass) were the participating musicians...The Drootin Brothers band has opened an extended engagement at the Governor Carver Hotel in Plymouth. Mass. They are also appearing Sunday nights at the Capeway Manor in Brocton. Mass. Bobby Hackett's son Ernie filled in for drummer Buzzy Drootin while Buzzy led the band at Boston's Scotch 'n Sirloin backing up Joe Venuti for a two week stand.

Baltimore's Left Bank Jazz Society featured Rahsaan Roland Kirk (5th), George Benson (12th), Louis Hayes Quintet with Junior Cook, Woody Shaw, Ronnie Mathews and Wayne Dockery (19th) and Stan Kenton (26th) during October.

Pianist Keith Jarrett appeared in concert at Michigan State University October 2 and 3...Bimbo's in Ann Arbor, Michigan presents "old tyme jazz" Monday nights with the Easy Street M.F. Jazz Band. The New McKinney Cotton Pickers were there October 5 and 26 and the New Reformation Band is scheduled for November 2... The New McKinney Cotton Pickers with Dave Wilborn were also featured at the Sheraton Southfield on October 12 for a late afternoon dance...The Detroit Hot Jazz Society presented The Gabriel Brothers New Orleans Jazz Band at the Crazy Horse Saloon on October 5... The Classic Jazz Society of Southwestern Ohio was formed recently (P.O. Box 653, Cincinnati, Ohio 45201) and their first promotion is a concertsession aboard the Mike Fink on October 26. Bill Rank, John Ulrich, Carl Halen, Terry Waldo and other accomplished musicians were on hand...Gene Mayl's Dixieland Rhythm Kings (Box 366, Dayton, Ohio 45401) have a busy Fall schedule and will be working in Iowa for most of November and then head east to the Manassas Jazz Festival (December 5-7).

Mary Lou Webb (see address elsewhere) and Frank Farrell are representing pianist Joe Albany, who returned to the U.S. from Europe in the spring of this year... A special big band is being organised in New York and will be available for concert and club engagements between December 1975 - May 1976. Lineup is Johnny Coles, Dizzy Reece, Ted Curson (trumpets), Jimmy Knepper, Curtis Fuller (trombones), Hank Mobley, Richie Kamuca, Charlie Rouse, Chris Woods, Pepper Adams (saxes), Walter Bishop (piano), Percy Heath (bass) and Philly Joe Jones (drums). Write Fred Norsworthy, Jazzway, Suite One, 7214 Bergenline Avenue, North Bergen, N.J. 07047 for further information.

Vanguard Records is getting back into the jazz world in a big way. Clark Terry's second record for the label is a small group session with Ernie Wilkins, Ronnie Matthews, Victor Sproles, Ed Soph, George Davis and Emanuel Rahim. James Moody has also been signed and his initial effort included Joe Newman, Bob Cranshaw, Kenny Barron, Eddie Gladden and Roland Prince among others...World Enlightenment Music is a new production company featuring the music of Marion Brown. They can be contacted c/o Integrity 'N Music, 800 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Conn. 06109 ... Mike Gibbs, currently artist in residence at Berklee College of Music, has just had released in England his new album "The Only Chrome Waterfall Orchestra" on the Bronze label...Of major importance to jazz enthusiasts is the news that Cayre Industries has purchased the Bethlehem label and intends to reactivate it. It joins Cayre's other labels - Salsoul and Different Drummer and it is expected that all of the material on the original label will be reissued... IAI Records is a new New York based company which has recorded Jimmy Guiffre with Paul Bley and guitarist Bill Connors. This initial release, entitled 'Quiet Song' should be available by the time this ap-

pears...Trumpeter Bill Berry has released a big band album recorded live in Los Angeles. Featured on the album are Cat Anderson, Blue Mitchell, Jack Sheldon, Conte Candoli, Marshal Royal, Leroy Vinnegar, Herb Ellis, Teddy Edwards, Richie Kamuca, Tricky Lofton, Jake Hanna and Dave Frishberg. For the time being the record is only available by mail (for \$6.50 plus postage from Beez Records, 23033 Bryce Street, Woodland Hills, California 91364)...Jim Taylor has released two new albums - "Jazz Trombones" (JTP 101) featuring Bill Allred and Al Winters and "Beiderbecke Legend is alive and flourishing in Michigan" with Don Ingle's Jack Pine Savages. Upcoming is an lp with the Gabriel Brothers Jazz-Band...Tormax Music, the publishing arm of Toronto's Climax Jazz Band has just released an lp of the band with guest pianist Graeme Bell, recorded on location at Malloney's in June. Upcoming at the end of October will be the band's lp with Ken Colver added on second cornet... PM Records has released two albums featuring Elvin Jones. ''On The Mountain'' (005) features the percussionist with Jan Hammer and Gene Perla. The second, recorded live at the John Coltrane Memorial concert in 1971 (#004) features Frank Foster, Joe Farrell, Chick Corea and Gene Perla.

A CODA

To combat steadily rising costs we regret that we have to raise the subscription rate to \$8.00 (\$15.00 airmail) and \$11.20 First Class in Canada and U.S. only as of January 1, 1976. All subscriptions and renewals received before that date will be honored at the old rate. New subscription rate in sterling is 3.75 pounds and 6.75 pounds airmail.

We will continue to publish 10 issues a year (one subscription) but we will not publish in January and August.

TELEVISION TRIBUTE TO JOHN HAMMOND

Readers of Coda need no introduction to the name John Hammond, I'm sure. As the discoverer of Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Charlie Christian, Lester Young, and the major catalyst in the careers of Benny Goodman, Mildred Bailey, Teddy Wilson, Helen Humes not to mention such recent artists as Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen, Hammond's stature in American music is both lofty and secure.

This month - December - he officially retires as Director of Talent Acquisition for Columbia records, a position he's held continuously since 1958. In marking this milestone in a great career, Public Broadcasting System in America has seen fit to mount an extraordinary and unprecedented television venture to honor this unique man.

The project started with a young Chicago producer with station WTTW, the PBS affiliate there. His name is Ken Erlich,

and last year he launched a series of musical programs funded by PBS and the Ford Foundation that quickly became the most acclaimed series of its kind. The program is called Sound Stage, and its purpose is to capture the finest performers in contemporary music in a television format that places maximum emphasis on the music without compromise or interference. It is perhaps the most purely musical show in the history of American television. Each show is one hour and generally focuses on only one or two artists. Performers who do Sound Stage get an opportunity to stretch out in a way they could never do on a commercial variety program, as well as do material which commercial TV might not permit.

Ken Erlich has fashioned Sound Stage programs in his own musical image. Although he realizes he has an audience to satisfy, he is in the comfortable position of liking pretty much what his generally youthful audience likes. Thus, the guests on the series have included The Pointer Sisters, Barry Manilow, Three Dog Night, etc.

But late last year Ken, in reading Charles Gillett's The Sound of the City, continually came across the name John Hammond. His career was so varied and included such diverse artists as Bessie Smith and Bob Dylan, Erlich was fascinated, and the idea of building a show around this remarkable man began to form.

But Erlich was at a disadvantage. Hammond's extensive work with jazz artists of the 30's and 40's took him (Erlich) into an area he knew little about. Based on Hammond's own suggestions as to who should be on the show, names such as Teddy Wilson, Jo Jones, Harry Edison and Benny Carter were being contacted by the summer of 1975. But Hammond feltrightly so-that he should not be the architect of his own tribute or actively approach any artist to participate.

It was at this point (around July) that I was fortunate enought to enter the picture. Hammond, about whom I had just completed a profile for High Fidelity Magazine to run in mid-76, suggested to Ken that I be involved as a sort of historian and musical consultant. For me, it turned out to be the fulfillment of a fantasy.

The first thing to do was fill out the guest list. Jo Jones, Teddy, Benny Carter, Harry Edison were in. So Ken and I set out to recruit the others. Although Hammond might have selected someone else, I felt Milt Hinton was the near ideal choice to handle the multiplicity of rhythm section chores. Next, the guitar. Fred Green would have made the perfect choice. But he and the entire Basie band including Count were totally locked into a week's engagement with Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald that directly conflicted with the taping date of September 10. Besides, I felt that the guitar should have a broader role in the show than merely as a rhythm instrument. After all, Hammond had brought forth Charlie Christian, and that could not be evoked by Green.

So the obvious choice became the great George Benson. The depth of this man's extraordinary talent is not even hinted at in the shallow disco music he's been cranking out on CTI in recent years. Although it's proved profitable and has gotten his name in the jazz charts in Billboard, it's produced no music of more than passing worth. Yet, I remembered his early Columbia sessions done with Hammond, and realized there was no other choice. Benson gladly accepted.

Soon afterward Red Norvo was secured, and then Benny Goodman. Goodman seemed non-commital for a couple of weeks, and nobody seemed sure what he was going to do, even his brother-in-law Hammond. John reported accepting a dinner invitation from Benny, but hearing not a word about the show during the evening's conversation. But the inscrutable Mr. Goodman finally came through, and we began to realize that this was going to be a big show. Helen Humes, Marion Williams, and John Hammond Jr. also jumped aboard. Bob Dylan appeared ready to do the same.

With Goodman and George Benson on the same program and Jo Jones at drums, I saw an opportunity to try something I had not even considered worth imagining until now. I was reluctant to approach Goodman with a long list of requests as to what to play and with whom he should play it. But I did want to get the Old Man together with Benson. So I called Benson a week or so before the show and asked him if he was familiar with Seven Come Eleven, the old staple of the Goodman sextet of 1940. He was indeed familiar with it, I was delighted to learn, and would make sure he was still more familiar with it by showtime. Benson idolizes Christian.

Goodman arrived in Chicago about noon the day of the taping. I met him at the airport and explained to him that George Benson was going to do a tribute to Christian. I asked if he would join Benson in Seven/Eleven. Goodman was apparently only vaguely familiar with Benson, and most of what he knew was the result of Benson's jazz-rock LPs. He didn't seem terribly impressed. He was non-commital.

Later on in the afternoon Goodman got his first exposure to Benson at a rehearsal. He called What Can I Say Dear, Body and Soul, and then Avalon. Benson took two choruses, as Benny guided him through the unfamiliar changes. The clarinetist's eyes lit up and his lips turned up in a grin that was definitely commital. I stepped to the stand and reminded Goodman of the Seven/Eleven sequence. He turned and launched once again into Avalon. I felt my question had been answered. Then a few minutes later, he started chatting with Benson. He understood there was to be a Christian sequence. What would he like to play. Seven Come Eleven, George said, and the group was off and running. It sounded good. More later.

There was also rehearsal time for the so-called house band: Jones, Wilson, Norvo, Milt Hinton, Benson, and Benny Carter. Harry Edison was to have been part of it but a last minute conflict with Sammy Davis forced him to cancel. I scrambled about for a trumpet player less than a week before taping. Roy Eldridge was

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cordial but couldn't make it. Joe Newman couldn't be reached. Ruby Braff was curt and totally uninterested unless he could pick his material and sidemen. I looked to the tenor sax, but Buddy Tate had just left on a tour. Then I got an idea. Why not a trombone? An alto-trombone front line could make a mellow combination. And of course there was only one trombonist to call - Benny Morton. He signed on without hesitation.

The rehearsal went well. Helen Humes (with her accompanist Jerry Wiggins replacing Teddy Wilson) went through Tain't Nobody's Business, Body And Soul, Song Of The Wanderer and a wonderful Driving Me Crazy with a long instrumental midsection of Moten Swing.

I had selected two vintage Basie numbers for the band to do instrumentally. I wanted one blues and one 32 bar piece. But I didn't feel the world needed another One O'Clock Jump. It was then that I discovered how few blues numbers the old

Basie band did (excepting Jimmy Rushing's material). Finally I decided upon Riff Interlude. And of course what would a show on John Hammond be without Eddie Durham's John's Idea. I sent recordings out to Benny Carter on the west coast and he graciously prepared lead sheets. Unfortunately, they were done for a trumpet lead - Edison was still in the show - and the problems of rescoring during rehearsal were more than I imagined. But the material was whipped into pretty good shape by the end of the rehearsal. Playing the recordings through the studio monitors helped a lot.

After everyone had prepared to their satisfaction, the studio was cleared and Bob Dylan brought his group in for run throughs. Others adjourned to another studio for an elegant candlelight dinner. The actual taping, which was scheduled to start at 7, didn't get underway until after 9.

Disaster struck when the band assembled on stage for the Basie numbers. It seems that a stage hand had removed the lead sheets. I could see it coming - another One O'Clock Jump. But after about a 20-minute search, they turned up and after two breakdowns, we finally got a reasonably decent John's Idea. A few more runthroughs wouldn't have hurt, though. There were other pressures and pitfalls I didn't anticipate. Benny Carter and Benny Morton had created a marvelous riff to play behind Helen Humes in the rideout of Song Of The Wanderer. When the tapes were rolling, however, it was inadvertently forgotten. And during the Moten Swing section of Driving Me Crazy, Benny Morton started the bridge of his solo on the wrong change, so he stopped and laid back for eight. Wiggins filled in with piano. It was a goof that caused the deletion of the whole number from the

But all these minor shortcomings will be forgotten by us who were involved and unnoticed by viewers. It's all redeemed by the fantastic performances of Goodman and Benson. Benny, after chatting with John and co-hosts Goddard Lieberson and Jerry Wexler, joined Norvo and the full rhythm section for a pleasant What Can I Say Dear, Sweet Lorraine, and Avalon. It was well after midnight by now, and Goodman had hoped to be on his way back to his hotel (The Ambassador East) if not his apartment in New York by this time. Moreover, the set-up on the stage was completely the opposite of the arrangement Goodman specifies in his concert contracts. He insists the piano be on his right, the vibes to his left. Here it was just the reverse. But Benny was in good spirits, and effortlessly made the best of a trying situation.

Heturned to Benson and indicated that he come forward and then leaned into the microphone. "There's supposed to be a sequence with George on Charlie Christian in which we play Seven Come Eleven," he said. "We might as well do it now and you can tuck it in later on." He then turned and gave the down beat. The beginning was tentative. Benson began in the wrong key. Then suddenly, a split second later, everything was together. The group swung



as one. Hinton, Benson and Goodman lit into the introduction like a bolt of lightning. After the opening ensemble, Benny took two superb choruses. He signalled to Teddy, but Benson failed to catch the gesture and started his solo. He played I Got Rhythm changes in the bridge, but but they were close enough to the Seven/ Eleven changes that no one noticed. Then in Benson's last 8 bars, Benny started to feed him a single high note riff. Benson began picking it up, and suddenly they were in unison. Then each leaped together into a collective ensemble that was completely spontaneous and electrifying. Benson ran off long sweeping lines, and Goodman fought harder than ever to hold his own in this violent duel of swing. His concentration focused into intensity, his grip on the clarinet stiffened like iron and his cheek and lip muscles brought all the strength they could muster to the razor thin reed. I hadn't seen Goodman play with such desperate brilliance in years. It was literally inspiring to see a master artist rise to and triumph over a totally unexpected challenge. It was perhaps the most invigorating musical explosion I had ever witnessed, and it took place in the concise time of only four minutes and four seconds.

The house went up for grabs as the crowd leaped to its feet in the only standing ovation of the long, long night. You'll see it all happen on the show. John Hammond declared that he saw 40 years drop off of Benny during that number and that he had not seen him react that way to another musician since the first meeting with Charlie Christian. And John was there.

When it was all over, Benny was anxious to get back to the hotel. As I went out to the car with him, I asked him about Benson. "Pretty good," he said. And then he asked me a few questions about his background. How old he was, and so on. (He is 33). Finally in passing he asked me where he lived, what his phone number was, things like that. I could see the wheels turning in his head.

Within three weeks Benson had agreed to join Benny on no less than 8 concert appearances. And within a month he and Benny went into Columbia's studios in New York to do an album. I recently heard the tapes of the first Columbia session and it's the best work Goodman's done in a studio since the "Together Again" reunion with the original quartet in 1963. And it all started at WTTW.

The show went quickly after the Goodman section. John Hammond Jr. did a wonderful Terraplane Blues. Then Sonny Terry. I had wanted a performer from the original "Spirituals To Swing" concert. And with Joe Turner in the hospital in California, we tried for Terry. When I told Hammond my plans, he had doubts, saying that John Jr. does the same sort of material. But I did want a "Spirituals To Swing" veteran, and Ialso thought interms of Terry and Hammond Jr. doing a duet. I think it's one of the high points of the program.

Finally the great Bob Dylan came on about 2 in the morning. He had registered earlier at the Ambassador under the name Albert Ammons. About half the audience had drifted away by now, and it was undoubtedly the only occasion in which Dylan played to a half empty studio of 150. He was brilliant. And it was appropriate that in a celebration of John Hammond, the great social activist, Dylan should perform a piece of profoundly moving protest material. It was a long (seven minutes) retelling of the Hurricane Carter murder frame-up, full of hard hitting detail and strong melodic content. It will appear on Dylan's forthcoming album and will be a landmark in his career. Then he did Twist Of Fate and Oh Sister, and finally another try at Carter. "After all John's done for me, "said Dylan, "it was worth staying late."

We had originally envisioned this Sound Stage as 90 minutes or even a two hour special. But there was so much great music that in its final form it will be two 90 minute programs. Sound Stage is seen on more than 200 stations in America and may soon be seen in England. I think it is the most exciting musical experience ever captured on television, excepting only the famous "Sound of Jazz" show in 1957. (A portion of Billie's Blues from that original

telecast is included in the second of the two Hammond specials. Part one features Bessie Smith footage from The St. Louis Blues).

One of the reasons for the excitement was that it was produced in one night. With everybody gathered under one roof at one time, there was a jovial party atmosphere to it all, exhausting as it was and frustrating as it sometimes became. Moreover, everybody was there because they wanted to be. Guests received only \$200 and expenses - even supernames Goodman and Dylan. In the audience was Helen Merrill, Dan Morganstern (who had to leave early), Bob Palmer of Rolling Stone, Don DeMichael, Robert Koester of Delmark Records and many other jazz writers. Leonard Feather appeared briefly on the show, as did Mitch Miller. Hammond's wife Isme, daughter-in-law Peggy, sons Jason and John Jr. sat nearby in the audience. It was a night John Hammond will not soon forget.

Columbia could conceivably assemble a stunning album from the results. Let's hope. Meanwhile gentlemen, man your tape recorders. - John McDonough

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OTTAWA JAZZ FESTIVAL

University of Ottawa September 8, 1975

The format of the festival consisted of three lunch hour recitals featuring local groups, a jazz workshop, and an all-night session with eight groups brought in from Toronto and Montreal. The festival was organized by the university's Department of Community Affairs, and admission to everything except the all-night session was free.

The lunch hour recitals were given by the Steve Groves Sextet, the David HildingerQuintet, and the John Cassidy Quartet. Although the mid-day timing practically limited the audience to members of the student body, attendance exceeded expectations, the musical quality was high, and the series was recorded by CBC for future transmission.

The workshop was perhaps the least successful event of the week. Two of the Fred Stone Quintet were delayed, and the music of the remaining trio never overcame this, nor the inhibiting requirement to play specific illustrative pieces rather than freely choosing and then getting into the music. Fred Stone, however, gave a fascinating and charmingly presented demonstration of various electronic instruments and attachments.

The big event was the all-nighter, which ran from 8:00 pm on Saturday until 5:30 am on Sunday. Approximately 800 people attended, again showing a greater response than the organizers had anticipated. This event was held in a large lofty chapel, and spectators had been

warned to bring cushions to sit on, although as the night wore on they became more useful as pillows.

Each group was introduced (bilingually of course, because this is a bilingual university) by Montreal jazz writer and broadcaster Nighthawk. First on the stand was the Fred Stone Quintet. Stone's technique is impeccable, but the group never seemed toget into their stride, and turned in a rather pedantic set. The Sadik Hakim Trio, who followed, dug much deeper into their material, with sterling work from Sadik on piano, Erroll Walters on bass and Clayton Johnston on percussion. They dedicated their set, and particularly the piece Lazy Bird, to the memory of Cannonball Adderley.

The only example of the present attempts at jazz-rock fusion came from the Quebecois group Zak, a young, hardworking and organized group. Each piece they played had been well constructed and rehearsed, but with plenty of room left for individual soloists. Illustrating the festival's cross cultural aspirations were the titles of the pieces they played - Magic Toy, Pave Dans Mon Parebrise, Grand Falloon (for Kurt Vonnegut), Don Quixote, La Passion, and from Quebec folklore, A La Claire Fontaine. Outstanding soloists were Charles Berman (reeds), Francois Lanctot (piano) and Yves Legare (guitar).

Sonny Greenwich's Quintet had the unique distinction of being allocated two appearances in the program. This proved to be very wise planning, because his first set left him and his audience unsatisfied. Things just wouldn't come together, and communication was only beginning when the first set came to an end. In complete contrast came the extrovert sounds of Jim Galloway and The Metro Stompers. This well rehearsed band plays tried-andtrue numbers, and while there is only one outstanding musician (Galloway - on soprano and baritone saxes), they generate a group sound which brought them the first standing ovation of the evening. High spots were the soprano solos on I Never Knew and Just A Closer Walk With Thee, and a trio of Ellington tunes felicitously dovetailed together.

There was a brief intermission before the Bernie Senensky Trio came on. Senensky is a lyrical pianist with impressive command of acoustic and electric piano. He also composed most of the pieces which the trio played. They have obviously been working together for some time, and are very cohesive. The leader's piano solos were outstanding on Another Gift and The Little One, and every solo by bassist David Field was a delight. Sonny Greenwich now returned for his second set. He and pianist Doug Riley took very mellow solos, but reedman Mike Stewart didn't really get it together, except in the second number where his reflective soprano solo fitted well into the early morning mood. During this set, the communication did happen, and the quintet was rewarded with a standing ovation.

Nobody who was present is likely to forget the magic which took over when Sayyd Abdul Al-Khabbyr and his teenage son Nasyr came on to the stage. Eschewing the microphone, Sayyd perched on a stool, his flute at his lips, his son at the percussion at his left, and started weaving a pure, beautiful and pastoral melody which silenced every whisper in the crowd. This piece, and indeed the whole set, transcended its surroundings and the music was offered up, humbly, as a sort of prayer. The simple tableau of a man alone with his son was repeated on Green Dolphin Street, which Sayyd played on tenor, a masterpiece of understatement, and a welcome contrast to many of the lengthy selfindulgent solos we had suffered earlier. Turning to the bass flute, his son drumming hypnotic patterns, Sayyd displayed all the beauty of the instrument, and then used the keys alone to produce a percussive sound. The mandala effect was completed on the final number, which had



Sayyd producing an almost flute-like tone from the soprano as he sped along fast and nimble with sympathetic support from his son. In response to a very enthusiastic crowd, Sayyd played one more number, this time on clarinet. A gem of a set.

The final group, Quintonal Jazz, was a real surprise. They had obviously thoroughly rehearsed the routines of everything they played, and used a fast hardbop unison approach to get in and out of tunes. The reedman's solos tended to start out strong and then fade away towards the end, the bassist's one solo feature - Poster was a show-stopper, and the solos of trumpeter Pierre Lafrenaye have to have been the most exciting individual contributions to the festival. A really professional band, making full use of dynamics, they rounded off the festival in wonderful style. - Ron Sweetman

EUGENE CHADBOURNE

A Space, Toronto September 28, 1975

The A Space concert series opened Sunday, September 28, with a performance by Eugene Chadbourne, a prodigious young guitarist from Calgary. For the first half of the concert Chadbourne played alone, using an acoustic 6-string and an eccentically tuned acoustic 12-string guitar

which, among other things, allowed him to construct 'dissonant' chords entirely in harmonics. On both these instruments Chadbourne commands an extensive timbral (textural) vocabulary; like the English guitarist Derek Bailey he extends the range of the instrument as a sound source in diverse ways, most specifically through variations in attack, and then combines and permutes these to produce massive orchestrations. Chadbourne is clearly most at home with complexity, and as such he is brother to many for whom the boundary between composition and improvisation is breaking down, for whom a concern with "structure" is synchronous with a concern for communication in real time. Soap Opera, the guitar version of a composition for big band, testified to the enormous energy that such synchrony may liberate.

In the second half of the program Chadbourne was joined by CCMC members Bill Smith (saxophones), Mike Snow (trumpet), and Larry Dubin (drums). Smith's curved soprano sounds sometimes entirely reedless, more like a french horn or a flute, and sometimes wildly throaty and animal. Smith, Snow, and Dubin are articulate composer-performers in their own right, very sensitive to each other. How successfully they were able to transfer their affections to the realization of another composer's intentions is something that (to paraphrase Miles Davis) only he and they are in a position to eval-- Peter Anson uate.

SHIRLEY SCOTT

Ronnie Scott's, London, England July 30, 1975

The Shirley Scott Trio is a far cry from the run-of-the-mill organ/tenor/drums group. Miss Scott is probably the most tasteful of all the jazz organists. Her dynamics are excellent, she is a fine accompanist and her solos glisten with gem-like ideas. Her units in the past have included saxophonists like John Coltrane, Jimmy Heath and Stanley Turrentine. The present incumbent is Harold Vick, a forthright, adventurous player who, besides tenor, also employs soprano sax in this setting. Eddie Gladden is the tidy, unflashy drummer.

The group features many originals by Miss Scott and Vick and are never merely content to play funky soul sounds. On the first of two sets I heard, Vick stuck to tenor, playing numbers likehis own Keep On Movin' On and Shirley's Big George, a highly charged chromatic exercise akin to Giant Steps. On the second set he alternated tenor with soprano and there was a sensitive version of What Kind Of Fool Am I?, Vick's Don't Look Back and his A Touch Of Love were fertile territory for Miss Scott and the composer. Sister Scott and Brothers Vick and Gladden will hopefully be back again soon for a longer stay than their short week at Ronnie's.

In this all-Scott evening, Ronnie played several interesting sets with his group comprising Louis Stewart (guitar), Ken Baldock (bass) and Martin Drew (drums). Ronnie, too, employed both tenor and soprano. Highly enjoyable was his tenor solo on Stella By Starlight, "a nice tune" as somebody in the audience put it, and Ronnie emphasized the fact with many choruses of attractive improvisation.

- Mark Gardner

GEORGE COLEMAN

Boomer's, Greenwich Village New York City, September 15, 1975

Afficionados of the saxophone have much to <u>listen</u> and look forward to because of George Coleman's new free-wheeling octet. Consisting of Coleman and Junior Cook on tenors, Frank Strozier on alto, Mario Rivera on baritone, Danny Moore on trumpet and flugelhorn, and a solid, driving rhythm unit made up of Harold Mabern on piano, Lisle Atkinson on bass, Eddie Moore at drums and Tom Nichols on Latin percussion, the Octet is an exciting new organization that will hopefully find the proper climate and soil so that its rich harvests can be shared by as wide an audience as possible.

Opening the first set was Coleman's arrangement of Bird's Now Is The Time. Following the rhythm section's setting of the stage, the four virile sax voices plunged into a strong statement of the tune. The power of this chart and Coleman's approach to arranging in general is based on



his intimate knowledge and command of the saxophone. Utilizing, in this case, tight outer voicings and subtle fluctuations in the interior lines, Coleman achieves a vibrant and compact configuration that was brought to full life by the excellent "section" musicianship of Strozier, Cook, Coleman and Rivera.

As far as improvisational ability goes, Coleman's Octet is a powerhouse. With Now Is The Time, for example, the first choruses featured the sprightly, playful, bluesy pianistics of Harold Mabern. Like Coleman, Mabern is a master who deserves much greater recognition. Next was the fleet, fluid, darting alto of Frank Strozier, another under-appreciated talent. Danny Moore's work on flugelhorn and Mario Rivera's combination of a big baritone sound and flexible technique were also impressive. At about the midpoint of each solo, Coleman brought the band back infor a pungent background riff that helped nudge each soloist to even greater heights.

Milestones was an up-tempo cooker showcasing Moore, Mabern and Coleman's tenor. With a hard and steely yet sensuous tone, Coleman spun out an inventive sequence of musical episodes that amply explained why Coleman's work is held in such high esteem by other musicians. Exploring and developing rhythmic, melodic and harmonic materials derived from the tune itself, Coleman took each element to its logical emotional and intellectual

conclusions.

A Coleman original, Littl∈ Miss Half-Steps, was up next. Inspired by and dedicated to one of improvised music's premier organists - Shirley Scott (one of the many admirers of the Octet at Boomers that night) - the chart is a beautifully voiced, mid-tempoarrangement that nicely portrays the warm nuances of Miss Scott's personality and musicianship. Of the fine solos, George Coleman's was especially poignant. Revealing his lyrical and romantic nature, Coleman essayed a dazzling set of dancing musical arab∈sques. His kaleidoscopic motifs were constantly in the process of forming, fragmenting and then reformulating in a performance that can only be described as a tour de force. The set concluded with an engaging arrangement of Green Dolphin Street featuring the solid work of Junior Ccok and Rivera.

A final note. Perhaps it's an old story to talk about music's power to regenerate the human spirit, but it was readily apparent from the audience's smiles, tapping feet and good vibrations that the music of George Coleman and his Octet has the capacity to make people feel spiritually refreshed. In an era of social, political and economic stress, we need to be put back into contact with the wellsprings of our humanity. This is what artists like George Coleman so admirably help to achieve.

- Chuck Berg

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