

CODA MAGAZINE

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CHARLIE HADEN * CARLA BLEY * WOMEN IN JAZZ * RAY ANDERSON * PETER LEITCH
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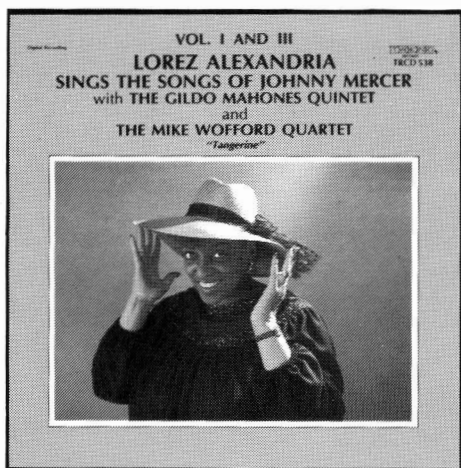


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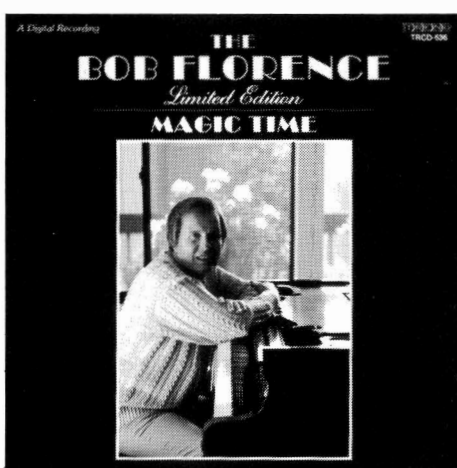
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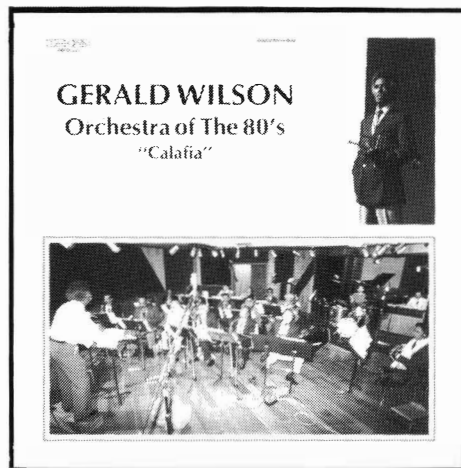
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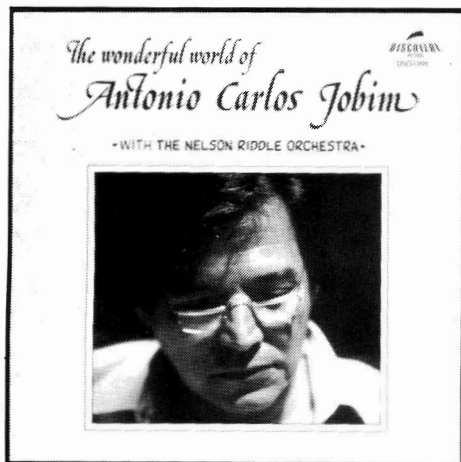
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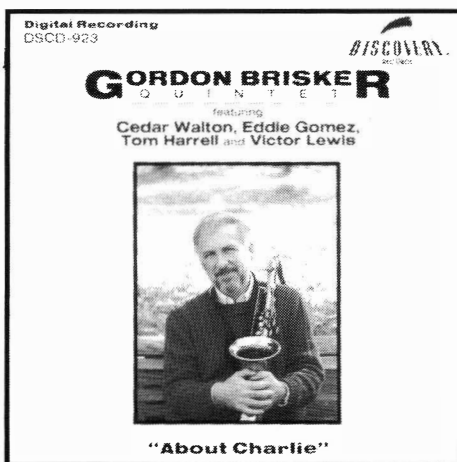
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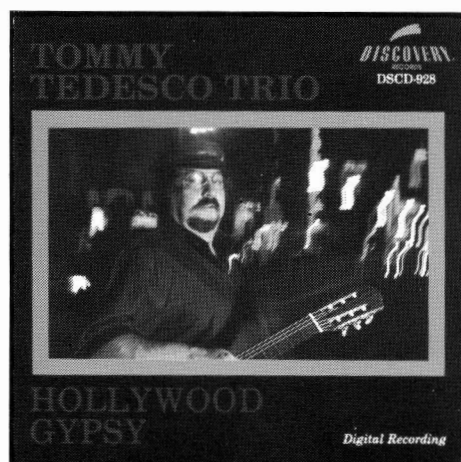
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THE NEXT ISSUE OF CODA MAGAZINE

Issue Number 213 will celebrate the **1987 DUKE ELLINGTON CONFERENCE** being held in **TORONTO**. An article on the **DUKE** by *Ron Anger*, and **DUKE'S** career on film by *Marc Glassman*. Also in this issue will be pieces on pianists **ANDREW HILL & ART HODES**, Canadian guitarist **REG SCHWAGER** by editor *Bill Smith*, Record Reviews, reports from Around The World, and Much, Much More. All contributors please note that copy for issue **213** must reach Coda by March 1st.

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Under The Volcano

A CONVERSATION WITH CARLA BLEY * STEVE SWALLOW * MIKE MANTLER & JACK CUMMING

Carla Bley is many things to many people. To some she is the critically acclaimed keyboard player; to others the groundbreaking composer. And to many others she is one of the founders of the New Music Distribution Service. Jester, band leader, conductor, administrator; Ms. Bley has worn all of these hats with style.

Most recently she has donned the hat of opera composer. As part of the New Music America '85 Festival, she set a Malcolm Lowry poem entitled "For Under The Volcano" as a "micro-opera." Bley, like the Lowry story, manifests so many aspects, that she is enigmatic and liable to be interpreted in myriad ways. This mystery was heightened by the difficulty I had in engaging her eyes, which were conspicuously hidden under her long, blond bangs.

Also present at the interview were Steve Swallow (who, with Bley, Jack Bruce and Don Preston, composed the musician-performers for the opera), Mike Mantler (co-founder of NMDS), and John Cumming (director of the opera).

TITUS LEVI — *What prompted you to compose a micro-opera? And why did you choose the Lowry piece?*

CARLA BLEY — It was commissioned. They said, "Choose any poem of Malcolm Lowry's," so I read through all of his poems. And I already knew what people I was using. I was using Jack [Bruce] as Lowry and Steve [Swallow] as the bass soloist. So I picked a poem that would apply mostly to Jack. And I know that Malcolm and Jack have been buddies a long time. They never met. [laughs] But Jack always loved Malcolm Lowry and made me read the book "Under The Volcano" many years ago. Since then we all read the book — except me.

TL — You set quite a bit of the text in spoken word rather than singing....

CB — Some of the words were too long, they didn't have the right rhythm. I know — I could look at the words and say, "These words sing and these words don't." And the first thing that was written was the very end. What you heard at the end — the very dramatic part where Jack is standing up and singing of his death. The music came first for that and I had to work backwards. That sings. I tried to think of elements in that that could be used to create more music earlier. And then I'd find a phrase in the middle that sung and then it'd be surrounded by things that there was no melody for. So I thought, "This is called Sprechsong." No, first I thought, "This is called Rap," and then I thought this is something that's always been there. And so I worked backwards to the beginning and found the Perfect Proportion.

TL — *How did it feel to be both musician and thespian?*

CB — Well, we'd have a good time, we'd play good... that I wasn't worried about. But I was afraid of how it would look because none of us had any experience in opera or theatre or anything like that. So we got John Cumming to come over. We've given him the benefit of the doubt and done what he told us to do. I wrote the original treatment and script and he pretty much changed *everything*.

JACK CUMMING — Actually, it's closer to the first draft now.

CB — Nooo.... you're right.

STEVE SWALLOW — The opera must have been up to thirty minutes.

CB — Originally it was just eight minutes — just the end part. Then I got a call from my commission to make the opera longer. And that was the hardest thing *I ever did!!* Because I'd used all the words up already. So the rest of it had to

be that instrumental piece at the beginning and improvised dialogue in the cafe scene.

TL — *The involvement of the musicians as the stage performers and the sparing use of actual singing in the setting of the libretto was quite a departure from the usual operatic approach.*

CB — Well, the idea of musicians accompanying themselves was shocking — musicians going in and out of characters — no one's ever done that. It's kind of awkward. I guess the audience accepts it as not too far from reality.

TL — *I think that depends on whether or not you're a musician. I seems that musicians think about the stage differently from visual or theatre arts people.*

JC — Yes, it's a problem you get into with straight theatre-visual art people or, for that matter, musicians who are only into a "pure" form. Any deviation is thought of as somehow hybrid. I don't see it that way. I see it as multi-disciplined because it's really quite difficult to do well. And there involves a tremendous amount of discipline and hard thinking. And if you're a musician wanting to perform in sort of a stage piece, you've got to find the means to do that. And probably those means haven't anything to do with what theatre people would see as being straight acting or conventional acting. I quite like working in a more fluid relationship like this, because I enjoy doing things that are good to do not because they're the right things to do.

SS — Carla also was writing specifically for each of us so the roles were right on the money.

TL — *Steve, that really came through with your part.*

CB — Yeah, that's his real self. And Don Preston is like that. You know, playing weird music and dressing up....

TL — *Did any of the linking together of ideas bear any similarity to "Escalator Over The Hill"?*

CB — I guess they do, I didn't think about it all.

TL — *Does the use of dialogue connect to that piece at all?*

CB — No, Escalator was all written. I don't think it's much like Escalator, except that the music is always the same. I haven't changed too much in my opera writing. But my personal music has changed one hundred and eighty degrees. You'll know what I mean when you hear "Night Glow". It's all song forms. There's no drama on the life and death level. It's the drama between two people instead of armies and famine and holocaust — which, of course, is a lot heavier than famine and war. I think that the records are what I want to do. "Heavy Heart" was *me*. With the exception of *3/4*

which was a commission. Composers are just whores. When I get a commission, it always starts out, "I couldn't possibly do that." But within a week I have it. I need direction. I like direction. As long as it's pure. I wouldn't want to do movie music. Just like in Escalator, I like to put the music first.

TL — *What was your musical background before pieces like Escalator?*

CB — Church music. Not pure — I'm from California. Gospel; white gospel — you're not supposed to tap your foot. And there was improvising; you never play the hymns the way they're written. A note down there, a chord up there — it's like a stride style. But this was about the second night in my life that I've played any improvised piano solo. It's been Hell.

TL — *Why do you have such an affinity for composed things?*

CB — That's the way I think. My natural method is to play a note and sit for five minutes thinking, "Is that a good note or a bad note." And then another note. So all of a sudden I'm I'm supposed to do it on-the-spot. I don't have the technique together. But I'm learning. Because I'm going to be doing that for the next year. I'm going to be working with a small band. I'm getting rid of the big band in order to *play*. To take those leaps off the diving board. Which are so exciting... so fun!! I want to have some fun. Everybody else has fun. Well, I'm not going to play *that* much. Composers sit alone in their rooms and tear their hair out and smoke too much and worry. But I'm doing a lot of composing: I'm writing a piece for the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society and Ursula Oppens [ace modern music pianist]. To concentrate on the classical music, I couldn't think of my own horns — I had to discover the bassoon.

TL — *How did New Music Distribution Service (NMDS), the Jazz Composers Orchestra Association (JCDA), and Watt get started?*

CB — You have to go back twenty years... maybe fifteen. There was an organization called the Jazz Composers' Guild in New York. It was started by Bill Dixon, the trumpet player. Cecil Taylor was involved with it, Archie Shepp, Milford Graves, and Roswell Rudd... and everybody who was anybody in New York at that moment. We said, "We're not going to play forty-five minute sets any more; we're not going to let the business people dictate what our records are going to be like." It was a revolution, in a sort, that we had! And they called themselves composers because they thought improvisation was spontaneous compo-

sition. But if I had any thought... but I was a real composer; I couldn't improvise at all. For six months we sat in rooms and argued and put on concerts. It was beautiful! There were only two people in the Guild who didn't have a band: me and Mike Mantler. And we both wanted to write for orchestra — big groups of people. So we said, "Let's have a band together. We'll call it the Jazz Composers' Guild Orchestra. And we got all the guys in the Guild to play in the band. And it was really a collection of marvelous players, but Mike and I weren't very good then. I don't think the music of the first couple of concerts was awfully good. People were always getting lost or taking drum solos.

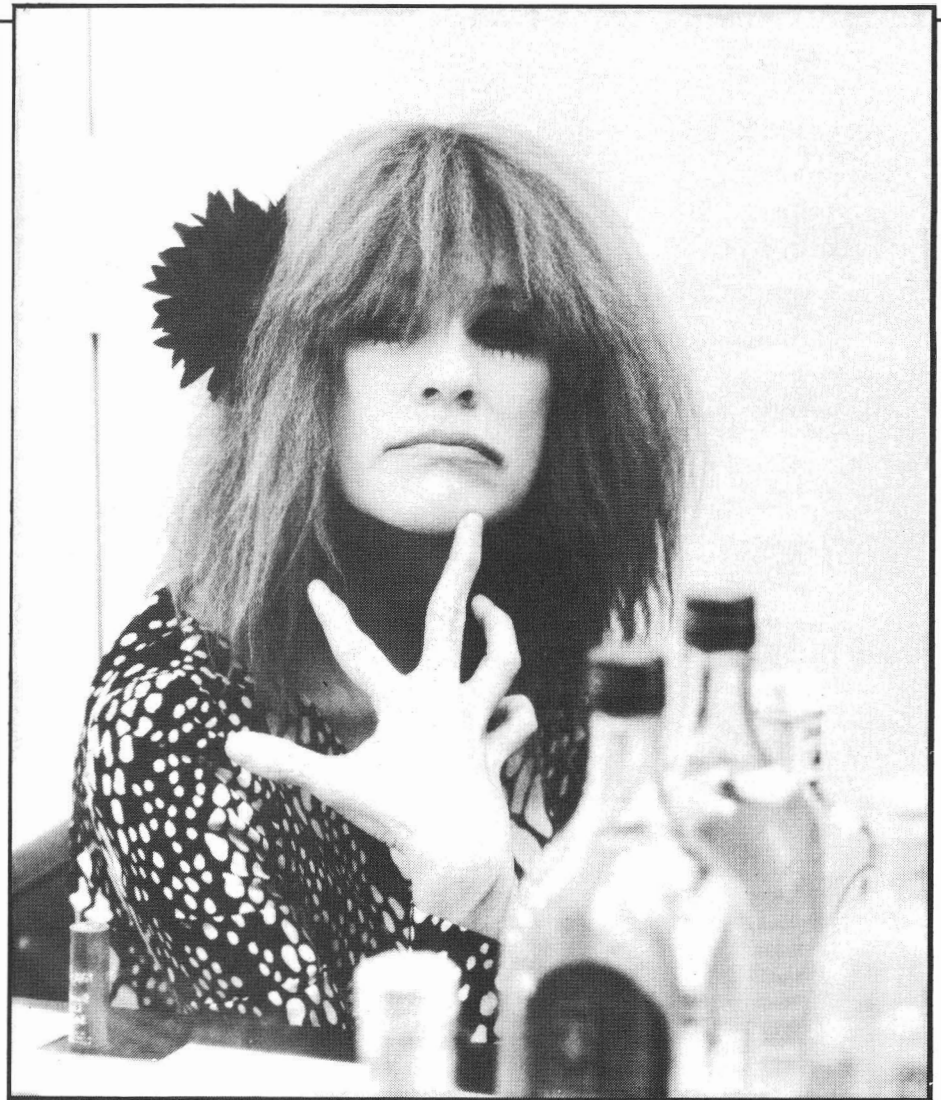
After six months of this intense behavior, we all quit. Me and Mike thought, "Damn, we've got this great orchestra together. Let's keep going and just drop the name 'Guild' ". So we called it the Jazz Composers' Orchestra. We made records. Mike Mantler wrote all the music for the first album. And I played the piano. I can't believe it. We made this record, but we didn't know how to sell it. And it just sat there in our bedroom. So we had to do the next step — we had to distribute this thing. So we started distributing this record and the records of other people around the world who were putting out records. We happened to be in Hamburg one night and got together with other people who were making their own records; we knew about five at the time. Manfred Eicher was one of the guys; Incus (an English label run by Derek Bailey and Evan Parker)...

MIKE MANTLER — Well, that was the beginning of the NMDS. Just a few labels, mostly European, and a few American ones. Then everybody started doing it... it grew tremendously. We eventually had to get rid of the European ones because there were so many here. Plus we were partly funded by Government money, like the National Endowment for the Arts.

TL — *So how long did you work in an administrative capacity with NMDS?*

MM — I still do. I run it. I don't do any of the day to day stuff. I guide it. Right now I'm doing a fair amount of work because it's not in very good shape — financially and organizationally — because in the last couple of years our general manager was very sick and eventually died. It's just been running on and not going anywhere. Unfortunately, the people who distribute us are carrying our burden. After JCOA started doing other things, other recordings, Carla and I had no other outlet. So we started Watt. We've made seventeen records. As soon as we started Watt, ECM distributed us as a label, so they always put out the records.

CB — I want to flesh this out in a more dramatic way... I guess we still had this fever, this intensity of youth, where you wanted to change the world and change the rules. Every time we made a record we would send every one of the guys, let's say there were five labels, two hundred of them. And they'd send us 200. A year from then it was such a mess. Waiting in New Jersey for the ship's cargo to come down, and licking the stamps... After a while it went to the point where we weren't making music anymore. We would still be doing that to this day if there weren't horrible misunderstandings. All of a sudden France wouldn't pay us. And



Holland decided that we were selling out because our records sounded too commercial. They deliberately sold the records and kept the money.

In a way it was the same as the Jazz Composers' Guild. Because of individuals and no one in charge — we all believed that no one would ever run anything. Everybody had the same value; everything had to be a compromise. And this didn't work for the second time in our lives. So finally we decided that we were going to pull out. We had the same ideals; we wanted to distribute our own records. But we couldn't do it internationally. We wanted to do it smaller and better. It was too crazy: People filibustering... At this point we were ready to kill each other. But what finally pulled the shade... The Chick Corea record with "Return to Forever". There were all of a sudden 10,000 orders for "Return to Forever" and we couldn't fill them. Success had destroyed us — we had a hit record. So we fired Chick Corea and ECM. I fired myself three years ago. I'm too big. It makes the office go crazy if they try to distribute me. When someone goes, we don't say, "Oh dear, they're leaving," we say, "Thank God, they're gone." As soon as you get famous, you can't be in NMDS anymore. So Mike and I took control and became benevolent despots. We know our intents are spot on. We're not

going to do the wrong things. We're too honest. And we have an overview of what the community needs are. Ever since it's been.... not great but... fairer, simpler.

TL — *What are you doing now to promote the Service?*

CB — We've been working on getting more grants. This thing is never going to make any money because we don't stop distributing a record because it doesn't sell. We keep those records until they melt.

MM — Actually, promotion isn't a big problem because it's very well established. We're the role model. But that's not enough. One thing we've done is that we recently recorded a series of shows and concerts for NPR which will also be distributing them.

CB — The worst thing is that by operating expenses being so high, we've fallen behind in the last three years on paying musicians. We're almost the bad guys. It's painful, embarrassing.

MM — New people always get told that it takes time...

CB — But we've spawned so many amazing things that maybe would have survived anyway, but we certainly helped.

SS — Also created millions of horrible records too.

CB — But if you throw it against the wall, whatever sticks... We've been holding to that.

FESTIVAL SCENES

JAZZ FEST BERLIN

October 30th - November 2nd, 1986

TOTAL MUSIC MEETING 86

October 30th - November 1st, 1986

I have arrived two days early in Berlin, from the eastern bloc, a lengthy train journey, to become acquainted with this strange divided city, itself, both east and west, land locked by the country of East Germany. The feeling from east (Berlin) to west can be seen and felt clearly even from the window of the first class compartment. The east - brown/grey police and citizens, gun towers, guns, and the horrific wall, gives way to the first ironic burst of freedom in the form of the giant macdonalds M of west Berlin's railway station. I walked the wall from Checkpoint Charlie to the Brandenburg Gate, a mile or so, and realised that although only so high its coarse quarter of a century reality is the truth of these two worlds. On one side the drab city of control and curfews, and on the other the most open and exciting city in Europe.

In the two days before the official start of the Jazz Fest and the Total Music Meeting, one becomes rapidly aware of the intense culture of this city. It is possible, apart from the official program, to hear the music of bassist **Joelle Leandre**, pianist **Irene Schweizer**, **Abdullah Ibrahim**, and **Last Exit** with Peter Brotzmann, Sonny Sharrock, Bill Laswell and Ronald Shannon Jackson. In fact to indulge oneself in any fantasy contained in the imagination almost to the point of decadence. But that is not why I am there.

"A shroud of sadness engulfs my heart strings, as I am confronted by the news that **Johnny Dyani** has died in Berlin". This great South African bassist embodied all that is the quality of our music. Tradition. Creativity. Joyfulness. So that a great deal of what took place, consciously or not, was a fitting tribute to his greatness. Some, like Don Cherry and Louis Moholo, declared their feelings openly. Don with a remembrance in the form of a "Song For Biko", and Louis in black shrouded doom, who came to claim his friend.

The festivities, a gathering of musicians, fans and critics, began on a joyous note with the German premiere of the much lauded film - **Round Midnight**. To see **Dexter Gordon** up there on that large screen in a grand cinema warmed one to the events that were to unfold. The second showing the following night was to have the spoken word of the sound track dubbed into German. I thought several times with silent tittering amusement of what Dexter's voice would be in that other language. Surely he will be at least nominated to the academy awards for his natural acting ability in this role.

Although there are two festivals occurring at the same time, it is possible, with intelligent organisation, to participate in both events, as the four locations where everything takes place are located within easy reach of each other, and with the exception of the Jazz Fest late evening concerts, do not clash (time wise) at all. For example the events at the Philharmonie

(the major venue for Jazz Fest) and the Music-instrumenten-Museum (solo piano) are within a ten minute stroll of the Quartier Latin, where the Total Music Meeting takes place. There appears to be a certain amount of cooperation between the two events, although I would think that the general opinion of the people I met would be that the Total Music Meeting is still considered the "alternative" music.

As I always explain, in my reviews of festivals, it is not possible to listen to everything, so once again one studies the amazingly full and varied program and makes decisions according to one's taste.



Words are not music, so a description of all the details will not actually illustrate the overall feeling of these four days. But as always, with so much, there are many highlights. Before I continue I should make clear that the difference between the two festivals is not that one is traditional and the other avant garde, for indeed the "city" festival has a considerable amount of contemporary music, which I suspect is because a great deal of the programming is done by **George Gruntz**, who is himself a modern composer and performer.

I would consider the main focus of the Jazz Fest, from my own point of view, to be orchestras or large groups, as there are no less than six of these configurations. From the opening night which features two European orchestras, the **Willem Breuker Kollektive** and the **Globe Unity Orchestra**, on to the **WDR Big Band**, **Charlie Watts Orchestra**, **Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy** and **Loose Tubes**, one is given the opportunity to sample the success and the pitfalls of so many musicians performing together. The most interesting, perhaps because of their professional experience and longevity, were the Kollektive, Globe Unity and Brass Fantasy. The Kollektive of Willem Breuker has always enjoyed a certain amount of popularity, especially in Europe, and this is due to the accessibility of their music which utilises an attitude that could be described as an updated avant garde novelty band, with choreographed movements, slick segues from one piece to another, and a large dose of comedy that at all times manages to keep the audience's attention focused on them. This is not to suggest that this is a band of simple tricks, and indeed there were very fine solos from trumpet player Boy Raaymakers and the leader himself. Eclecticism was also part of the success of Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy, which included purple silk tails somewhat akin to those old Cab Calloway movies of years gone by, once again choreo-

graphy, and the use of a number of pop songs in their repertoire. Lester himself described the music as avant-pop. Once again there were a number of impressive solos, in particular from trombonist Steve Turre and Bowie's as always persuasive trumpet. Globe Unity however represented the orchestra in a more serious manner, but again not without humour, although their humour is not so theatrical and rehearsed as the previous two descriptions, more to do with the natural humour that is contained within the highest order of improvised music. This was a special occasion for Globe Unity as it was their twentieth anniversary, making one wonder why this music is still referred to as avant garde. For a dozen artists of such individual strength to be able to make a final agreement of such clarity is really still the truth of what "jazz" music signifies. not always gelling, but then what in proper life can.

The WDR Big Band is what it appears to be. A well oiled radio orchestra with featured guests. Charlie Watts really does sound great with the Stones, and Loose Tubes lost my attention in a very brief time.

Other highlights would be the wonderful solo piano music of **Andrew Hill**. Thank goodness he is performing in public again, and the well produced groups of **Herbie Hancock** and **Bobby Hutcherson**. Neat but a little dull.

The Total Music Meeting, organised by **Joost Gebers**, is always based on a theme, and the 1986 version is to do with trombones. If you have never considered how many improvising trombonists there are in the world, then this event would alarm you, for it seemed, with few exceptions, that every push me off the pavement player on the planet, was at one time or another, in those three days, presented on the stage of the Quartier Latin.

The club itself is every listener's dream of the kind of environment that great music should be presented in. The concert hall in the back of the building is a five hundred seat theatre with the most perfect sound I have heard in many a year. The front section is a bar that also served as a collection space for multitudes of players and fans alike, and in this short time introduced me to dozens of artists who had previously simply been names in **Coda** reviews. Upstairs is the restaurant. Paradise indeed.

This festival is part of the already important organisation, Free Music Productions (FMP), who alongside such independent record companies as the Instant Composers Pool (Holland) and Incus (England), have been responsible for making the world at large aware of the bulk of improvised music that has been produced in Europe over the last two decades. That they are responsible for this yearly festival is of no surprise.

Every afternoon, the seventeen trombone players meet to decide what the evening performance shape will be. From solo to complete orchestra. The combinations, and results are astounding. From **Gunter Christmann** solo music with visuals, to the **Vinko Globokar** piece *All For One and One For All* that utilised

almost everyone. To illustrate the joy of the evening, although this is only one description, one would perhaps think of the comic aspect of the trombone. Its somewhat simple arrangement of tubes, being inventively manipulated in more attitudes than would seem possible. For example the solo music of British trombonist **Alan Tomlinson**. A short piece that really delighted the enthusiastic audience. This all accomplished by attaching a long plastic tube, with a bell like ending to the rear of his instrument. Whirling the tube around his head. Using his head as a mute etc. But of course this was not the content of the Total Music Meeting, or of the music as a whole, just a small detail that illustrates one of the occasions.

The last night continued until dawn, with the difficulty of saying farewell to new and old friends, a most amazing week in Berlin completed. For me even more had occurred, because I had had the pleasure of performing, in a separate concert in the FMP studio with **Evan Parker**, spent a great deal of time with friends from North America that I only seem to meet in foreign lands, and above all witnessed, even though briefly, some of the most amazing music on the planet. If only life were this way all the time.

I must thank Ihno von Hasselt and George Gruntz of the Jazz Fest Berlin for their hospitality, and of course Jost Gebers for arranging for me to play in Berlin. I cannot imagine having a more wonderful time at any festival on the planet.

— **Bill Smith**

PARIS FESTIVALS

Well! October and early November saw a blitz of music in Paris, with not one but three festivals and then some. This writer attended only twelve evenings in that time, but folks were hopping every night of the week and it wouldn't stop!

First, the New Morning — when they've got a good program for the month, they can't be beat for Paris clubs. Unfortunately, they're inconsistent. But in early October they hosted two nights with **Hannibal Marvin Peterson's** quartet, who was so superb that people were sweating submarines. One solo after another, Hannibal was striking lines and reaching notes that if man had been intended to fly... Hannibal truly had wings, he's a beauty, and he was overjoyed to see how excited we all were at his music. Later in the month, **Charlie Haden's** quartet came through for a couple nights. Seems Haden will always be a rock, he never falters, and together with Dewey Redman's sure touch they give a deep sense of what a long musical friendship can bring. Not to slight Paul Motian's drumming nor Mick Goodrich on guitar, but Haden's voicings of endurance and survival carries across continents, it's like going home again. A few nights later at the same club, the **Black Swann Quartet** put in a special appearance. A black string quartet hovering between jazz and classical tonalities, they consisted of Abdul Wadud on cello, Reggie Workman on bass, Arlen Folsom on viola (if memory serves), and Akbar Ali (who seemed to be the leader) on violin. Strange jewels would crystallize and vanish through their pieces, it all went too quickly, hopefully they'll do a record.

Now for the festivals (whew). The seventh Festival de Jazz de Paris had probably its greatest program yet, of which this writer only caught four nights. **Sonny Rollins** brought his quintet to the Theatre le Rex and the place was packed. A hard bopper made of steel, Sonny would blow for twenty minutes at a stretch. The man is still in his prime, only you just don't want to be Clifton Anderson, the trombonist in his group, who didn't get to play a lot (on the other hand, of course, playing with Sonny...). A thrilling evening of bop and Latin classics, after that you *know* why the man is great.

A couple nights later, **Gil Evans** brought his big band to the Theatre de la Ville and this fellow too remains ever young. Whoever's playing, it's always pure Gil Evans. A dream, a wish, a marvel of joy, with Gil swinging like the mightiest. The evening opened with the appearance of Japanese piano star, **Yosuke Yamashita**, who seemed to combine Cecil Taylor, Fats Waller and Bill Evans, that is to say encyclopedic, and he won the people over.

The night after that, at the same hall, two excellent brass bands held court. **Mike Westbrook's** band did their versions of Rossini, and if there were a bridge to span the great divide between jazz and opera this could be it. Westbrook's arrangements were careful, smart, tasteful, and yes, they did swing. Then came the guys from St. Louis, Chicago and such directions, **Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy**. They are so hip it makes you want to scream, Lester in his sequined lab coat, deluxe version. Playing most of the tunes from their new ECM album, "Avant Pop", they shifted moods and tempos from jazz to salsa to even the Willie Nelson tune they do. No one can punch or squeeze out the notes like Lester, and each of the other eight musicians in their purple and pink tuxedos created a stunning ensemble of strong voices, soloing with distinction, folding back together in a chorus of brass fantastic. Somewhere it is probably a crime to miss a concert by this band.

Lastly in this festival was a Brazilian/Argentine evening at the Cirque d'Hiver. Despite much expectation, it turned out to be the opening duo, **Ulisses Rocha** on guitar and **Silvano Michelino** on percussion, who gave the most pleasure. Consistently in control, spanning slow and fast tunes, they were a model of full sound with small means; their encore number with horn player Cacao (who plays in Ramuntcho Matta's band and others) was a delight as well. The great disappointment for yours truly, a *fou de Dino*, was the band **Dino Saluzzi** and **Enrico Rava** had put together. With a drummer who knew no restraint, and Harry Pepl's excessively present guitar work, the two leaders tended to get drowned out. Of the two, Rava's solos often lacked luster as well. If Dino had done a solo gig, he would have had us in his hands (right there between the buttons of his squeezebox, his bandoneon). Last on the bill that night was **Hermeto Pascoal's** group, which was also overbearing, too loud, too electric, too frantic. Hermeto should have drunk some herb tea or something.

Though not heard by me, that festival also included concerts by Ben Sidran, Louis Sclavis,

John Abercrombie, Claude Barthelemy, Antoine Herve, Miles Davis, Doudou Gouirand and more.

A concurrent and smaller festival, the first Festival des Musiques Mutantes, took place across town at the Dejazet theater. Organized by Gerard Terrones, longtime French manager for such musicians as Archie Shepp, Sam Rivers, Joe McPhee and others (as well as the founder of Marge records and other important small labels in the 70s), the week featured various concerts and groups with McPhee, Mal Waldron, Steve Lacy, Rivers, Roy Haynes, Chico Freeman and many more, plus a couple nights of avant garde rock. I caught two evenings. The first had the **Raymond Boni/Joe McPhee** duo, the **Waldron/Lacy** duo, and **Rivers'** quartet. The middle group was the most exciting, though the others had plenty of fine moments too. A couple nights later, missing the Waldron/Freeman duo, I caught Lacy's Sextet, splendid as ever (personal bias notwithstanding), and waited till it was announced that Steve Coleman's septet would not be playing after all. Which is unfortunately one of the 'myths' of such alternative, experimental festivals that should be broken: the technical crew, as well as the organizers, did not have their act as well together as they might have. Other exciting though unheard evenings included the Last Exit group, Ramadolf, Rivers' Rivbea Orchestra, and Alan Silva's orchestra. Terrones' people do fill a much-needed role, that of presenting some of the most challenging music, in a city where the official jazz festival has usually been mostly quite staid.

All right, the last festival is the city-wide Festival d'Automne, which features all the arts, though in music it's mostly classical (Boulez, Xenakis, Berio, etc.). This year, however, there were two terrific groups of evenings up in a nearby suburb, at the Theatre de Gennevilliers. The first was a series of concerts by **Meredith Monk**, who opened with a solo work (I've forgotten the piece it's from), playing her voice off the notes of a resonating goblet of water. While quite simple at first, she bent and stretched the relation between voice and sung object into a delicate intricacy of possibilities. Then with her group of six singers, they performed work from her piece "Book of Days," set over a couple of shifting keyboard patterns. Her work is really quite marvelous, each personality in the ensemble acting as a supple and surprising figure in the whole fabric, spinning a series of changing landscapes that makes one feel, Here is Great Art. The other series of great art was the first Paris-area performances of the immense work, "Futurities", played by the **Steve Lacy Nine**. Featuring the dancers Douglas Dunn and Elsa Wollaston, upon a group of twenty Robert Creeley poems, sung by Irene Aebi, with an altar-like decor in the luminescent chevron of Kenneth Noland's painting (under John Davis' lighting), the work is perhaps stronger than its premiere performances in Lille two years ago. The only changes among the musicians was to include the ever-phenomenal Glenn Ferris on trombone and Tomas Gubitsch on guitar. The show is not easy to contain, it risks splitting the spectator into a pile of sensory fragments, but held by the music it shimmers hypnotically through to the end, a day in the life or vice-versa, the life in a day.

— **Jason Weiss**



Charlie Haden's Liberation Music

I talked to Charlie Haden before his performance at the Pacific Jazz and Blues festival in Vancouver during June of 1986. Our discussions were wide-ranging, but the aspects I want to deal with in this article concern the dialectic between politics/ethics and artistic expression. Haden himself is deeply concerned with these issues, as I'm sure you will discover. Whether he has solved the difficulties in a successful manner, I'll leave it to you to judge.

At this stage of his career, Haden needs no introduction to fans of improvised music. It does seem hard to believe that he has virtually become an elder statesman of the acoustic bass. But then, the revolutionary music of the Ornette Coleman's quartet with Haden is almost 30 years old now. When I listen to it these days, it seems amazing that it was once reviled as anti-music, anti-jazz. To some of us, anyways, it's as comfortable as an old sofa.

Attitudes toward the music may have mellowed, but Haden has not. Always known as a politically-aware and -active man, he has not, like so many, abandoned the ideals of his youth. Instead, these ideals have nourished his music, given it the sincerity, strength and power that distinguish Haden as perhaps the most expressive bassist playing improvised music. His efforts can be held up as an example to young musicians attempting to struggle

with the difficulties of producing honest music in these alienated times.

Jazz music may have developed out of the experiences of black enslavement in the New World, but in its early years it was a music of entertainment, devoid of overt political content. Indeed, in the form of "race" music, the stereotypes adhering to it actively functioned against progressive political developments. Of course, jazz bands became integrated, but it took until the upheavals of the civil rights movements in the late 50s and 60s for the situation to become ripe for jazz musicians to undertake other action in the musical sphere for the social ideals they believed in. Charles Mingus and Max Roach led the way, and by the late 60s, musicians such as Archie Shepp and the Revolutionary Ensemble were producing music whose form and content were explicitly ideological.

In 1969, Haden, in association with

Carla Bley and others from the New York scene, recorded a renowned but scarce album by the Liberation Music Orchestra. This included the famous *Song For Che*, about the CIA-orchestrated murder of Che Guevara, as well as others about the war in Vietnam and about the violence at the Democratic Convention in Chicago. It seems hard to believe now, but this incendiary recording was actually released on a major label. I asked Haden how he pulled off that one.

First I went to several other major labels that turned me down. Then I met Bob Thiele [of ABC Impulse], who I'd known before – I'd played on several records by Archie Shepp and Roswell Rudd that he'd produced – so I went to him and told him what I wanted to do, and we recorded. I actually regretted doing it for that label afterwards, but there were no other labels. The small independent ones had no distribution, and I wanted to make sure the album got distributed all over the world. But as it turned out, when the executives at ABC found out about the political content of the album, they weren't going to release it. Finally they released it but didn't promote it.

This album, in spite of subsequent releases on European and Japanese labels, has become a sought-after collector's item. To the ABC executives, the musical content was irrelevant, overridden by political considerations. The long battle by a subset of jazz musicians to release their musical production from the strictures of being merely a vehicle for popular entertainment toward becoming "art" music, i.e. a vehicle for unrestricted personal expression, merely revealed a wider set of boundaries for artistic discourse in the mass media and corporate sector. Only certain types of personal expression will be supported and promoted, those which do not threaten the status quo. The escape from the popular music ghetto was only into the ivory tower.

But then, Haden has seen these contradictions played out in a much more forceful manner than most. I asked him to tell me exactly what happened in that now-famous incident in Portugal in 1970.

Actually there was a notice about it in Coda, one of the only magazines that printed something about what happened right after it happened. I had gone to Europe to play a concert tour with Ornette with a tour called the Newport Jazz Festival Tour of Europe, which included the Giants of Jazz – Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Stitt, Art Blakey, Al McKibbon, Kai Winding – Miles' band which included Keith Jarrett, the Duke Ellington Orchestra, and a lot of other folks. When I arrived in Europe and saw the itinerary, I noticed that the

last concert of the 14 countries was in Portugal. I went to Ornette and told him that I didn't feel comfortable playing in Portugal because I didn't agree with their government's policies and their colonies in Africa. He told me he'd signed a contract and we had to play. I decided to dedicate one of the songs [Song For Che] to the black liberation movements in Mozambique and Angola at the beginning of the song, which I did. I was arrested the next day and taken to P.I.D. Headquarters and interrogated. Ornette called the embassy and put pressure for them to send someone to get me out of jail.

If there was ego involved in those actions, it was positive ego, in the service of freedom, not the bloated ego, in the service of exploitation, that feeds the careers of the hyped media stars. The apologists in the mass media claim that they're just giving the people what they want, that they're following public taste. To an aware observer, the threads of audience manipulation and product production are all too apparent. And to an inner-directed musician like Haden, this entire conception is a sham, does not even enter into the equation.

I think it's important that each musician play the music that he or she feels honest with, and that what they do comes from them. I can only speak for myself. It's important to me, I feel a responsibility to make as many people as I can aware of what I think is important. It doesn't necessarily have to be with the Orchestra. The way I play music is to make the people a part of the music to the point where they question what's happening in the world. I do that no matter who I play with. It doesn't have to be a political song. It can be a love song or a standard or a blues.

As far as playing political music, it adds another dimension to the presentation and communication to the listener, because you're playing music that comes out of other people's struggle to live in a free society. It adds an awareness, or an enlightenment, or an inspiration that you can hear music from other parts of the world that comes from people's struggle and honesty.

I think the important thing is that the musicians dedicated to the art form all fulfill the responsibility that they have, which is to play the music as much as they can to as many people as possible. Jazz is an art form that's really unique and very special in that the musicians experience a spontaneity instantaneously with the ability to communicate to people that spontaneity, and there aren't many other art forms in which that is possible. That is a very important process, and I believe that that's the issue.

There are those who take up music as

a tool for political expression. Haden remains first of all an artist, dedicated to personal expression; it happens that the personality he is expressing is humanistic and activist in orientation.

The term "overtly political" is uncomfortable to me, because it's not my intention to go out and play political music. It's my intention to play honest music, and to try to improve the quality of life, and to involve people in the creative process. I think the very fact that can happen shows that there's hope on the planet.

There are a lot of words that you can use. Human values, creative values, honest values. The values that are in all human beings that they have to remember or discover or rediscover. Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya, who we saw tonight, is an example of that. I heard some of his early music, but since I moved away from New York, I haven't had a chance to hear his music that much. I was impressed with his music tonight, with his commitment to make people aware what's going on in his home country of South Africa. I was impressed with the way he presents it in a really beautiful, reverent, respectful way. It really inspired me.

Musicians should really be thankful for their gift, and really respect it and respect the audience and respect sound, and play with humility. That's what I heard tonight.

Since the early days, jazz has been performed in unsavory locations, starting in Storyville, the red light district of New Orleans. The musicians were frequently ripped off by the clubowners and the record companies. This is obviously not the greatest situation for artistic production, and it was easy for the public and the arts intelligentsia to downplay the value of whatever the musicians were able to produce. These contradictions have not been ameliorated, merely become more sophisticated in application.

It is inevitable that difficult decisions have to be made when attempting to maximize the distribution of one's music, whether in live performance or in a recorded medium. Neither of the major sponsors of this particular festival were particularly savory, yet they made the musical performances possible. I tried to explore with Haden the mechanics of dealing with these problems.

When you have a chance to play for large numbers of people, it's important that you play. The exception that I would make is going to another country where the politics of that country are against humanity. I've been invited to play in South Africa, but I never will unless the situation changes there. As far as playing in Canada and the U.S. in places where you know there are vested interests you don't like, I think it's important to play

to audiences that want to hear the music. There is a possibility that there are going to be people in the audience that are going to be exposed to the music for the first time. The more you can do this, the more likely you can help to create a society where you don't encounter these vested interests.

I always think about where I'm going to play, and whether it's the right setting, and that the right people are behind it. For instance, playing at the Playboy Jazz Festival. I don't necessarily agree with what the Playboy Corporation stands for or the people who are involved in it, but I feel that if everyone in my band is compensated according to their contribution to the music, and if we have a chance to play for people who wouldn't ordinarily hear this music.... At a place like that you have 17,000 people to play the music for, and if you touch a few of them, it's worth it.

After the first Liberation Orchestra record, I had this idea of only playing concerts in situations where the music had immediate meaning, to play for different causes, against oppression, racism. The first concert we played was a benefit for the big anti-war May Day demonstrations in Washington to raise money for bail funds to get people out of jail. We played in New York. We raised some money, and no one got paid for it. I was thinking about this afterwards. We raised money to get people out of jail, which is great, and we didn't get paid. We should also think about playing other places so more people could be exposed to the music. The musicians should get compensation for their families.

Those of us who are not actively involved in dealing with these problems are often somewhat sanctimonious in our reactions to how they are dealt with by working artists. One can only play the starving artist game for so long without permanent damage to one's creative abilities, not to mention health. Yet if one is socially conscious, to be true to one's beliefs and still support oneself through artistic efforts can seem an insurmountable difficulty. Until these contradictions are excised from our society, the artist can never escape the web, just wrestle with them and perhaps use them for inspiration. Above all, she or he can't just ignore them, pretend they're not there. That's when their power reigns unchecked.

It boils down to the commitment inside the person, what they feel strongly about. If they have the passion inside them to play the music, or to paint, or to write, they'll do it. And hopefully they'll do it in such a way that is done with a passion for making positive change in the world is worth it.

— Scott Lewis

Rosetta Records * Women In Jazz

Rosetta Reitz, founder of Rosetta Records, started her label for a specific reason: "There was a crying need for it. Years ago I asked questions about women in jazz, the chief one being 'Where were they?' The more I looked and researched the more I found but because they were on race records and not reissued they have been mostly ignored in jazz history books."

Reitz has done a great deal to lessen the neglect. Since starting her company in 1980, Rosetta has issued 14 albums that feature female jazz and blues singers and a few instrumentalists, emphasizing recordings from the pre-1950 era. While six of the records feature one artist or group, the other eight group together 15 or 16 different singers/musicians performing songs with a particular topic in common. The one main criticism this writer has with these collections is the difficulty involved in locating a specific selection since recordings from the same session are often on different albums and the tunes are not in chronological order. This minor fault is easily compensated for by the uniformly high quality of the formerly rare music, the lengthy and informative liner notes by Rosetta, the many photos included in every album and the research and loving care that went into these projects; particularly impressive when one considers that Rosetta Reitz put these together almost completely by herself.

Of the eight multi-artist sets, four are grouped under the subtitle **Independent Women's Blues. Mean Mothers (Rosetta RR 1300)** seeks to show that not all of the blues sung by women were of the "poor helpless me" variety. These 16 tracks (all but two from the 20s and 30s) find women declaring their independence from their "no-account men". For example Martha Copeland (not helped out by Bob Fuller's primitive clarinet) is a "Good Time Mama" who does not play around but is happy to spend other men's money while Bessie Brown complains about the quality of males available. The more memorable selections include the powerful (but forgotten) Maggie Jones stealing honours with *You Ain't Gonna Feed In My Pasture Now*, Mary Dixon telling why *You Can't Sleep In My Bed*, the totally obscure Bertha Idaho (who only cut four sides despite her talent) shouting *Move It Out Of Here*, Rosa Henderson's *Can't Be Bothered With No Sheik* (superb backing by pianist James P. Johnson) and Ida Cox's graphic *One Hour Mama* from the late 30s.

Assertiveness and self-reliance are celebrated on **Big Mamas (RR 1306)**. Ethel Waters touts divorce during *No Man's Mama* (in 1925!), Viola McCoy tells her man to *Git Goin'* and Julia Lee doesn't attempt subtlety in complaining *You Ain't Got It No More*. One of the strongest of these collections, all 16 recordings on **Big Mamas** are of high interest. Half the total output of the fine singers Issie Ringgold and Gussie Williams (one song apiece), a rare sideman appearance by Count Basie (playing in an unrecognizable early blues style in 1929 behind Edith Johnson) and a vocal from the famous actress Hattie McDaniel (backed by pianist Tiny Parham) are among the more unusual selections. Billie Holiday, who would have benefitted from more assertiveness in her private life, is in fine form on *Now Baby Or Never* (from a 1950 film short with Basie's

sextet).

The material on **Super Sisters (RR 1308)** can be divided into two categories: Women telling off men and double-entendre songs. Of the latter are such colorful titles as Lil Johnson's raunchy *Meat Balls* (nothing has been heard about Lil since 1939, is she still alive?), Lucille Bogan's *Coffee Grindin' Blues* and Lizzie Miles' delightful *Take Your Fingers Off It*. Helen Humes, heard on *Do What You Did Last Night* at age 14 (1927), probably did not know exactly what she was singing about. Of the more angry songs, Mildred Bailey gets off some good lines on *Junk Man* ("I'm gonna give that junk man my broken heart for a loaded '32'"), Sweet Peas Spivey calls her partner *Double Dozens, You Dirty No Gooder* and Sara Martin advises her man that he *Take Your Black Bottom Outside*. Albennie (aka Albinia) Jones jumps on *Papa Tree Top Blues* (she should be dragged out of retirement), Bertha Idaho is heard on another strong performance and Cleo Gibson (who only recorded 2 sides) sounds exactly like Bessie Smith on *I've Got Ford Movements In My Hips*. Only Ella Fitzgerald (on *Ella Hums The Blues*) sounds out of place although her humming cannot be topped.

Sweet Petunias (RR 1311) differs from the other albums in the **Independent Women's Blues** series in that the majority of the recordings are post-1940 with several such as Annisteen Allen's *Baby I'm Doing It* and Ella Johnson's *Well Do It* fitting securely in the 50s r&b style. The topic of **Sweet Petunias** (being lovable and sweet in one's relationships) is a bit vaguer than the subject matter of the other albums but there are a fair share of memorable numbers on this collection, particularly Etta Jones' *The Richest Guy In The Graveyard* (a warning for workalcoholics), Monette Moore's *You Don't Live Here No More* (backed by beboppers in 1945), Stella Johnson leaving us pauses to fill in with rhyming obscenities on *Don't Come Over* and the Bandanna Girls harmonizing on *Part Time Papa*.

Women's Railroad Blues – Sorry But I Can't Take You (RR 1301) features train songs from the female point of view. While men thought of trains as an opportunity to escape from the oppressive life of the South for the promise of work and freedom up North, black women (who were rarely permitted to ride) saw trains as an evil demon that took their men away. That fear of the power of trains is expressed in diverse ways on this set. The backing musicians to an extent sink Clara Smith's *Freight Train Blues* and Martha Copeland's feature (where she is sabotaged by the two destructive clarinets of Ernest Elliott and Bob Fuller) but other stronger numbers dominate this album. Best are Clara Smith's *The L&N Blues*, Sister Rosetta Tharpe's inspired *This Train*, 3 appearances by Trixie Smith (who deserves an album of her own) and Nora Lee King's 1942 *Cannon Ball* which has her backed by a group that includes a muted

but quite audible Dizzy Gillespie.

In contrast **Red White & Blues (RR 1302)** gathers together 15 selections that have little in common other than that each song title includes the name of a city or region. Dating mostly from the 30s and 40s, some of the best moments are contributed by Victoria Spivey and her Chicago Four (performing, oddly enough, the *Detroit Man*), Mildred Bailey's *Arkansas Blues*, Chippie Hill in 1946 shouting out the *Charleston Blues* (with pianist Lovie Austin and trumpeter Lee Collins in top form) and a rare 1952 radio transcription of Betty Roche singing *Take The 'A' Train* with Duke Ellington. Of lesser interest is Blue Lou Barker's *New Orleans Blues* (her voice is an acquired taste) and an unnecessary excerpt of *Chicago* from a TV show that has a brief appearance by Lil Armstrong.

Piano Singer's Blues (RR 1303) showcases a variety of females playing piano behind their own vocals. When one thinks of pre-1950 woman pianists usually only Mary Lou Williams and Lil Armstrong come to mind but actually female pianists were fairly common (especially in the churches) since that was the only instrument (along with violin) that young girls were encouraged to play. Unfortunately they were not often recorded and therefore have been overlooked by historians. On this fine album there are individual features for popular players such as Julia Lee, Hazel Scott, Nellie Lutcher and Lil Armstrong (who jams a spirited *Harlem On Saturday Night* with her 1938 sextet) but the main value to **Piano Singer's Blues** is its focus on the more obscure singer-pianists such as Edith Johnson, Fannie May Goosby, Cleo Brown and Hociel Thomas.

Boogie Blues (RR 1309) has six instrumental by female pianists, six examples of non-playing woman singers, one pianist-vocalist, two guitarists who sing and one piano player backing another singer. The programming is a bit confused since some songs are boogie-woogies, others might have "Boogie" or "Woogie" in their titles but be a different style and some songs are not technically blues. But the consistent quality of the music makes up for the slight confusion. Among the highlights are Lil Armstrong's ad-lib improvisation based on Jelly Roll Morton themes (*Original Boogie*), Hazel Scott's *Brown Bee Boogie*, a hot boogie-woogie from Dorothy Donegan (back in 1942), features for Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Memphis Minnie and Helen Humes (*Be Ba Ba Le Ba Boogie*) and some joyful blues playing by Myrtle Jenkins behind Bumble Bee Slim on *When Somebody Loses*. A collection such as **Boogie Blues** would have been stronger if it was in chronological order for then it would have traced the evolution of boogie-woogie through the years.

The five Rosetta albums that feature one artist are subtitled **Foremothers**. Ida Cox's *Wild Women Don't Have The Blues (RR 1304)* is the only straight reissue of a previous session, a

long out-of-print Riverside album. Ida Cox, one of the top classic blues singers of the 1920s, made a brief comeback in the late 30s, before dropping out of the scene for twenty years. By the time of this 1961 album, Ida was 72 and she knew that it would be her final musical statement. She chose her backing musicians carefully (including pianist Sammy Price and the two immortal players, Coleman Hawkins and Roy Eldridge) and sang ten of her favorite songs, seven of which she originally wrote. Her voice was still pretty strong at this time (if occasionally off-pitch) and the old-time authority was still there. There is also a fair amount of solo space for Roy and Hawk (both only kids when Ida was already famous) and their backing of Cox is superlative.

Valaida Snow's life should be made into a movie. A musically gifted child who could play any instrument and was performing at four, by the time she was eighteen Valaida was touring as a trumpeter (influenced a bit by Louis Armstrong), singer and dancer. As early as 1926 she was traveling around the world and during the 30s she was better known in Europe than in the U.S., recording many of her hottest sides with European musicians and becoming internationally famous. But in 1941 Valaida was captured by the Nazis, spending eighteen months in a concentration camp until a jazz-loving police chief got her released. After recovering her health, Snow made a comeback in the U.S. although never quite reaching her former heights. She died in 1956 at age 50. **Hot Snow (RR 1305)** is a fine cross-section of Valaida's records, dating from 1936 up to 1950. The postwar sides are particularly rare and throughout Snow projects enthusiasm in her heated scatting, jazz phrasing and inventive trumpet solos. She certainly deserves to be remembered.

Another unjustly forgotten performer is **Georgia White (RR 1307)**. A singer and pianist comfortable in blues and jazz settings, she was based in Chicago and recorded frequently between 1935-41 before totally disappearing: it's not even known if she is still alive. Sixteen of her best selections are included on the Rosetta album, including matchups with such players as trumpeter Jonah Jones, guitarist Lonnie Johnson and pianist Sammy Price. Her voice is powerful and easy to understand (check out the blues *You Done Lost Your Good Thing Now*) while her piano (best heard on the sweet melody *When You're Away*) is laidback but quite suitable. The music includes good-time songs (*Alley Boogie, Hot Nuts*), serious blues, *Some-day Sweetheart* and a definitive version of *Crazy Blues*. Since she recorded 91 selections in all, hopefully there will be other Georgia White collections in the future.

Unlike Georgia and Valaida, there is little chance Dinah Washington will ever be forgotten. The biggest influence on black female singers of the past thirty years, Washington was a remarkably versatile vocalist who could sing jazz and blues with as much credibility as gospel and commercial music; she always sounded original. **Wise Woman Blues (RR 1313)** consists of two basic sessions: a superb small-group jam in 1945 with such modern musicians as Lucky Thompson, Milt Jackson, Charles Mingus and trumpeter Karl George and some radio transcriptions with the 1943-44 Lionel Hampton Orchestra. Rounding out this album is *Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me*, recorded

when Dinah sat in with Duke Ellington's band in 1963. This album would have been improved if all of the twelve selections cut with Lucky Thompson had been included (instead of just eight) since these are superior to the Hampton broadcasts but overall, along with "A Slick Chick On The Mellow Side" (Emarcy 8141841), **Wise Woman Blues** is the most significant Dinah Washington album available.

A potential competitor of Washington's was Lil Green, a talented blues singer with a country twang who bridged the gap between classic blues and soul (as Rosetta Reitz points out in her liner notes). Lil, who recorded 54 songs between 1940-51 and had two major hits in *Why Don't You Do Right* and *Romance In The Dark*, died in 1954 of cancer at just 35. Since Atlantic Records (for whom she cut her last two songs) was very interested in her, Green quite possibly would have been a major star in the 50s had she lived. On **Lil Green — Chicago 1940-7 (RR 1310)**, Lil is heard at her best when backed by trios during 1940-42 that include guitarist Big Bill Broonzy. A few years later she is backed by a less interesting big band that does not quite suit her style but Green still manages to excel. Lil's voice takes awhile to get used to since it's so individual, but it's a taste worth acquiring. **Chicago 1940-7**, which includes her two hits, is virtually all that is currently available of Lil Green.

Finally there is the **International Sweethearts of Rhythm (RR 1312)**, the greatest all-female jazz orchestra of all time. Organized in 1937 as a school band, within a year this racially mixed orchestra was already touring. By the early 40s the Sweethearts could compete favorably with most orchestras yet during its life (which lasted until 1949), the Sweethearts only recorded a handful of songs for tiny labels. The Rosetta release consists of several brilliant radio broadcasts (from 1945-46) that show off

this sixteen-piece orchestra at its prime. With Tiny Davis' hot trumpet and Vi Burnside's rugged tenor, this swing band (no hints of bop despite the time period) could hold its own with the best, as shown on such numbers as *Galvanizing, Bugle Call Rag* and *Gin Mill Special*. The **International Sweethearts of Rhythm** is an essential album from a top-notch orchestra that belongs in all serious jazz collections.

"My dream," says Rosetta Reitz, "is that there should not be a woman's jazz and blues label such as mine because the women should be so well integrated into the music that it wouldn't be necessary." But in the meantime, Rosetta (whose next project is an Ethel Waters collection from the late 30s) deserves thanks from all lovers of jazz and blues for rescuing such important nearly-forgotten music and making it easily available (from Rosetta Records, 115 West 16th Street, # 267, New York, NY 10011).

Ethel Waters always stood apart from the crowd. One of the first black singers to record (back in 1921), Waters in the 20s sang blues with a Northern accent and more sophistication and elegance than most of the classic blues vocalists. When she sang pop music in the 30s it was with a greater feeling of swing than her contemporaries. Her phrasing was very influential on younger vocalists and she made hits out of such songs as *Dinah, Am I Blue* and *Stormy Weather*. The most recent Rosetta release, **Ethel Waters 1938-9 (RR 1314)**, includes all sixteen of her Bluebird sides with Ethel heard in her early 40s at the height of the swing era. She straddles the worlds of pop and swing while backed by an octet led by trumpeter Eddie Mallory that features short solos (including a few by Tyree Glenn and Benny Carter). Although not as historically significant as her earlier records, this Ethel Waters album is quite enjoyable. — Scott Yanow



The program for the Ottawa Jazz Festival quite naturally boasts that Peter Leitch is a native son. But the reality is that at the age of six months his family moved to Montreal, making the formative years of his life a Montreal experience. Unlike many teenagers in the early sixties, although fascinated with the guitar, his major influence is not to be rock and roll.

His musical education is much the same as most developing musicians in that he took private lessons, learned from records, "even studied some classical guitar", but mostly he is self taught.

PETER LEITCH: I don't really come out of rock 'n' roll although I was aware of it. I started playing the instrument rather late, in my late teens and at that time Montreal had a great jazz scene. Montreal was on the circuit. There were a couple of clubs where you could just hear all the great players, and for some reason a lot of saxophone players: Coltrane, Roland Kirk, Jimmy Heath, Sonny Stitt and all these people were constantly coming through town. It was at that time that I became aware of the music.

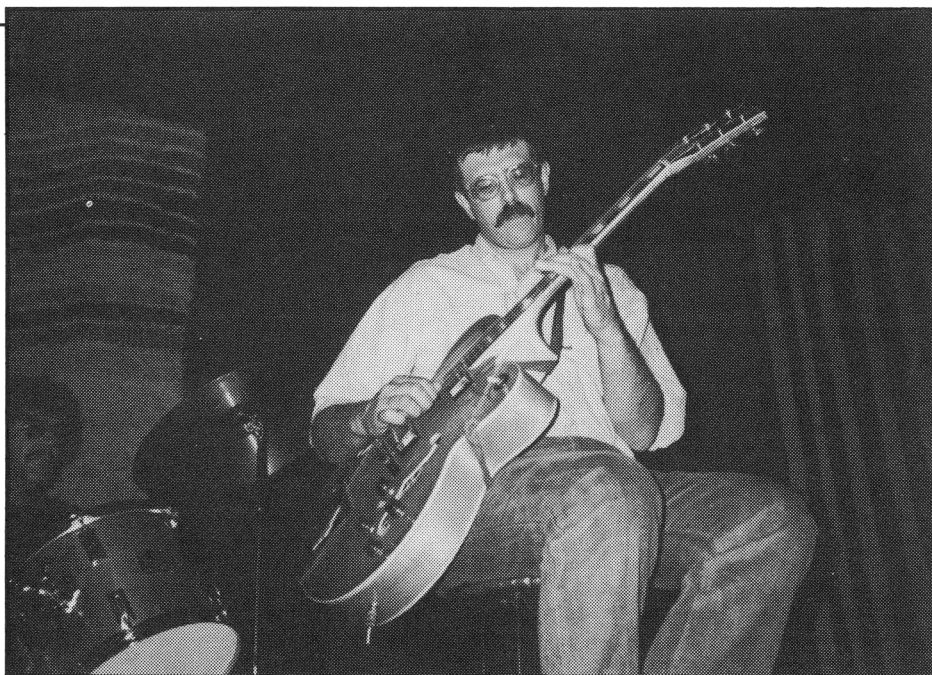
BILL SMITH: *My own personal experience of Montreal from that period, is the amazing guitarist Nelson Symonds, who seemed to be the mainstay of much of the activity that was taking place.*

He was very active. He used to back a lot of the players who came up from New York. Although he wasn't really an influence on me in terms of style, although I love his playing. I used to go to hear him all the time. His cousin, Ivan Symonds is also a really fine guitarist and he was one of my early teachers, I would just go to his house and we would play together.

What is the reason, in that period, that Montreal was on the circuit? Why was there so much music there do you think? Because now of course it's sort of tomb-like, Montreal.

Probably because there was a much larger, more centralized black community in Montreal at that time. There was a large black North American community from Nova Scotia and the United States as opposed to a Caribbean black community which is there now. And there was this large, centralized black community up until about the late sixties. And what happened was an expressway was put through the centre of the black community in Montreal which completely de-centralized that community. The Ville Marie Expressway bisects the lower downtown part of Montreal island. The downtown section of this is set in a deep trench. I believe this was implemented as a military/political strategy, as a way of sealing off the financial district and City Hall in the event of a Quebec revolution, which was a very real fear of the federal government in the 1960s. This could be done by deploying troops on several key overpasses, and forming a "Magenot Line" on the lower part of Rue Berri, thus preventing penetration from the eastern sector.

At one point in the early sixties there were four or five clubs, all around the corner of Mountain and St. Antoine. There was the original Black Bottom, Rockheads, Club 99 where Ivan Symonds used to play, the Harlem Paradise and all these clubs had great bands in them. Rockheads had a great show band upstairs and a trio downstairs. And there were



Peter Leitch

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clubs uptown that would bring in American jazz musicians and you would catch them sitting in later down at the Black Bottom. When they put the expressway through, it completely decentralized that community. As a result of that there is a whole generation of musicians in Montreal who came up after that, who don't really know anything about American music, which is both good and bad.

Obviously you've been very influenced by American music. Presumably you feel that American music is really the basis of jazz music.

Well I think it is. But I only say that because it's the first music that I heard in my life that really moved me.

What is the tradition out of it? Were you influenced by guitar players like Wes Montgomery? Because unlike a lot of new guitar players you actually play bebop which is kind of interesting.

In terms of phrasing yes, although I wouldn't describe all the music that I play as bebop. In terms of music that I write. But it certainly has elements of that and when I play a standard tune you could call it bebop.

Wes Montgomery and Jim Hall and Kenny Burrell were a big influence at one time.

Canada in many ways is similar to Europe, in that most of the music that's occurred in Canada is all influenced by American music. And there isn't a stylistic thing that you can point at and say oh, that's a Canadian jazz musician from 1948 or whatever.

Although with the guitar there is starting to be a distinctive style in terms of jazz guitar. In terms of say Ed Bickert and the influence that he has had on a lot of the younger Canadian players.

And Sonny Greenwich also is an unusual player.

Yes, although Sonny was actually more of an early influence than Nelson. Not in terms of sound, because I think we both have our own distinctive sounds, but in terms of actual linear

content. You see Sonny was one of the first guitarists to deal effectively with the harmonic and modal innovations that Coltrane and McCoy Tyner gave to the language in the early sixties. He actually translated this vocabulary to the guitar.

Sonny was around Montreal in those days and I can remember hearing Sonny and Nelson playing together until eight in the morning at the old Black Bottom, often.

Well, we're getting to the thing that I've always thought Sonny was a very unusual and original guitar player. And we're getting to this thing of why Canadians aren't very well known. He's a good example in fact. He's this underground legend, what they call internationally famous all over downtown Toronto. What do you think are the reasons for this?

Until quite recently, Canadians weren't very well known. Aside from the most obvious ones, Oscar Peterson, Paul Bley, although they are Canadians they are more international.

Because they left. I think it's a problem, a big problem with all of Canada. A lack of population density. You've got this huge, huge country which in terms of square miles is much bigger than the U.S. And spread out across this country you've got maybe the population of New York state. It's impossible to tour really without government assistance, because you're making jumps from city to city which are a thousand miles or more with nowhere you can stop and perform in between. The government does help artists. But if the Canadian government really wanted to help its artists the first thing they should do is de-regulate the air lines, get those fares down. That's something that would really help Canadian artists.

That also means that the players living in Canada don't hear the music that's going on now, because it costs too much money for an American to be brought here.

The Canadian dollar also, of course.

Have you been treated well by the government in your attempts to tour Canada?

Yes, I've done it twice very successfully. But as I say, without government assistance it's impossible. Just because of the distances involved and the high airfares.

You feel comfortable with having your art subsidized by government money?

I think so, because I wouldn't say it was exactly subsidized. I've been around for fifteen or twenty years, done two tours in the last year which have been subsidized and I would say I feel comfortable with it, if it's the only way to do it. Certainly I would rather they give you or I the money than put it into weapons or something.

I actually do have to leave Canada to play. I have to go to other places for some of the reasons you are talking about, a lot of them geography and population, but of course I still live in Canada and go to those places and come back. Now you've made that big move of actually going to the source, or the jazz source anyways, New York. Were you kind of forced to leave Quebec, was nobody taking any notice of you?

Pretty much. Quebec in the early and mid-seventies was a very difficult place to play jazz because there was just no place to play.

There were no musician co-operatives who were trying to put on their own music?

No. In fact I think for jazz music or black American music or whatever you want to call it, the early seventies were a very difficult time all over. The record companies were all looking for the next Beatles.

Or the next Coltrane.

They weren't even interested in the next Coltrane. That was the time when the large corporations completely took over the entertainment industry.

I think a lot of people, especially the American people who read Coda, perhaps couldn't understand about the unusual political and language structure of Quebec. I don't think people are used to having two languages, one English, one French. Now you've had some difficulties with this. Not with speaking the language, but with the fact that it's divided....

I am perfectly bilingual but it would seem now from what I understand that it's barely legal to do business in English in Quebec. If you have a business in Quebec you're not allowed to put out signs in English. It would seem to be a very strange political situation.

I believe there is a very large Spanish-speaking population in Florida. But if the state of Florida passed a law that said all the business had to go down in Spanish, these laws would immediately be tested in a federal court. But that doesn't happen in Canada. The laws, why can't they be tested in federal court? Is that because Quebec hasn't signed the constitution? So that's very strange. It's a situation that's just sort of hanging there.

This would affect you with things like funding and venues to play in.

I think it might. I can't say that it would for sure because I haven't lived in Quebec since 1977, but just in terms of being a citizen of Canada it makes me feel weird that the federal government would not support my rights as an English Canadian, in my efforts to do business in English, in whatever province I choose to live in, which would probably be Quebec, because

it's my home.

Your music is not particularly weird so you shouldn't theoretically be victimized by the media.

Well I don't think I've been victimized by the media.

Why then didn't all the information get out about you? You worked very hard to put yourself forward in the period, for example, when you came to Toronto.

I guess I didn't work hard enough. Or I didn't really have my hustling act, or my press act, together in any way, because I was concerned with the music. Really, I have no answer for that.

Having organized now, by having someone who takes care of answering the phone calls and taking care of the letters and pushing the hobs; is this something you recommend to musicians; that they need someone to do it so they can concentrate on the music?

I think it depends on the individual. I think it would certainly help a lot of musicians if they had someone doing that for them. Sure, I know it's helped me. Because the promotional aspect of it is not something I do very well and it's just hard for me to pick up the phone and go after something.

So this legendary myth that if you're great you'll eventually just be recognized is not true at all.

I don't think it is anymore because there's not too many people out there and there are more musicians than there is work for. So I think you have to go after it somehow.

You don't think in that glorious Blue Note and Riverside period there were too many musicians then as well?

Yes there were too many then but there are a lot more now.

Why do you think there are a lot more now. Is it because of jazz in colleges?

Yes. It's because of jazz education. Which is, I don't think necessarily a good thing for the music. It's good for the musicians in terms that they can come out of one of the music colleges and just have all the technique in the world and read fly-shit but that doesn't make them jazz players. It makes them able to get a job. Not necessarily playing jazz either.

Wasn't it necessary, I mean you're not that old, but wasn't it necessary even in your period, in the last ten years almost, to actually play for people to know who you were.

Certainly and that's how you learn. That's how you evolve and develop just by being out there playing.

In this period there are a lot of changes in guitar music. People like Pat Metheny, Bill Frisell. You see the guitar changing its concept from the usual 2-handed way of playing.

Well, if you're talking about things like synthesizers sure, it's the whole other thing. It's not something that interests me at this time because the way I look at it now is probably a very old-fashioned thing to say but I've worked for twenty years just to develop a sound on my instrument and I just feel now that I'm getting a sound that I'm happy with. Why would I want to take a machine and change it? Plus, the fact that a lot of the sounds I hear coming out of these devices don't sound good to me. They sound like kazoos or accordions or something.

For instance, Bill Frisell. I love what he does and he plays in completely non-linear, non-

traditional ways. Yet what he does is very beautiful and very warm and I enjoy that for instance.

Bill has made a very good duet recording with alto saxophonist Tim Berne, who comes out of the extended Ornette Coleman system of blues playing.

Well, I like that tradition of alto saxophone playing and there are some people back in the fifties who had that concept of pitch on the alto that were generally overlooked and basically they were doing the same thing Ornette was but only with changes. And I'm talking about people like Ernie Henry, Sonny Red, Jackie McLean even. C-sharp. They have that same cry in their playing and that same concept of pitch which is not about the temperate scale and I'm sure you've heard people say, "Well, that Jackie McLean doesn't play in time," but it's not about that it's just that music is not about the temperate scale and they had the same concept of pitch as Ornette had. The only reason that Ornette was considered so shockingly different at the time (the late 50s, early 60s) was because he didn't use changes. But melodically and the concept of pitch was just the same as these other guys were using. Only they were doing it with changes.

It's not really commonly thought of but often guitar players are actually influenced very much by saxophone players' music. You're one of them. Is this because of the vocalized idea of it, you think?

Yes, I think so. I think If I was going to do it over I would play the saxophone.

Let's concentrate a little bit upon suddenly making a decision to go to New York. It took you a long time to make up your mind to do this?

Well, I'd always wanted to live there.

The dream of the jazz musician.

Well, not even that. I mean, the first time I went to New York my parents took me when I was eight and I was overwhelmed at all that filth and all that energy and I didn't know what it was at the time but I remember just being overwhelmed by it. So when I became interested in the music I continued to visit New York to hear the music and just to hang out, buy records. I used to drive down in the 60s and fill up the car with records.

What do you actually have to do when you move into another main city like New York when you're not actually from there? Did you have enough reputation that people knew about you?

No, not really. A few people did. It's just a question of somehow networking. Just start with a few musicians that you do know and get in touch with them, go to people's houses and lofts and play at sessions. There was always a place to play. Someone was always having a session. Then you meet other musicians.

So, it's the regular building process.

Except in New York it's a lot harder because there are so many great players. I mean, you'll walk down the street and you'll hear people playing on the street who'll send you right back into the woodshed.

So you feel quite good about the fact that you've made this impact on New York. Or have you made an impact on New York?

I would say if so, very slightly.

So what has been the advantage of it?

I just enjoy living there. And the advantage

is of course being able to play with great musicians. Now I get a chance to work with players like John Hicks, Ray Drummond, Walter Booker. This is just an opportunity I would never have in Canada. And I feel that it's very valuable to my development as a player to be able to play with these people. In the last few years I've been doing a lot of duet playing. Which is a kind of playing one does a lot of in New York City, if one is a guitarist or pianist or bassist. And it's a style I think that is particularly New York City. This has made me more aware of the instrument and its possibilities. Whereas before I was only concerned with getting the music over in a linear sense. Now I'm playing, maybe a little more guitaristically. Using the instrument in a fuller way.

Is there some advantage from a promotion point of view that you have a New York address, for example.

I think a definite advantage. There was a famous opera singer, Benita Vallente, she was in Philadelphia and she was asked by one of her students, "If I really want to be successful in my field (opera) do I have to live in New York?" and she said no, you can live anywhere you want just as long as people think you live in New York.

One of the frustrations initially in Canada was the lack of possibility to be recorded. Because of course in Canada there are only two or three jazz record companies, who suffer from the same financial problems that everyone else suffers from. In fact, what you did to get going was to invent your own record company.

Yes. I put out two records in Canada before I moved to New York, one of which was leased to a company in California, Pausa. And that was a very unsuccessful venture for me. It was successful in the sense that the record got out there in the stores, and was well distributed but was just unsuccessful in a financial way, just because of the nature of that particular record company.

Would you recommend to young players

that they put out their own records?

If they have to, certainly. But it's a lot of work and you're lucky to break even.

What did you actually learn from putting out your own record?

I learned a lot about record production which is something that interests me in the future. I learned a lot about business.

Did you also learn that it might not be economically sound for any record company to record other people unless they know....

Yes, I did learn that.

Because sometimes there are a lot of demands from musicians on record companies....

Which are based on kind of a false understanding of the business.

Which kind of false understanding?

False expectations. Lack of understanding of the business realities of putting out a record. What it costs to get colour separations for a cover, what it costs to get the record pressed, what it costs for shipping. All these things.

Even the little cardboard boxes they go in cost money.

That's right. I learned about different grades of cardboard for record mailers. You know, as an example, I learned so much.

But by going to New York you didn't just simply attract the attention of Uptown Records.

No, I sent out tapes to various record companies. And some of them even graced me with a reply. As it turned out, Uptown was interested in what I was doing. So I ended up doing dates for them, two dates in fact, one of which has been released, and another one in the can which should come out soon. The first one was a project with Pepper Adams, John Hicks, Ray Drummond and Bill Hurt.

Pepper was already a friend from the Montreal days.

Pepper I had known. Although we hadn't played together that much. One of my very first gigs when I moved to New York was with him.

So that's sort of like a thank-you, making

your first record using such a great musician.

Well it is, sure. But it was also something that I wanted to do. Because Pepper's always been one of my heroes playing that music. And I like the combination of guitar and baritone and I thought we came up with some interesting voicings with those instruments.

Since Peter and I had this conversation he has made his first trip to Europe, performing in England, Holland, Belgium and France. In Holland he recorded a trio album with Neil Swainson (bass) and Mickey Roker (drums), for Criss Cross Records, to be released in the spring.

PETER LEITCH DISCOGRAPHY

As a leader

Red Zone	Uptown
Exhilaration	Uptown 27.24
Sometime in Another Life	Jazz House 7002
Jump Street	Pausa

With Oscar Peterson

The Personal Touch	Pablo Today 2312-135
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With Woody Shaw (guest appearance)

Setting Higher Standards	Muse 5329
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With Buddy Munro

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To contact Peter Leitch:

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Leo Records Out Of The USSR

HANS KUMPF / On A Baltic Trip / Leo LR 122 / Hans Kumpf, clarinet; Lembit Saarsalu, tenor & soprano saxophones; Vyacheslav Ganelin, piano & synthesizer; Rejn Rannap, piano; Ivars Galenieks, bass; Vladimir Tarasov, drums.

In A Medieval Room / Walking In The Church / Modal Mood / To Run Up A Duo / Ivars / Ebony / Without Chekasin

ANATOLY VAPIROV / Invocations / Leo LR 121 / Anatoly Vapirov, reeds; Sergey Kuryokhin, piano & percussion; Valentina Pomomareva, vocal; Ivars Galenieks, bass; Vladimir Volkov, bass; Alexander Alexandrov, bassoon.

Invocation Of Spirit / Invocation Of Fire / Invocation Of Water

HARRY TAVITIAN & CREATIV / Horizons / Leo LR 124 / Harry Tavitian, piano; George Manescu, violin; Catalin Frusinescu, bass; Corneliu Stroe, drums; Alexandru Ianos, alto saxophone.

The Bride's March / The Horizon / Springtime. In the Memory of Armenian Martyrs / Instant Toccata / Song for a Sad Puppeteer

THE GANELIN TRIO / Baltic Triangle / Leo LR 125 / Vyacheslav Ganelin, piano, basset, electric guitar, trumpet, percussion; Vladimir Chekasin, reeds, double alto sax, trombone, violin, whistle, percussion; Vladimir Tarasov, drums, bells, percussion.

Baltic Triangle / Mack The Knife / Summertime / Russian Kaddish

ARKHANGELSK / Arkhangelsk / Leo LR 135 / Vladimir Rezitsky, alto saxophone, percussion, voice; Vladimir Turov, piano, synthesizer, percussion; Oleg Yudanov, drums, percussion; Nikolay Yudanov, percussion; Fyodor Bagretsov, guitar, percussion; Nikolay Klshin, bass, percussion.

"Music by Vladimir Rezitsky & Arkhangelsk except On The Sunny Side Of The Street and Rock Around The Clock."

VALENTINA PONOMAREVA / Fortune- Teller / Leo LR 136 / Valentina Ponomareva, voice with various groups featuring V. Chekasin, reeds; O. Molokoedov, piano; G. Laurinavichus, drums; L. Shinkarenko, bass; Symphony Orchestra; A. Vapirov, reeds; S. Kuryokhin, piano & percussion; I. Galenieks, bass; S. Belichenko, drums; S. Panasenka, bass & tuba.

Ain't Misbehavin' / Michelle / Sheptalki (Fortune-telling) / Invocation Of Spirit / Spontaneous Composition

MAGGIE NICOLS & PETER NU / Nichols 'N' Nu / Leo LR 127 / Maggie Nicols, voice; Peter Nu, piano.

Touching Faces / Dynamite Dream / Kids / Chad's Blues / One note leads to another / Moments

SAKIS PAPADIMITRIOU / First Move / Leo LR 128 / Sakis Papadimitriou, piano.

Side A / Side B

ANATOLY VAPIROV / Macbeth / Leo LR 130 / Anatoly Vapirov, tenor saxophone; Chamber Orchestra of Leningrad Maliy Theatre of Opera and Ballet; Tympani solo by Alexander Mikhaylov; music composed and conducted by A. Vapirov.

Macbeth, sides A & B

HARRY TAVITIAN & CORNELIU STROE / Transilvanian Suite / Leo LR132 / Harry Tavitian, piano, shepherd flute, perc; Corneliu Stroe, percussion, shepherd flute, tuba.

Etude / Transylvanian Suite / Two Romanian Dances from "Codex Caioni" / At the Gate of the Levant

THE VLADIMIR CHEKASIN BIG BAND / New Vitality / Leo LR 142 / Recorded live in Vilnius.

Side A / Side B

KUNIYOSHI-KUHN / MATTOS / PREVOST / Handscapes / Leo LR 143 / Akemi Kuniyoshi-Kuhn, piano; Marcio Mattos, bass; Eddie Prevost, drums

Bird's eye view / Handscapes / In Winter / Rise to the future

Without Leo Records, our perception of the international scope of improvised music would be vastly different. To a large extent the "cold war" between "East" - the countries of the Soviet bloc - and "West" - Western Europe and North America - is a war waged with information. Naturally artists have no part in this war except insofar that, as the making of art depends on a free flow of information, their very activity as artists may be seen as subversive, not to one side or the other, but to the whole adversary mentality.

In improvised music there is an expatriate Russian in England, Leo Feigin, who has established a flow of information from East to West where none previously existed. Except for his Leo Records we would have only hints that improvised music of any kind takes place in the USSR and its neighbouring countries. Leo Records' output also reveals that, at the same time, these improvisors are conversant with virtually every genre of Western improvised music, while we have been ignorant of theirs - evidence that, through certain chan-

nels, information is just as strictly controlled in our society as in theirs. Certainly the Western entertainment industry has as little use for most improvising musicians as it has for Russian jazz. With this in mind, Leo Records has also served to represent some of the music from the vast Western underground.

The Leo catalogue reveals that there is an active improvised music scene, with strong regional qualities, in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. At the same time, it reveals few major stylists among these improvisors. Some of them are fabulously eclectic: they can perform well in a broad range of styles, without ever once giving the impression that they have any statement of their own to make - that singular viewpoint, which might be regarded as a "composer's" viewpoint, that marks the work of a great improviser. I would certainly recommend that you listen to the work of bassist Ivars Galenieks, percussionist Vladimir Tarasov, vocalist Valentina Ponomareva and pianist Harry Tavitian, yet the work of these ensembles, stretching as they do from the

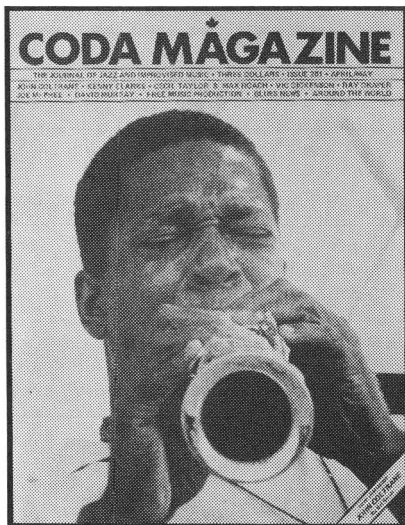
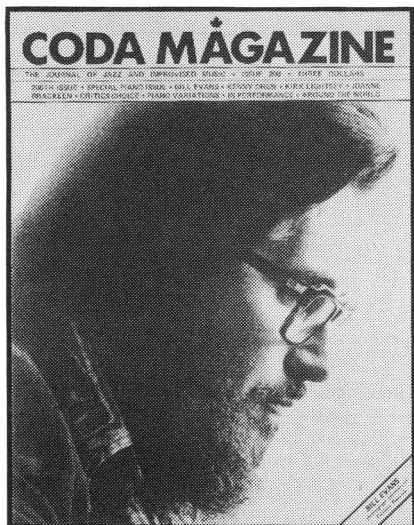
Arctic to the Baltic to the Black Sea, only hint at the evolution of a style as distinct as, for example, English or German improvised music has achieved (that is, separate from the American jazz tradition). Which is achieved by a community of players working together, and developing a musical vocabulary of their own. In a sense this makes these records all the more valuable, in that they document an exciting process at work; that the process is still in an early stage emphasizes the pioneering nature of these musicians and their work.

Improvised music from the USSR, then, cannot be said to be totally unlike any other music you've ever heard. It relies on tried and reliable devices: gentle percussive introductions; passages of playful rhythmic unison; patterns and styles of soloing which are familiar from other contexts with other players. However, the quality of the music here is generally high.

HANS KUMPF has always been an adventurer in terms of taking his clarinet into unusual settings. "On A Baltic Trip" finds the German musician in the Baltic Republics of

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the Soviet Union. As a unique document of improvised music from this region, like some of the other Leo records the music itself is not as remarkable as is the opportunity to hear it. To cite Western jazz players who I feel have influenced saxophonist Lembit Saarsalu, pianist Rejn Rannap and bassist Ivars Galenieks would not do justice to the value of their music, or to Kumpf's wonderful efforts to further improvisation as an international language. Side one of "Baltic Trip" offers a trio and four duets, all musically quite successful, especially considering that some of them depict musicians who are playing together for the first time. The music is rather polite, as initial meetings often are, as the players work to define a common language. The musical revelation of the side is bassist Galenieks, whose relationship to Kumpf in their seven-minute duet is more challenging than conciliatory. His propulsive bowed playing constantly drives the clarinetist to the limits of his abilities.

On side two, all the players from side one are joined by Vyacheslav Ganelin and Vladimir Tarasov of the Ganelin Trio. It begins well - then an excellent duet by Tarasov and Kumpf is disrupted by the loud intrusion of Ganelin's synthesizer which, motivated by no specific language of its own (the liner notes tell us that Ganelin was playing this instrument for the first time at this session), is simply manipulated by the player through different settings - an amateurish exercise which disrupts the efforts of the ensemble as a whole to make music.

HARRY TAVITIAN & CREATIV's record begins with a traditional Romanian wedding song, interpreted bizarrely through several different types of improvising by a trio of violin, piano and bass. *The Horizon* starts with an interesting, moody improvisation for violin, piano and drums - with Manescu proving, as he does on *The Bride's March*, to be quite an unusual violinist. The group's music in general can be described as well-conceived, fairly swinging free jazz, although it is hard to imagine music of this kind being made anywhere but Romania. Besides this strong regional character, the group plays as if it has its own sense of humour, but is not embarrassed when something beautiful happens. It is not a "virtuoso" group. Tavitian plays with considerable sensitivity and emotional range, at times bringing to mind, especially in the quartet with saxophonist Ianos, early Cecil Taylor, but he is a pianist with a sound of his own.

On "Transilvanian Suite" Tavitian duets with percussionist Stroe in what seems to be, for him, a characteristic blend of Romanian folk music and completely free improvisation. Once again he plays to good effect although, since these are live recordings (like most Leo records) there are passages that probably worked better in concert than on record. The liner notes say "An unprejudiced listener will certainly detect in this release a special Romanian feeling, search for novelty and respect for the past, combined with temperament and sense of humour."

Of all these recordings, Harry Tavitian and his colleagues seem closest to attaining a style of their own - a style that is developed not from academic sources, but by the evolution of a common vocabulary among themselves. Players in their situation can often produce a group music of depth and beauty not always

attainable to even the best-educated musicians — a music that the latter can spend whole careers trying unsuccessfully to replicate. This is a lesson seemingly impossible to “learn” — rather it is a truth that one enters, if at all, through a mixture of chance, situation and affinity. The alternative, for many, is the sort of restless eclecticism we hear in **THE GANELIN TRIO**. A music unsatisfying to the ears, which at its best is most interesting because it is itself unsatisfied.

As usual on the Ganelin Trio's “Baltic Triangle”, the group presents different musical styles, apparently in a humorous way as they careen from one style to another and from one instrument to another. In a brief flirtation with the song form, two improvisations offer snatches of Weill and Gershwin; of the whole record I prefer their version of *Summertime* not from any great affection for the tune, but because for a minute or two the trio establish a dark, turbulent mood; they almost *approach* making a musical statement of some kind, which in general their records resolutely avoid.

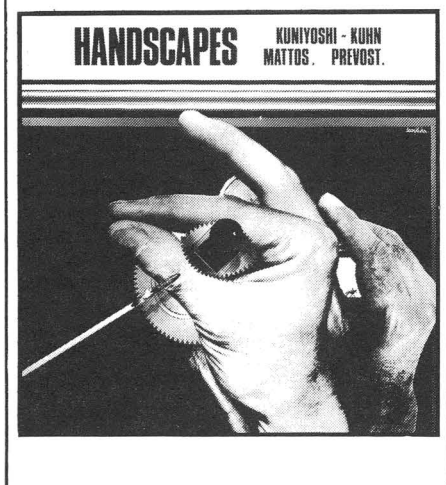
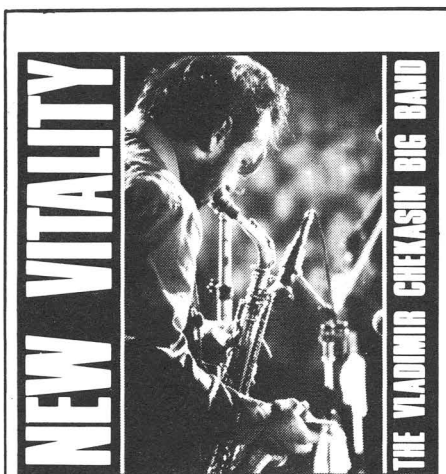
On **ANATOLY VAPIROV's** “Invocations” we find two different groups containing such excellent players as Sergey Kuryokhin and Ivars Galeniks. However, Vapirov's saxophone, very much out of the Coltrane-Shepp-Ayler axis, seems a bit disconnected from the more free stylings of the other musicians.

On “Macbeth”, Vapirov creates music that is truly exceptional. *Macbeth* is a Vapirov composition for chamber orchestra, in which he performs well in the demanding roles of lead instrumentalist, improvising soloist and conductor. His writing for chamber orchestra brings Stravinsky to mind, but his blend of jazz and classical sensibilities is unique. A fusion made seemingly without compromise. The voicing of his saxophone against strings and percussion makes for a music that at its best features long passages of delirious tension. Vapirov on this record makes the best of an opportunity that few Western jazz composers are ever given.

THE VLADIMIR CHEKASIN BIG BAND, “New Vitality”, offers the kind of tour of various jazz styles that is by no means unheard-of in the West. Chekasin's reconstruction of big band swing contains neither the ferocity of parody, the consistency of imitation or the originality of a contemporization of the genre. Like a good college band — and the music is very well-played — the arrangements that carry the music from style to style are exceptionally clever, but the range of expression is academic rather than emotional.

There is nothing academic about **ARKHANGELSK**. From a city roughly as far north as, in North American terms, Fairbanks Alaska, they bring to their music a strong sense of focus. At the same time they seem to be, as so many other Soviet groups, in a constant state of segue from one style to another. The liner notes' comparisons with Sun Ra are apt, as Arkhangelsk play their mixture of styles with a similar balance of deadly seriousness and genuine silliness; infused with a surrealist's willingness to let the listener decide which is which. They even produce a convincing version of *Rock Around The Clock*.

Why is it that Russian improvisors in general are so compulsively eclectic? Granted I'm con-



cluding this from the slender evidence of these records, but this evidence does point in a certain direction. Players in the Baltic Republics and Romania seem able to produce sustained free improvisations, or formulate strong regional styles, where Russian musicians return obsessively to jazz and popular music forms, constantly replaying them without ever reshaping and re-defining their elements into a language of their own. Since I know nothing about the climate of Russian society or music I cannot speculate why this is. For example, on “FortuneTeller” **VALENTINA PONOMAREVA** enters improvising freely with a jazz quartet, and gradually evolves the piece into *Ain't Misbehavin'*. In her case, the juxtaposition does not jar, as she is a superb improvising vocalist, who manages to remain true to Waller's original sense of humour, whether swinging or freely improvising. And what Western vocalist would dare to base a five-minute improvisation, unaccompanied save by herself on echoplex, on Lennon-McCartney's *Michelle*? Other pieces feature her with symphony orchestra, with a piano trio featuring Sergey Kuryokhin, and in an excerpt from *Invocation of Spirit* which appears in its entirety on Anatoly Vapirov's “Invocations”. Ponomareva is definitely a vocalist worth listening to.

Leo Feigin is also doing important work in making available alternative musics from Eng-

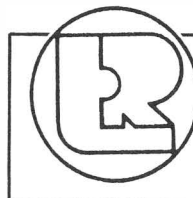
land, Europe and the United States. Three recent releases feature English and Greek music; treating “Handscapes” as an English record, since although **AKEMI KUNIYOSHI-KUHN's** name is evidently of Japanese origin, no further information is given on the record jacket, and the pianist is accompanied by two excellent London musicians, bassist Marcio Mattos and drummer Eddie Prevost. On four pieces the trio produces very effective music; to the pianist's dark, dramatic textures the bass and drums add elements of light and motion to engage in a highly enjoyable interaction.

SAKIS PAPADIMITRIOU is a Greek pianist. “First Move” is taken from live recordings done in Belgium and France, a welcome indication that this startling pianist's work is becoming more widely known. His area of work is mostly inside the piano, both playing the strings and preparing them in different ways for attack from the keyboard. Unlike most other pianists who use this approach, Papadimitriou does not resort to the keyboard to provide resounding climaxes around which the “other” material may be structured. His work with the piano occurs in a context where the keyboard is only one of the directions via which the instrument may be approached. Papadimitriou's playing includes percussive and string passages which are so complete in themselves that they seem to inhabit their own musical world, a world in which the use of the keyboard in piano technique seems not at all necessary.

Vocalist **MAGGIE NICOLS** (from the evidence of “Nicols 'N' Nu” she has dropped the ‘h’ from her surname) and pianist **PETER NU** produce duet music that is intimate and down to earth without becoming too cozy. Their duo dynamic reminds me slightly of Jeanne Lee and Ran Blake's record from many years ago, but the music is vastly different. The warmth of their improvisations and the everyday concerns of Nicols' lyrics does not preclude the musicians from using the full range of their instruments' techniques — Nicols in particular employs vocal effects that are frighteningly virtuosic. She has a very special command of voice harmonics, and possibly has muscles in her throat that other people don't have. Highly individual music.

In Nicols' *Dynamite Dream* she sings: “They like to tell you that it's impossible to change our destiny / We are doomed never to be free they say / They discourage our visions / Push us into the ground / But more and more what we've found / What's we've got / Is a dynamite dream / When things seem impossible then you must know that it's gonna change”. One speculates that this is the attitude Leo Records themselves takes in presenting these alternative musics to the listening public, and we can only wish them more and more good luck in doing so. Of course, the best way to wish a record company luck is to buy their records.

— David Lee



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RAY ANDERSON

TROMBONIST RAY ANDERSON IN CONVERSATION WITH OTTAWA WRITER DAVID LEWIS

DAVID LEWIS — *Tonight you were playing with a new trio with Bob Stewart on tuba and you're getting some unique brass combination with that.*

RAY ANDERSON — Well, I've been playing trio for a long time with trombone, bass and drums. Actually it was a friend of mine, Marty Ehrlich, came and heard one of the gigs at Sweet Basil and said, "Did you ever think of trying that with tuba?" And I actually hadn't thought of it until then, so I'm indebted to Marty Ehrlich for that tuba suggestion. And, I'm very happy with it. Like I said, we've done three or four of my own gigs with Bob now. And we also did a couple tours with Carla Bley together. We went to Europe and Japan.... the summer of 1984 I think. I took Gary's place for those tours. It's the last time Carla took a big band out. She hasn't done anything with a large band since then. Economics once again I guess.

We were talking about Gil Evans earlier. You sub in that band.

I do some things with Gil, but who hasn't played with Gil. Gil's a really wonderful guy. He continues to continue. He plays what he calls "cheerleading piano". Gil's kind of like a culture in which things grow; you have culture and then you put things in it and you let things grow. So he's the culture, he's the environment, he's the nurturing environment. And then things happen. The guy's so far out. I say I really dig this cat. He's a really far out person. I like his unique style of leading without leading.... he's just kind of there and lets it happen. And yet it's his band. It's his material and everything. But he really lets the band do what it wants to do. He doesn't make any attempt to control it like "now you'll play this" and "now there'll be this solo". He really just lets it happen, and since he has some stability with personnel they manage to eventually achieve a really nice balance between discipline and freedom. New things are happening all the time but also it's really set. But I don't play with Gil much. Once in a while, you know.

Have you ever thought of leading your own big band? Have you done that?

I have not done that and I have thought of it. Because a lot of the stuff I write would be very easy to expand to a big band format. Musically that would be easy. The amount of work involved and the amount of time and money involved has been prohibitive so far. But maybe someday. I have that in my mind, because a lot of those pieces you heard tonight, for example the Tizol piece, *Slickaphonic Stomp, Tapajack, Right Down Your Alley*, I can very easily hear in my head how that would be orchestrated for big band. It's not difficult. It's more or less right there you know. You just take the elements that are there and expand them, add a few other things. I would like to try my hand at that at some point. That would be a great challenge. It'd be a far out challenge. So sometime maybe I'll do that.

My next album project is a slightly larger brass band. It's still being mapped out. But at the moment it would be with an additional

trombone. So there'd be two trombones and a cornet and tuba and probably piano and drums. I also have thought of having a clarinet in there in order to really get that New Orleans sound. And it's an idea of a record with a lot of Southern influenced music. A lot of New Orleans kind of music. New Orleans has that unique combination that's sort of where all the funk comes from, the Dixieland combined with Latin is what really produces funk. So there's all of that rhythmic stuff in there. The combination of the Latin and the jazz two-beat and the way the New Orleans drummers play. So I'm really interested in that and that's what the record would be about with this brass band instrumentation.

I've always been a fan of.... how do you say this? Oliver Lake once said it well when he said, "Put all the food on the same plate." In other words it's just like people get hung up in these categories of old/new, in/out, funk/jazz, free/traditional. You've really got to get rid of that if you want to hear my music. I'm really not coming from there. I'm not coming from categories. I'm coming from "Here I am. Here's everything I ever heard in my life. Here's what I'm doing tonight." I just try and be honest and play from the heart. It's about acknowledging the tradition and at the same time stating who I am. I'm a unique person as every person is unique. So I don't play exactly like anybody. But music doesn't really relate to those categories of new/old, blah blah.

AFTER A BRIEF PAUSE

Anyway, this is how I understand it — what happened in New York. There's an old archaic cabaret law, that dates back to the same heritage law that prevented Billie Holiday and various people from working in New York in the fifties. Maybe because they didn't have a cabaret card and that. So that's gone but this was another vestige of that same law which stated that drums and horns were illegal in clubs unless the club had a certain type of cabaret licence. Which was difficult to get and had a lot of stipulations about how many fire exits and how many chairs and how much room and how much ventilation. It had a lot of stuff attached and so there were bunches of clubs that couldn't get that legally, had for years been having drums and horns and bands in there anyway. And this is something that had been ignored for years and then what happened was there were a number of major scandals in the New York City government. The parking violations bureau turned out to be something that a bunch of people were running for their own personal benefit. And several other agencies and a couple of really big people got busted. The Bronx County president and this and that, and so somewhere growing out of these scandals were about three or four pretty hilarious scandals. Suddenly they started enforcing this cabaret law and it closed a number of clubs. Like the West End Cafe, which has had jazz bands, tradi-

tional jazz bands and different people for years and years and years. Suddenly they came in there and said, "Well, you can't have drums and horns in here" and so they did this thing. It went on for several months. They closed that and the Angry Squire and I don't know how many other places that don't have this actual cabaret thing.

And then what I heard just recently is that that got amended. The City Council did pass a resolution and they did abolish that. So now it's down to simply a question of noise level and how many pieces the club is allowed to have. A club of a certain size cannot have more than a certain number. So I think it's ok now actually. But there were several months in there where a bunch of places were closed and there was really a bunch of work lost.

.... You said American society seems to value duplication. But actually it's not the society that values that. I feel that's a mistake. It's what you're dealing with is the economics. Let's face it. In America it's about the Almighty Dollar, that's what runs the scene. So that runs the music scene in the same way that it runs the car industry and it runs the garment industry and it runs the shoe company and it runs the oil company. It's about money, so this duplication thing, the reason that it occurs is that somebody makes money with one type of recording. So then people say, "Well, let's put out another kind of recording like that and make some more money." It's really as simple as that you know, so that is stifling creativity. That is a problem.

I don't differentiate the audience. Pretty much the same audience that would go to the Slicks would be happy at the trio concert. Maybe it's easier to get in front of some people with the Slickaphonics than with the trio. It may be, to date that has not occurred. The Slickaphonics haven't played in America any more than the trio has, in fact, less. But that's all right now changing for me. We're going to make an American record with the Slickaphonics, the next one will be on an American record label. So that'll help enormously. It's called "Blue Heron Records". It's a brand new label. I think that the Slickaphonics will work some more in America, and that will in turn open up some more things for the trio or the quartet thing that I'm doing.

As a matter of fact I think Soul Note is an excellent label. I have enormous respect for Giovanni Bonandrin, the cat who runs it. I think he's done the music itself an incredible service. He is one of the few really honest people in the music business. It's just a great label. It also has its drawbacks. It's *so* small and he puts out so many albums that you don't *really* get that kind of support for each support that the artist actually needs. To really do what you need to do you need a co-ordinated effort between a record company that will spend some money toward promoting its albums and a booking agent that works with the record company. You need to have this kind of stuff co-ordinated to really make it work. That's not



possible with Soul Note. The catalogue is too large and he doesn't do that kind of thing. He just puts the records *out*. So it's absolutely great in that he does put out records that otherwise would never come out. And he's done an enormous service to the music and to the people who listen to music. It's great but in terms of the ultimate thing it of course has its limitations. You need to eventually have a record company that will do tours support so that these things get co-ordinated.

You were saying you enjoy all music. What about the country scene and people like Chet Atkins and George Jones?

Chet Atkins is just incredible. And Bill Monroe and some of those cats, man. Earl Scruggs and some of them cats. That's just so beautiful.

Have you ever thought of doing some country tunes some time?

Never thought of that. It's not really my bag. But I'll tell you this though. Everything is everything. It's that same thing we were talking about earlier. To really categorize that stuff is completely impossible because if you really start looking at it the boundary lines blur, and there is no line between what's country and what's reggae or whatever. If you really start looking at it closely you can't distinguish anymore.

The music that I write, like these compositions we've played tonight, they're written with the purpose that they will be different in different groups and on different nights. It's written as a spring board more or less. Or as

something that you jump off from. With the idea that you might land in a different place. So I always strive for that kind of looseness or possibility in the music. And of course one of the things that's nice about working with a trio, when you get one really formed like the trio with Helias and Hemingway, it we've spent so much time playing together, we have such a large backlog of experience playing together. The stuff can just turn corners on a dime. It's just like: ZOINK! We can be into something else. Because there's only three instruments, so you only have to have three people telepathically hooked up. That's harder with eighteen people. You have to have more structure with more people. But part of the fun in working with the trio is that you can just change direction and play the pieces in radically different ways every night. There's only three people, you can hear what everybody's doing all the time.

What you're talking about made me think of Anthony Braxton and his ideas of inter-galactic music.

Braxton's a genius and I've learned an enormous amount from playing with Braxton. He's a great, great musician. He really is. He's really far out and he's also a great person. I just have absolutely highest respect for him.

I've met Ornette a couple of times, but I've never played with him and don't know him except through his music, from the recordings and stuff, which of course has been a big influence. Ornette has influenced everybody playing whether they know it or not! That's

how strong his stuff was.

When you're speaking in terms of influences people who write for *Downbeat* will either list the names of thirty trombone players or they'll say he plays himself. And I prefer that. It's not certain trombone players. I'm influenced by everything and of course every trombone player I ever heard. The point I am trying to make is that I am much more influenced by Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Louis Armstrong, Sonny Rollins, than I am by other trombone players.

All I can say is music is an expression of love. I'm trying to play the feeling of love, that has various forms, and it encompasses the range of emotions of fear, anger, pain, love, whatever. But ultimately music is love, that's what it is. It's vibration. It's ecstasy. It's the stuff.

For me at that time, with where I was at, I couldn't get it together to learn stuff from school. Because I don't think that there is absolutely anything ultimately true. In a lot of ways now I wish I had more schooling. It's one of the things that bugs me on a regular basis. I do not have piano chops, I can't play piano. So I have a lot of musical ideas... so I can't sit down at the piano and I don't have enough technique to voice these things and see what's happening. I don't have the kind of harmonic knowledge or theory or understanding of what harmonic realities exist that I wish I had. In some ways I wish I had been more into school. But in another sense I've got something else that wasn't available in school and I couldn't do without that either.

Interview transcribed by Anna Hostetter.

3 For A Quarter • 1 For A Dime

Harlem Roots is an intriguing record series dedicated to reviving on disc the music tracks made originally for “soundies”, the forties equivalent of music videos. Jazz film archivist David Chertok has selected the recordings with an eye toward diversity. Quite a variety of musical styles are presented on these albums. This is in keeping with the spirit of the soundies themselves, which were utilized by groups as far ranging in content as the Mills Brothers, Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington. All of the material on the first four records released in the series is, at least, of historical interest. Many cuts are quite entertaining and allow us valuable insights into what was occurring in the music during the volatile period, 1941-1947. The albums are attractively designed, the sound transfers are clean, and the liner notes by Dan Morgenstern, Phil Schapp and Peter Grandysa are well researched and quite informative. One can only hope that this Storyville series will excite renewed interest in the soundies themselves, allowing a new audience to view the musicians while they hear these works.

The soundie was a 1940s phenomenon consisting of a three-minute visual accompaniment to juke box music. It gave the mass listenership an opportunity to see and hear its favourite performers — both for only a dime! Soundies were very popular in urban centres, especially on the East Coast, where the special devices, the “Mills Panorama Machine”, were placed in bars and local hangouts. The company that created soundies, the RCM Corporation, was established in 1941 with the goal of extending the function of the juke box. The founder/partners included James Roosevelt (the President’s son), Sam Coslow (the songwriter) and Ralph Milles, who owned the manufacturing facility that produced the machines. The three-minute length of soundies was approximately the same as that of a 78 rpm record, so most of the performers, who were also recording artists, did not have to adapt their material significantly.

The soundies are interesting because they are not concert footage *per se*, but were films shot inside studios where comedy and skits were performed and where there would be comics, dancers and chorines. The films are worth seeing on their own account, but they are significant primarily for their historical value. Although they are hardly great works, soundies do document a culture that would otherwise have been almost totally lost.

It is a great irony that while Hollywood was producing vast numbers of musicals during the 1930s and 1940s and was desperately seeking out musical talent wherever it could find it, it chose to ignore a vast pool of black musicians, including, with perhaps one exception, the major stars of the day. Jazz was often incorporated into feature films and animated shorts — to this day, some people can’t hear groups like Fletcher Henderson’s without thinking of it as “cartoon music” — and black performers were sometimes shown in the context of “specialty” acts. However, where a white vocalist or band leader would be given a major part, even a leading role if he was at all attractive, black stars were consigned to the roles allowed to all blacks in white society, that of servants. Louis Armstrong was the possible exception, appearing in a number of musicals with Bing Crosby. Still, even he was confined to portraying stereotypical characters.

Judging from the collection that David Chertok has presented, soundies concentrated on the presentation of black performers. This in itself is unique in the history of audio-visual media in the United States. As is well known,

blacks were either ignored by Hollywood moves, or were presented in demeaning, servile roles. A number of major musical stars made short subjects, appearing as themselves on film, but by and large, black culture and society was not captured on film. The root of the problem lay in economics. Parts of the United States — particularly the South — would have refused to show films that portrayed blacks in co-equal roles. Black features such as Vidor’s “Hallelujah!” and Murphy’s “The Emperor Jones” received short shrift from wary distributors and film-house managers. Blacks were regularly excised from film in parts of the U.S., even when they were allowed only brief, secondary roles. The market for integrated films was therefore too small to make producing them worthwhile for the studios.

It can be argued, then, that the founders of the RCM Corporation were operating from an idealistic foundation in that they gave a tremendous number of black performers a chance to be seen by their public, the chance that was denied them by the Hollywood production system. Regrettably, the financing for soundies was minimal and the resulting product turned out to be marginalized in its popular appeal.

Due to their slim budgets, soundies are dependent on the charm of such great performers as Fats Waller and Louis Armstrong. A certain vagrant charm has accrued to these shorts, as they represent rare glimpses of an exciting era in popular culture. Not a single director of a soundie has been heard from since — for good reason. The camera hardly ever moves; the sets are extraordinarily tacky; and it is rare to get a sense that the director is doing anything of any real interest. The visuals were often not synchronized with the sound, another symptom of low budgets. Under the circumstances, it was almost impossible for a performer who was not a natural actor to do anything exceptional in front of the camera. Most soundies eschew any narrative at all, confining themselves to a small amount of interplay between the leader and the musicians, a comedic turn, or occasionally a bit of interplay between the leader and a good-looking female singer.

So the prime value of soundies lies in their documentation of a large group of performers who otherwise would not have been seen — even at the time, much less by later generations. One of the disappointments of **Harlem Roots**, however, is that the soundies themselves seem to have been poorly documented (or the com-

pany’s records have simply been lost). If the backup musicians do not appear on-screen, in many cases their names have been lost to us. It would be very interesting if Chertok, on his archival forays, was able to track down the records or was able to find people who could identify more of the musicians for a new audience.

The soundies allow us to view how black entertainers presented themselves to a mass audience during the 1940s. Most whites, even in the liberal East, still viewed blacks with suspicion and disapprobation. As late as 1940, only such radical organizations as the U.S. Communist and Socialist Parties were willing to campaign on a plank extolling the virtues of racial equality. It is no surprise, therefore, that even the most popular black figures of the period — Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, Stepin Fetchit — strove to create “acceptable” images of themselves. While there was a movement towards portraying blacks in a more heroic light — the Paul Robeson persona is an example — part of the appeal of even the greatest musicians, like Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway and Fats Waller, lay in their self-parody or caricature. With their tremendous thespian abilities and intelligence, it may very well be that, like the athletes and actors, each of them made conscious decisions to make themselves likeable to a white audience.

Some of the great bandleaders chose another approach. Duke Ellington, for example, was charming enough but remained dignified and withdrawn. Where Waller tried to give the impression that he was a “natural” musician, Ellington tried to create the opposite impression, that his music was studied and should be taken seriously. In 1941, the year these soundies were recorded, Ellington was involved in a musical called “Jump For Joy”. Phil Schapp quotes Duke in the liner notes of the **Big Bands** album, to the effect that the show was an “attempt to correct the race situation in the U.S.A. through a form of theatrical propaganda”. Ellington and the band used the superb black writer Langston Hughes as one of the lyricists on the project. Earlier, Duke had been willing to participate in the Cotton Club, the famous Harlem club that catered the top black performers to an exclusive white audience. One’s impression of Ellington is confirmed by looking at the soundies and finding a rather impassive figure, one less willing than some others to act within the format of a comedic skit. Count Basie “played” to the audience to some

extent, but again maintained the pose of the polished leader.

Despite covert racial stereotyping and Poverty Row budgets, some soundies have narrative and visual appeal. Two of the most exciting are *Zoot Suit* and *Jig In The Jungle*, which star Paul White and Dorothy Dandridge, in contrasting roles. *Zoot Suit* is a zesty number with an attractive conceit. Dandridge and White dress themselves up in their "Sunday best" to go out on a hot date. White is resplendent in a "zoot suit with a reet pleet", the picture of mid-40s perfection while Miss Dandridge is elegance personified in a "brown gown with a lace waist, a scat hat with a trim brim".

The use of fashion in this footage prefigures today's fashion videos and is an entrancing look at the "zoot" sub-culture. *Jig*, in contrast, places White and Dandridge in Africa where, through the beat of tom-toms, they get to go native with a vengeance. The use of a Tarzan-like decor only adds to the horror of this campy, racist item.

They Raided The Joint as performed by a dazed Vanita Smythe, presents yet another peek into a then unusual subject, drugs. Smythe's lyrics are quite explicit and one can only assume that they were permissible because they were sung by a supposedly "wacked out" black woman. Fats Waller's *The Joint Is Jumpin'* also provides the audience with a social gathering. Here it is a Harlem rent party. Fats gives an outstanding performance to a roomful of happy, jiving dancers. This soundie employs editing and a plot; a neighbour is seen hanging out her window, calling for the police to break up the noisy merry-makers. At the end, the police arrive to the accompaniment of sirens to drag everyone away.

While it is tempting to characterize soundies as being either pseudo-documents of black life and performance then or as presenting pure fantasy, one can more accurately state that they created their own form. Despite the abysmal conditions under which they were produced, they did provide a unique opportunity for the "otherness" that was black culture at that time to be expressed in a compact visual format.

Soundies were made at a critical juncture in popular music and culture. The depression was ending, while World War II was raging overseas. In terms of the direct effect on music, the sudden growth of manufacturing, especially in the North, created a migration of blacks from rural areas to the cities and a continuation of the movement of blacks northward from the South. This was the time of the "Rosie the Riveter" phenomenon, which found black and white women working together in the factories to further the war effort. This led, obviously, to a greater circulation of money, with relatively few goods on which to spend it during the war years. There was an outpouring of funds for music and all forms of entertainment. There was a tremendous flowering of bands, during this period, with literally hundreds of professional musicians working full time.

Another factor created by the northern migration was cross-fertilization of musical influences. The Big Band format, then at its apex, was willing to incorporate almost any other style within it. The soundies, and these albums, are full of examples of crossover styles:



Sister Rosetta Tharpe, struggling a bit to bring her gospel style to a jazz audience; the rather academic sounding Delta Rhythm Boys trying to swing; Sam "The Man" Taylor and "Bull Moose" Jackson playing with Lucky Millinder prior to becoming rhythm and blues stars in the fifties; Jimmy Rushing, a great blues singer, performing with Count Basie. Jive style, novelty songs, popular vocals, cocktail jazz, hip vocalizing, even barber-shop quartets, were subsumed within a general appreciation for big band jazz, and all were very popular.

This period is often described in terms of being the genesis for such popular genres as urban blues, rhythm and blues and rock'n'roll. There are cuts on these albums, especially those by Lucky Millinder, Mabel Lee and June Richmond, that point in that direction. Looked at in another way, this era can be described as the most exciting in popular musical history precisely because those other genres had still not established themselves. One can regard this period as being an epoch in which all manner of styles melded briefly into one huge melting pot. Forced to blend into the disciplined swing format, a particularly rich sound was created.

Approximately 1000 soundies were produced in the period 1941-1947. David Chertok does not indicate how many of these have been archived, but one senses that the four records released to date represent a small sampling of the vast range of material that *Harlem Roots* has to offer. The albums are organized under the following headings: **The Big Bands, The Headliners, Rhythm In Harmony and Jivin' Time.**

The Big Bands (Storyville 6000) features the music of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Lucky Millinder and Cab Calloway. No one will have difficulty accepting Ellington and Basie as two of the great big band leaders; however, the choices of Calloway and Millinder can only be described as being highly debatable. Basie and Ellington were major jazz musicians and their bands from the 1940s are legendary aggregations. Millinder was a minor player on the scene, in comparison, and Calloway is now

more notable for his star turns than for his abilities as a band leader. This disparity in ability makes for an uneven, if eventful disc.

Count Basie is represented here by two fine cuts that are representative of the period, *Air Mail Special*, basically a boogie woogie, and *Take Me Back Baby* featuring a wonderful vocal by Jimmy Rushing. The impressive band featured on these soundies is from 1941 and includes Buddy Tate, Don Byas, Dicky Wells, Buck Clayton and Sweets Edison.

Cottontail and *Flamingo* are two famous Ellington instrumentals from the forties; *Bli-Blip* and *I Got It Bad* are both from his musical, "Jump For Joy". *Bli-Blip* is interesting because it has a vocal by Paul White and Marie Bryant. (Marie Bryant, for those who love jazz on film, is the singer of *On The Sunny Side Of The Street* in "Jammin' The Blues", the great Gjon Mili short. Her style, all hesitancy and legato, is also featured in Nick Ray's noir classic, "They Live By Night". Bryant is unique in that her filmic appearances are really her only important contributions to jazz history). *I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good* features Ivy Anderson in one of jazz's immortal moments. Many historians claim that the 1941-2 Ellington band heard on these cuts represents the orchestra at its pinnacle: among its members were Ray Nance, Johnny Hodges, Barney Bigard, Jimmy Blanton and Ben Webster.

With regard to Lucky Millinder, we have an odd character, someone who led bands for almost twenty years but who himself was not a musician. Although Millinder does sing, or rather walk through, *Hello Bill*, he seems to have the kind of vocal power that is best confined to the shower. Lucky proved his musical acumen through his employment of such interesting musicians as Bill Doggett, Sam "The Man" Taylor and "Bull Moose" Jackson, all of whom were later prominent on the rhythm and blues scene. Sister Rosetta Tharpe, a great transitional figure who appears later in the *Harlem Roots* recordings under her own name, was an important crossover performer from gospel. In terms of the music of the Millinder band, *Shout Sister Shout* is an intriguing instance of how gospel could be turned into jazz by changing the call and response format into a "cute girl with the band" vocal number.

Cab Calloway appears wearing his wonderful "zoot suit", leading a talented band that included Jonah Jones, Tyree Glenn, Hilton Jefferson, Milt Hinton and Cozy Cole. Unfortunately, as back-up to the main man, these fine musicians weren't able to smoke as they might have been able to elsewhere. Whatever one says about the low quality of the soundies, their true value is clear in the case of *Minnie The Moocher*, with Cab Calloway singing it. Watching him perform, one is awed by his physical presence. Calloway is totally arresting, a unique performer on the stage. It is easy to see why later generations consider him the Mick Jagger of his time. In terms of the construction of the albums, though, one has to wonder why he wasn't placed with other star actors such as Louis Armstrong and Fats Waller.

The Headliners (Storyville 6001) features the sounds and stylings of Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller and Louis Jordan. The inclusion of Jordan seems odd here and one could rightly interject that Calloway should be placed on this record in his stead. Although all of these gentle-

men were definitely "headliners", acclaimed for their charisma, musicianship and humour. Calloway seems the more respected — and venerated — presence. In any case, the sound transfers to disc on this album are excellent and this record is easily the best of the four released so far.

Louis Armstrong was the *non pareil* jazz performer, as a musician, vocalist, comedian and personality. It is difficult to describe his position in cultural, sociological and musical history without resorting to superlatives, so let's just say, he was the greatest. On this album, he gets to have fun with *You Rascal You* and turns in nice performances on *Swingin' On Nothin'*, *Sleepy Time Down South* and *Shine*. In Armstrong's case, the soundies are interesting as curiosities rather than as essential documents, since he did appear in so many feature films. Any footage of Louis is worthy of our attention, though, and there are moments of pure "Satchmo" in these soundies.

There is an argument to be made that Fats Waller was the true master of the Soundie medium. His lyrics were full of hidden meanings that his facial expressions could make clear in the course of a three-minute skit. In our revisionist history of the world, instead of Bob Hope/Bing Crosby musicals, there would be films starring the great team of Fats Waller/Louis Armstrong. They would have been funnier, they would have been more musical, and who wouldn't have loved to see them romance the girls! What was denied to us in Hollywood movies is available here in these four films and recordings. *The Joint Is Jumpin'* is probably the most polished soundie of them all. The music is great of course, but there is actually a bit of a plot and some directorial intervention. *Honeysuckle Rose* and *Ain't Misbehavin'* feature the studio's chorus line of attractive "high yellows", or mulatto girls in charmingly minimal dress and embarrassingly minimal choreography. The very pretty Myra Johnson takes a chorus on *The Joint Is Jumpin'* and gets to sit on the piano while Fats makes eyes and innuendos at her in *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Honeysuckle Rose*. The strangest of the four in this group is undoubtedly *Your Feet's Too Big*. Shot on the same stage, with the same girls, and probably at the same time, the object of Fats' waning affection is a man shuffling about in clown-sized shoes. This is strange stuff, indeed. Still, the point is unmistakable that Fats was a true sensualist, the Henry VIII of jazz, a man who loved living to the fullest extent. At the same time, it is through the soundies that one can feel privy to an understanding of the man's sense of irony and his tremendous intelligence. He knows he's playing a role and he's baiting the audience to see if they catch on. Fats Waller is the Rigoletto of jazz, the tragedian in clown costume.

Louis Jordan is a very enjoyable performer and Dan Morgenstern makes a persuasive argument in the liner notes for his significance. He says, "Louis Jordan, I think, invented what the industry called 'r&b'". His special combination of jazz and blues elements in a swinging vocal and instrumental meld aimed at urban black audiences — hip, in the know, never missing a beat or throwing away a line — set the stage. Among those who paid tribute to Jordan are B.B. King and Ray Charles — neither of whom would have been possible without him". Songs

that he made famous are still regulars on the bar circuit: *Caldonia*, *Let The Good Times Roll* and *Choo Choo Ch'Boogie*. He's a good vocalist, both soulful and humorous, unsurpassed (except by Slim Gaillard) at the novelty song, but there is a curiously lightweight quality to his music. Where he matches up to his colleagues on this album is in the humour, but whereas with Armstrong you have the sense of a great man who wants to share his joy with you, and with Waller, an understanding of how irony and anger can inform comedy, with Jordan, you have the sense of a man at his own level, just having a little bit of fun. On *The Headliners*, he is represented by *Five Guys Named Moe*, *Jumping At The Jubilee* and *Caldonia*.

The weakest of the four records issued thus far for jazz fans is *Rhythm In Harmony (Storyville 6002)*, featuring complete sides of the Mills Brothers and the Delta Rhythm Boys. The two groups evolved from the roots of black music via the barbershop quartet. The antiseptic, acceptable style of both groups allowed them to appear frequently in films as well as in soundies. The Mills Brothers were original enough in their sound and retained sufficient emotional appeal and spontaneity to produce hits and spawn numerous imitators, including the Delta Rhythm Boys. The Boys were highly trained musicians (probably the most highly educated performers in the history of popular culture!) who as a result sounded formal and rather academic. Their greatest popularity came in South America and in Europe, where they eventually relocated.

Unlike *The Headliners*, all of whom were entertainers in the broadest sense, the Mills Brothers and the Delta Rhythm Boys confined their efforts largely to singing. As a result, their soundies tend to be more static than those of, say, Fats Waller. Each group is represented by what might be called its greatest hits, including *You Always Hurt The One You Love*, *Caravan* and *Paper Doll* for the Mills Brothers; *Dry Bones* and *Take The A Train* for the Delta Rhythm Boys.

The last of the collection, *Jivin' Time (Storyville 6003)*, is also the most diverse. It includes recordings by a number of performers who represent the musical ferment of the time. Comparing some of these later soundies to those of only five years earlier, one can clearly see, in the fashions, in the deportment and generally in the ways these people chose to present themselves, a radical change. With the exception of Dorothy Dandridge and Nat King Cole, the musicians on *Jivin' Time* were not destined to be stars and do not present themselves as being anything but mediocre entertainers from the period (especially Bob Howard, Decca's response to Fats Waller). The Nat King Cole tune that opens the album, *Got A Penny Benny*, is hip, fast, light and stylish. This is an easy, popular vocal, with a skittish sense of rhythm and an optimistic awareness of the possibilities available in modern urban living. It gives one the impression that things were looking up for blacks at that time. *Drink Hearty* by Red Allen is similar to much of the vocalizing then done by performers like Slim Gaillard. Allen also performs here on trumpet, and has J.C. Higginbotham in the band on trombone. Skeets Tolbert, who sings *No No Baby* is credited with being an influence on Louis Jordan. *Rhythm Of The Rhythm Band* by the

Musical Madcaps is most notable for its vocal by Joe Carroll and for its boppish style.

Of the four albums released so far in the *Harlem Roots* series, only one side of one of them is dedicated to women. Dorothy Dandridge's *Zoot Suit* and *Jig In The Jungle*, as previously noted, are among the liveliest numbers recorded on soundies. She is accompanied on both numbers by Paul White, Marie Bryant's "Jump For Joy" partner. Dandridge, like Lena Horne, had the sort of ability that can make one a star. Both were beautiful, could sing and easily adapted to the physical and emotional constraints involved in performing for the screen. Of course, neither achieved her potential because of colour barriers. Dandridge scored two great successes in Preminger's "Carmen Jones" and "Porgy And Bess". In the end, though, bitter and disappointed, her life ended tragically.

Rosetta Tharpe appears again here, holding back on her gospel powers, turning *Lonesome Road* into a mainstream jazz number. The unknown Mabel Lee sings with a regrettably unidentified group of musicians on *Chicken Shack Shuffle* and *The Cat Can't Dance*. The anonymity is truly regrettable, not only for purposes of documentation, but because the pianist and guitarist are clearly predicting trends in r&b. As for Mabel, we can only assume that the studio was low on funds and hired someone's girlfriend to meander through the lyrics on a couple of tunes. *They Raided The Joint* is sung here by Vanita Smythe. In this case, it's the lyrics that rivet the attention. It is truly difficult to believe that this song, with its clearly enunciated lyrics about a police raid and the use of drugs was ever released, much less played on juke boxes and shown as a soundie. Perhaps the world was indeed more naive then than now.

Where can one see soundies now? Chertok and other collectors occasionally show them at special shows or festivals. In Toronto, Joe Showler and Bill Smith have presented such films to packed houses in the last few years. Perhaps an enterprising video distributor will put together some packages in the future. In the meantime, these recordings — and more, we hope — will serve to remind us of a by-gone era in jazz history.

— Marc Glassman and Judy Wolfe Glassman

HARLEM ROOTS Record Credits

The Big Bands	Storyville 6000
Duke Ellington and his Orchestra / Count Basie and his Orchestra / Cab Calloway and his Orchestra / Rosetta Tharpe with Lucky Millinder and his Orchestra	
The Headliners	Storyville 6001
Fats Waller and his Rhythm / Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra / Louis Jordan and his Tympany Five	
Rhythm In Harmony	Storyville 6002
The Mills Brothers / The Delta Rhythm Boys	
Jivin' Time	Storyville 6003
Nat King Cole Trio / Henry "Red" Allen and his Orchestra / Bob Howard / Skeets Tolbert and his Band / The Musical Madcaps / Dallas Bartley and his Band / Dorothy Dandridge / Rosetta Tharpe with Lucky Millinder and his Orchestra / Mabel Lee / June Richmond / Vanita Smythe	

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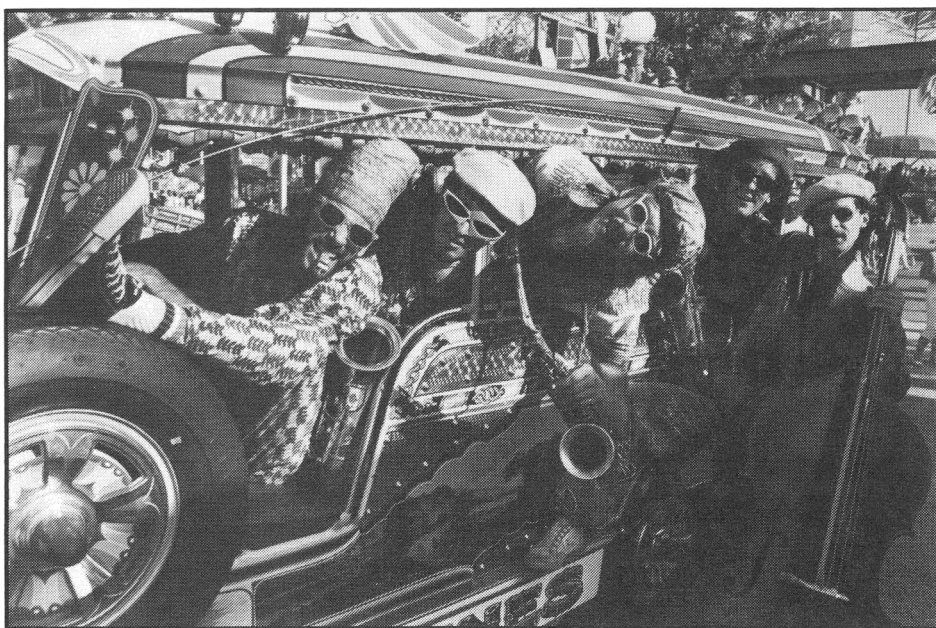
Certainly, Reg Schwager's recent **Resonance** album (**Justin Time 13**) deserves a much wider audience. The young, Dutch-born guitarist is admirably paired with proven performers Michel Lambert (drums) and Dave Piltch (bass); he presents an interesting array of originals (*Eso Es, Forgotten, Crow's Cry*) blended with a diverse selection of traditional material (*Jitterbug Waltz, Poinciana, Ghost Of A Chance*). The entire session is a worthy addition to any collection; Schwager's deft and delicate swing is refreshingly appealing.

Two further albums, Orhan Demir's **The Way I See You** (Crescent 9172) and Oliver Jones' **Requestfully Yours** (**Justin Time 11**) are also now on Canadian record shelves. Demir's amazing facility on guitar is evident from the opening cut (*As Time Goes On*), set against a relentless drum (Barry Elmes) and bass (Neil Swainson) backdrop. In almost total contrast to Schwager's deliberately understated approach, there is a passionate intensity about Demir's playing, even on such beautifully scored compositions as *In Favour* and *Improvisation*. Poet, acrobat, sprinter — all his pursuits are strangely woven into the very texture of his musical tableau and artistry.

Pianist Oliver Jones' latest album, recorded before an audience at Pepe's Club in Halifax, with bassist Skip Beckwith and drummer Anil Sharma, is ample proof that he plays with the same forceful drive in trio settings as he did on his 1984 solo debut (**Justin Time 3**). Unfairly judged by some as an Oscar Peterson clone, he shows, in works like *He Was Beautiful* and *Dumpcake Blues*, that his style can be personally evocative and innovative, as well.

What the Shuffle Demons (**Stubby 001**) may lack in polished performance, they make up for in raw energy. They play with that same sense of irreverence and unpredictability so characteristic of the AEC; their instrumentation is often as varied and unusual (windchimes/castanets/goat nails/roach stomps/et al). The core of the unit is built around three saxes, bass and percussion. Highlights are the rap number *Spadina Bus*, a rollicking *Gabi's Gimi Suit* featuring tenor, bass and drums, and the granular *Big Daddy, Fat Boy*, dedicated to the baritone saxophone. This is a group both to watch for and see.

The Mallet Busters (**CBC JZ 103**), an intriguingly percussive group made up of vibraphones (Arnold Faber), marimbas (Allan Molnar), bass (Mike Farquharson), guitars (Greg Stone) and drums (Rick Gratton), present seven original composi-



tions in resonantly lilting performances. Special guest, bassist Don Thompson, adds his considerable voice to the group's efforts, especially on *Time Piece*. The overall result is a pleasant, low-key, closely-integrated musical session that borders on rather than encompasses the realm of jazz.

Manteca (**Duke 31027**), according to jacket notes, arrived on the music scene with its first commercial release in 1980. Here, some five years later, it has emerged, as the notes suggest, as a representative of the new wave. It has, indeed, sprung full-blown from rock-oriented roots; the nine original numbers are testimony to that (*Fungus Amongus* is not by Mary Lou Williams, I assure you). If you are tuned in to the overlay of percussive pulsations and guitar, this is an album for you; if you have a more definitive view of what constitutes jazz, move on.

Alex Dean's **Dreamsville** album (**Justin Time 12**), like so many Canadian albums, abounds with original compositions. This time it works well. Dean is an exciting performer on reeds, and his cohorts, bassist Kieran Overs, drummer Curtis Smith and pianist Mark Eisenman, afford swinging support. The emotional descent from *McCoy Type Tune* to *Dreamsville* is an early indication of the thoughtful planning that went into the recording date. The presence of Lorne Lofsky (guitar) on some cuts, swelling quartet to quintet, is an added bonus. Nice listening!

Lest you think that the roots of jazz have withered and disappeared from the scene, the Montreal Jubilation Gospel Choir, directed by Trevor Payne (**Justin**

Time 10), in live performance at St. James United Church, Montreal, will quickly dispel any such illusions. This is infectious, foot-thumping stuff that gets right to the heart of what jazz is all about. The choir, soloists Salome Bey, Kathleen Dyson-Oliver and Rachel Pierre, and organist Oliver Jones make this a must for anyone truly interested in the music. I cannot recommend this album too highly!

And, the roots of Canadian music are interestingly documented as one of a comprehensive series of recordings **Jazz And Hot Dance In....** (**Harlequin 2023**). Excerpts, culled from old 78s and acetates, date from as early as 1916 (Harry Thomas' *Delirious Rag*) up to 1949 (Lorna Dean's *Pallet On The Floor*). It is a fascinating amalgam of long-forgotten Canadian bands (New Princes' Toronto Band, Sandy DeSantis Orchestra from Vancouver, George Sealey's Orchestra, Mynie Sutton, et al) and individual performers (Oscar Peterson's 1944 appearance on the Bovril show before his first 1945 RCA commercial releases). It captures a music played by both black and white musicians, and displays the diversity of styles prevalent over the years on the Canadian music scene, though the recording quality, at times, is less than ideal.

Such a variegated cross-section of music exploration is, perhaps, nothing more than a further reflection of that great Canadian past-time of seeking to assert that special identity that we believe we possess; unfortunately, most of these efforts will probably not be heard beyond the borders of our own land. Pity!

— John Sutherland

WORLD SAXOPHONE QUARTET
St. James United Church, November 21

CARLA BLEY SEXTET
Le Spectrum, November 22

EVAN PARKER TRIO
Cafe Campus, December 10

Montreal — In comparison to previous years, our local scene has received a healthy dose of special events this fall. After the two night Benson & Hedges Superbands concert reported in the last issue, a mini "jazz-fest" put a little zip in our usual quiet fall season. Sponsored by our own International Jazz festival, the program featured two jazz bands on consecutive nights, followed by Robert Cray's Blues Band two nights later.

To get the ball rolling, the **World Saxophone Quartet** came in to town welcomed by our first winter storm. As expected, the WSQ is now promoting their latest record, the all-Ellington album. That this group is now joining the ranks of the "revival movement" (which others may less flatteringly qualify as "musical revisionism") might be surprising, for their work has always forged ahead in an innovative direction.

In any event, as jazz has always swayed between periods of renewal and periods of consolidation, one gets the impression that the latter trend is now getting the upper hand. With the resurrection of the music of Tadd Dameron, Kenny Dameron and now Rahsaan Roland Kirk, jazz may just be groping for a new paradigm, somewhat reminiscent of the early forties when the swing era was turning its wheels before the emergence of bop.

Since each of these four players has established his credentials through a very personal repertoire, I was looking forward to hear how they would do on a traditional, if not a standard one. The first half of their concert reflected more closely past performances of the quartet, as most of the themes served as a starting point for collectively improvised statements. The second half opted more for single voice solos with ostinato accompaniment figures, which enhanced the clarity of the music, although making the content a little more conservative. Along the way, each player was given his solo spot, ranging from Oliver Lake's *In A Sentimental Mood* to Hamiet Bluiett's *Sophisticated Lady* to David Murray's *Come Sunday* and Julius Hemphill's fine arrangement of *Lush Life*, proving his capabilities as an arranger and soloist.

On the whole, the results were most satisfactory, even inspired at times. Though the Ellington charts dominated, some of their more indigenous material was added as a measure of variety. For instance, David Murray's *Morning Song*, played as an encore, turned out to be a condensed no-holds barred outburst, ending the evening with a bang. Considering their program as a whole, it is interesting to note that the most standard tunes of Ellington were used, even though there are reams of lesser known and even obscure material worthy of rediscovery.

In contrast to the strong playing of the four saxophonists, **Carla Bley's** sextet sounded rather pale. In the first place, by removing all



horns from her new band, she has now focused her writing towards percussive and rhythmic concerns. But, by the same token, all of that wry humour a la Kurt Weill has been expunged, which has been one of her longstanding trademarks. Apart from the two keyboards, Bley on organ and Larry Willis on piano, the band was rounded out by Victor Lewis (drums), the ever faithful Steve Swallow (electric bass), the always excellent Don Alias (percussion) and an electric guitarist whose name I fail to remember.

Essentially, the lack of a front line, which used to be one of her best suits, is her most serious liability: caught between a chordal backdrop and a rhythmic swell, there was little in the way of engaging solo work, save for a few boisterous guitar solos, heavier on sound than on musical substance. Bordering on the atmospheric at times, some tunes might have been suitable for a film score, though none of them made an impression on me. Maybe Ms. Bley is now in a transitional stage; if not, it would be a letdown to see her music stay within this mould for much longer.

From the apparent limpness of this band, we move on to the outright calisthenic performance of the **Evan Parker, Barry Guy and Paul Lytton** trio from England. To present these three players is somehow superfluous now for each of them has charted his own path borne out of the European New Thing of the late sixties. Call it "Free", "high energy playing" or whatever, this music has established its own perimeters, ascribing itself to a level that either bewilders or befuddles.

By its own stylistic exigencies, this approach either absorbs or alienates, depending on the listener's abilities. One cannot help thinking about the limits between sound and music when confronted with such unbridled displays of intensity that saturate the ear and stretch it to its outer bounds. Some may ask where the music is, while others may reply that where there is sound, there is music to be made. Basically then, listening to these three musicians is like trying to grasp pieces of an elusive puzzle, in which more questions are asked than answers are given.

Through his soprano saxophone, Parker layers a multiphonic display of sounds, filling the air with nary a respite by means of circular breathing, and creates a mosaic of shifting patterns. His tenor playing slashes and

cuts jagged edges, like a Pollock action painting, scribbling at a feverish pace through his gliding fingers. Twenty, thirty minutes last these whirlwind tours that drive you to complete involvement or rapid distraction, whatever your inclination may be. Barry Guy's physical involvement with his bass seems trance-like, but it exhausts too. Paul Lytton's unusual set of traps eeks in and out, never overbearing, but just adding layers of sounds in the jousting match.

As a form, their music is solely determined by its content, the realization of the moment that dictates neither latitude nor longitude, but just a string of discrete happenings that revolve around themselves. By expanding itself further afield, the music attempts to fill all voids of space and time, placating sound by sound in an unending search for countervailing densities.

Opting for strength, the music imposes itself by hurling its vociferous musings in a constant swirl of uninterrupted activity. This trio represents a brand of sound production that never ceases to amaze its devotees, while making its detractors shrug in vain and seek more familiar terrains. To paraphrase the old saying, "all is in the ear of the behearer": judging by the sparse crowd who braved a frosty December night, most of the attuned "behearers" were in attendance.

— Marc Chenard

MILES DAVIS
Wembley Conference Centre, London, England
November 17, 1986

It's a bit hard to believe that anyone would really want to become a rock 'n' roll star at 65, but Miles Davis seems to have just that as his ambition.

Does anyone out there remember the good not-so-old days when jazz was jazz and rock was rock? Back then, if you wanted to hear the latter, you went to see The Rolling Stones and if you wanted to hear the former, you went to see, say, Miles Davis.

Well, those days are gone forever now, as Miles' concerts at Wembley Conference Centre proved. What is perhaps more telling is that even in London, Miles did not sell out the 7,000 odd seat centre for any of his three appearances.

Most of the material was from Miles' two

most recent albums, "You're Under Arrest" and "Tutu", with the emphasis being on the latter. Much of the time was taken up by Garth Webber's rock 'n' rolling electric guitar, and an equal amount of time by Bob Berg on a Huey Lewis and the News style saxophone binge. This is not to say that Miles did not play his trumpet — he did, when he felt like it. The rest of the time he relied on his eight-piece band — including two synthesizers, a drummer, and a percussionist — to carry the concert.

Perhaps Miles feels that after forty years on the jazz circuit, he is entitled to his little whims, and perhaps he is, but not at the 8.50 pound-a-head expense of his faithful audiences. Most of the time, he stood with his back characteristically (and perhaps symbolically) turned on the audience.

On some of the songs, though, the old Miles that we know and love shone through. Ironically enough, one of these was Cyndi Lauper's *Time After Time*. On this well-known pop song, Miles stretched out and *played*, wrapping it around his fingers and twisting it about as if playing cat's cradle with it. Another softly beautiful composition was *Portia*, where Miles again took the opportunity to display his virtuosity and considerable musical tenderness.

His stage presence is powerful, as he stalks from end to end, occasionally stopping to huddle over his red trumpet, blowing intensely, whether one note or a hundred, his gold lame suit glinting under the harsh stage lights, his wrap around shades hiding his eyes from them. His voice crawls up the gravel path from larynx to lips as he introduces his band members, and then falls silent as he once more turns his back on the audience and watches the drummer.

But stage presence does not a concert make, and while on some of the pieces Miles more than lived up to his reputation, these moments were too few and far between to justify a full two-hour plus concert. I have nothing but deepest respect for Miles' contributions to jazz, and his talent and intelligence are still evident in his music. The concert was not unforgivably horrible, but on the other hand, it would have been much improved by more Miles and less rockish notes.

— Michelle Beauchamp

SAXOPHONE COLOSSUS (1986)

Producer/Director/Editor: Robert Mugge; Executive Producer: David Mazor, Michael Phillips; Assistant Producer: Lucille Rollins; Jazz Consultant: Francis Davis; Director of Photography: Lawrence McConkey; Audio Director: William Barth. 101 minutes. 16 mm. Stereo soundtrack available from: Mug-Shot Productions, 1271 Nicole Lane, Secane, Pennsylvania 19018 USA.

The year of 1986 proved to be doubly fortuitous for those of us who share a passion for both "the music" and film with the late release of "Saxophone Colossus", the latest "musical portrait" by 36-year-old Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, filmmaker Robert Mugge. Focusing upon both the person and the music of Sonny Rollins, "Saxophone Colossus" has a relaxed and casually constructed format reminiscent of Mugge's earlier portraits of Sun Ra, Gil Scott-

Heron, Al Green, and Ruben Blades. Moreover, it provides a valuable contrast to 1986's prior gift, "Round Midnight", in that it focuses upon a musical giant whose spirituality and devotion to music carried him to a musical life beyond the tragic circumstances of the bebop era from which he sprung.

Mugge's musical portraits tend to be refreshing combinations of concert film and interview, and "Saxophone Colossus" is no exception, featuring as it does extensive performance segments of Rollins in a quintet format (with Clifton Anderson, trombone; Mark Soskin, piano; Bob Cranshaw, bass; and Marvin "Smit-ty" Smith, drums) as well as fronting the 100-member Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra in the Tokyo world premiere of his "Concerto for Tenor Saxophone and Orchestra". The latter performance calls to mind Rollins' youthful passion for painting, presenting him majestically attired in knee-length red frock making broadly expressive strokes across the orchestra's rhythmic and textural "canvas".

A park bench interview with Sonny and wife Lucille offers some insight into the serenity of the man as well as providing clear evidence of their joint control over Sonny's artistic and commercial future. Colorful anecdotes of the sort frequently sought by filmmakers are not in evidence here, however, given the soft-spoken reticence of this particular colossus.

Clearly, evident, however, is Rollins' humility and devotion to life, manifest in references to his "meditation" prior to performance as well as his account of himself as "a self-taught musician always trying to improve my craft". Describing simply his roots in Harlem, his memories of 52nd Street, and "the wonderful energy that is in New York and nowhere else", Rollins soon becomes introspective, describing his relationship to his instrument as "a very personal thing... it can drive you crazy."

Mugge employs a similar park bench arrangement to tap music writers Ira Gitler, Gary Giddins and Francis Davis in an attempt to lend both historical perspective and anecdotal commentary to the film. The attempt is only partially effective, however, as the three "critics" outdo each other with effusive praise of Sonny's artistry, capped by Davis' tribute: "the greatest living jazz improviser."

Perhaps Giddins is most to the point in describing Rollins as "a communicator who always tells a story" with his ability to improvise lengthy solos of "Aristotelian perfection... with a beginning, a middle, and an end... never a self-indulgent howl or emotional outpouring." The film, and Rollins, could have been served better, however, by interviews of long-time musical associates like the always articulate Max Roach, or Bob Cranshaw.

Sonny brings the commentary back to earth by describing his approach to the legendary solo forays: "I try to blot out my mind and let it flow by itself... after studying the material." And indeed we soon see him studying material in rehearsal for the Tokyo premiere, with his chosen orchestrator and arranger, Heikki Sarmanto.

The Concerto itself is difficult to judge structurally, presented in only partial form (Movements 1, 3, 4, 5, 7), but Sonny's

posture on stage embodies "the personal authority of the man" alluded to by Giddins: he is clearly an artist in complete control of his chosen medium. In this instance we receive a very precise performance from the orchestra, colored by sweeping melodic strokes rich in feeling but conservative in timbre and tone from the soloist.

Even so, the spirit is there, and the look of satisfaction on Sonny's face as he acknowledges the final applause is worth the price of admission. Moreover, one has the feeling that the Concerto, combining orchestration and thematic improvisation, will grow with each performance.

Mugge uses this initial occasion to emphasize the universality of jazz as a musical language with sometimes annoying cut-aways to the streets, people, and exotic neon signs of Tokyo. He also partitions the movements with interview segments of Sonny very much at ease in Japan, and speaking of spirituality:

"I always try to inject my work with a spiritual quality... I've studied Zen in Japan... Yoga in China... and I was born a Christian in America." Remarking upon the similarities in religions, he concludes: "Spirituality is never very far away from what I'm doing at any time."

Much to his credit, Mugge, who is extremely unobtrusive as an interviewer, never forces the film to address Rollins' media-celebrated sabbaticals, although they are alluded to. He adopts instead a park bench conversational style which could have the hard core fan wishing (s)he was there to ask Sonny a question or two himself.

It seemed to me strange near the end of "Saxophone Colossus" to hear Sonny Rollins describe himself as a "diplomat and ambassador for the United States" who takes his job "quite seriously". But brief reflection upon his words brought into clear focus their awful sincerity: "I thought once that I'd be able to turn the world around... but I don't have those illusions anymore. (I just want to) bring enjoyment to myself and those people who appreciate the music and what I'm doing."

All of Robert Mugge's films (with the exception of "Amateur Night at City Hall" about Philadelphia mayor Frank Rizzo) are shot from the point of view of someone with the appreciation Sonny seeks. Therein lies their great value. Moreover, audio and photography directors William Barth and Lawrence McConkey do highly competent jobs. "Saxophone Colossus", although marred somewhat by Mugge's newfound propensity for eccentric visual cut-aways from the music, is a valuable and rare document of a jazzman in his prime. It ends, appropriately enough, with Lucille's words: "I think he's spectacular!"

Measured against the best jazz films of the '80s, Ron Mann's "Imagine The Sound", Shirley Clarke's "Ornette: Made in America", and Mugge's own "Sun Ra: A Joyful Noise", "Saxophone Colossus" doesn't quite measure up. It lacks the force of the first, the sheer frivolity of the second, and the fearless creativity of the last, but stands, nonetheless, as a major addition to that small but growing library of films about the makers of the music.

— Roy Durfee

Roy Durfee is an arts and environment writer currently residing in Albuquerque, New Mexico

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HAL HILL (Toronto) — (1) 29th Street Saxophone Quartet - Watch Your Step - New Note 1002 (2) Bud Shank - That old feeling - Contemporary 14019 (3) Pat Metheny/Ornette Coleman - Song X - Geffen 24096 (4) Vic Dickenson - Just Friends - Sackville 2015 (5) Duke Ellington - Happy Reunion - Dr. Jazz 40030 (6) Woody Herman - 50th Anniversary Tour - Concord 302 (7) Stan Getz - Voyage - Blackhawk 51101 (8) Don Pullen/George Adams - Breakthrough - Blue Note 85122 (9) World Saxophone Quartet - Plays Duke Ellington - Nonesuch 79137 (10) Abdullah Ibrahim - Water from an ancient well - Blackhawk 50207

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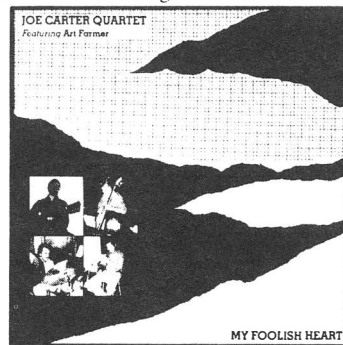
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Gatemouth Brown's new Alligator release, **Pressure Cooker (A 4745)** is not really new, nor is it a "pressure cooker" in the true Alligator production sense. Gate is featured on guitar and vocals in nine cuts drawn from several Black and Blue releases originally recorded in 1973.

Gate is in a rather low key, relaxed mode joined by some Southwest friends like Jay McShann, Milt Buckner, Arnett Cobb, Hal Singer and Paul Gunther organized into tight little trios and quartets. The largest ensemble is an eight piece including trumpet, two trombones, alto, tenor, organ and drums.

The best material comes from the prevailing small groupings. There is no heavy-handed production. The music seems to come from an informal Saturday afternoon jam with liberal solo space for all. Gate's guitar is particularly mellow. Arnett Cobb and Milt Buckner get some nice tenor and organ space on *Ain't That Just Like A Woman*.

For me two pieces really stand out. *Deep Deep Water* is a lazy blues vocal with some beautiful work by Gatemouth and Jay McShann. The second is a guitar/organ/drums instrumental with some equally satisfying interaction between Gate and Milt Buckner.

Chicago Jump (Red Beans RB007) can be easily pegged as the best ensemble lp **Sunnyland Slim** has released to date. Cut in the spring of 1985, it focuses on the collective effort of a real working band.

Slim's brand of downhome, barrelhouse piano is in superb form and quite at ease with this particular assemblage of the Sunnyland Slim Blues Band. Members include guitarist Steve Freund, saxophonist Sam Burckhardt, bassist Bob Stroger and drummer Robert Covington. Both Freund and Burckhardt are not only good team players but also strong soloists. Freund is not adverse to showing some jazz preferences, while Burckhardt's tenor work reinforces a real small ensemble jump feel. Remember there is no harp, and this is definitely not predictable post-war Chicago ensemble blues.

Aside from an obligatory reading of the ever popular *You Used To Love Me*, Slim gets down in the alley and shouts out two great blues, *I Gave You All My Money* and *Got To Stop This Mess*. Robert Covington demonstrates some vocal skills on his two jump vocals *Feel So Bad* and Jr. Parker's *Crying For My Baby*. Steve Freund also turns a nice vocal on the autobiographical *Never Picked No Cotton*, which neatly places him in time and space.

"Chicago Jump" is a particularly refreshing and enjoyable release. Slim's band features some strong musicians with some good individual ideas that blend into a solid collective jump blues sound. Highly recommended.

Also from Red Beans comes **John Davis' You Better Cut That Out (RB008)**. This solo piano collection recorded on April 22, 1985 fits the late John Davis' perception of himself as a more general 1930/40s stylist and not simply a straight blues/boogies pianist.

The non-blues side is evident in John's selection of *Mood Indigo*, *Canadian Sunset*, *Honey* and his own *Violet Serenades The Blues*. On the bluesy/barrelhouse side there are healthy performances of Sonny Boy's *You Better Cut That Out* and *Sail On*, plus John's own *Bartender's Bounce*, *Texas Tony* with its strong CowCow Davenport flavour, and *Jersey Cow*

BLUES

A COLUMN BY DOUG LANGILLE

Blues.

The real gems on this collection are the slow, reflective *No Mail Today* and *Born To Lose*. On the latter John stretches out with a nice, relaxed solo, and sings with a sad tone of resignation. Beautiful stuff. Overall there is a rare warm and soothing ambience to this collection that showcases the late John Davis as the eclectic performer that he was.

Another recent solo piano release comes from **Cousin Joe**. Recorded in July, 1985, **Relaxin' In New Orleans (Great Southern Records GS1101)** is very true to its title. For some, Cousin Joe is a bland and uninspiring performer. While he is not the most versatile or technically astute pianist, his functional playing is rather suited to his flat, sort of deadpan vocal style and his sometimes witty lyrics. For me, small doses of Cousin Joe are fine.

Generally the eleven vocal cuts are all kept short (the longest is three and a half minutes) and, not surprisingly, permit little room for straight instrumental workouts. The bulk of the program is comprised of original blues with *Revenge Is So Sweet*, *Hard Times*, *Hard Work* and *What A Tragedy* providing good examples of Joe's song writing capabilities. This last song is a tongue-in-cheek reflection on the Titanic's sinking. There is no denying it, he can write some good blues. For slight variety producer John Berthelot takes up piano on *That's What Love Is All About*.

While not the most inspiring piano release, "Relaxin' In New Orleans" does provide some nice witty moments, and should appeal to Cousin Joe's numerous fans. Great Southern Records can be contacted at: P.O. Box 13977, New Orleans, Louisiana 70185, USA.

Now for some real vinyl exotica we turn to a release from a Milwaukee boogie/blues bar band by the name of **Leroy Airmaster. Taste And Compare on Mainstream (M003)** was released in late 1985 showcasing Leroy Airmaster as a technically competent, high energy blues bar band. Core members Steve Cohen (harp), and Bill Stone (guitar) formed the group's nucleus back in 1968, and their repertoire (as illustrated here) is wide enough to encompass Moon Mulligan's *Seven Nights To Rock*, Magic Sam's *You Belong To Me* plus a host of originals. Cohen's Little Walter inspired harp is a focal point for the band's sound which cooks along with Stone's guitar (slide on *I'm A Poor Poor Country Boy*) and Junior Brantley's driving keyboards. Nothing distinctive here — just some nice hard-rocking bar blues and R&B.

From a well fertilized reissue trail comes **The Blues World of Little Walter (Delmark DL-648)**. This anthology presents the eight classic, uninhibited **Little Walter / Baby Face Leroy Foster** Trio sides from the original 1950 Parkway session. Although these sides (original-

ly out on Parkway, Regal, Herald and Savoy) have seen the light of day on various anthologies dating back to the 1960s, they are grouped here as a complete package utilizing the original masters obtained by Delmark.

The Trio consists of Little Walter on vocals, harmonica or guitar, Leroy Foster on vocals and drums, with some hard, downhome guitar by Muddy Waters. Included are Baby Face Leroy's *Rollin' And Tumblin' (Part 1 and 2)* and *Boll Weevil*, plus Little Walter's *Bad Acting Woman* with a totally uninhibited Delta based solo by Muddy, *Moonshine Baby* and *Muskadine Blues*. These sides are certainly amongst the most exciting early post-war Chicago blues to be heard, and set the standard for Muddy's 1950s Chess sides.

To complete the package, two unissued Sunnyland Slim Regals (1951) and three J.B. Lenoir J.O.B.'s (1951 and 1954) are included. Slim's two blues, *I Done You Wrong*, and *Low Down Sunnyland Train* feature some nice Lockwood guitar around some bluesy Oliver Alcorn tenor work. Lenoir's sides feature backing by Sunnyland Slim and drummer Alfred Wallace. Included are a typical Lenoir jump in the form of *Play A Little While* featuring some hot electric guitar work by Lenoir (shades of the driving, rhythmic work of the 1960s West Side school where economics limited the ensemble to a single guitarist). On the blues side comes a soothing interpretation of the classic *Louise*, plus a moody *People Are Meddlin' In Our Affairs* that comes from Lenoir's debut release.

"The Blues World of Little Walter" is a must for downhome Chicago blues fans. It is also the welcome reactivation of Delmark. As this review is being written, Delmark (under Pearl!) has put out a Walter Horton based reissue which should be covered in the next issue.

From **Rosetta** are a broad based anthology **Sweet Petunias (RR1311)** and a most welcome **Lil Green** collection, **Lil Green's Chicago 1940 - 1947 (RR1310)**.

"Sweet Petunias" provides the listener with a great deal of stylistic variety as it focuses primarily on independent expression by women vocalists. The material spans 1929 through 1956 with a range encompassing a torchy ballad by Helen Humes, *Living My Life My Way* (1950), some rocking R&B jump by Big Mama Thornton — *Stop Hoppin' On Me* (1954), a growing classic blues by Bertha Chippie Hill — *Charleston Blues* (1946), some Butterbeans and Suzie style hokum from Monette Moore — *You Don't Live Here No More* (1945), a vocal duet by Mozeloe France and Mae Hopkins — *Part Time Papa* (recorded in 1939 as the Bandanna Girls), and an obligatory semi-sweet Billie Holiday/Lil Green style ditty by Etta Jones — *The Richest Man In The Graveyard* (1947). Backing ranges from a piano/guitar/bass trio on the France/Hopkins duet to the big bands of Andy Kirk on June Richmond's *Baby Don't Tell Me No Lie* and Buddy Johnson on Ella's *Well Do It*. Instrumental work is secondary to the featured vocalists with some nice guitar by Burt Kendricks on Big Mama's tune, and some worthwhile contributions by Sidney Bechet and Clarence Brereton on O'Neil Spenser's 1938 selection *Sweet Patootie*. Certainly there is enough strong and varied material here to make this anthology a good addition to a reissue collection. This is true even if you are not inter-

ested in the 1933 Mae West conversation piece.

The Rosetta Lil Green package is something else. For my money Lil Green was one of the most expressive black women vocalists of all time. Her recordings spanned the 1940s through to the early 1950s, and stylistically she straddled blues/jazz/R&B. Her self-assured, top end nasal vocals influenced Dinah Washington, Etta Jones, Esther Phillips, right through to Wanda Jackson.

Served up are sixteen Blue Bird/Victor cuts from 1940 through 1947. Included are her hits *Romance In The Dark* and *Why Don't You Do Right*, plus gems like *Now What Do You Think* and *My Mellow Man*. Lots of good lyrics by Green herself, plus Broonzy and Joe McCoy.

The majority of cuts feature Bill Broonzy on guitar, Simeon Henry on piano and Ransom Knowling. Broonzy and Henry are superb. Broonzy's high end lead work is so comfortably in line with Green's phrasing — check *Hello Babe*, *Romance* or *Do Right*. Simeon Henry is a beautifully melodic player. He is able to inject a real melodic mood noir with a subtle, haunting undercurrent — check out *If You Want To Share Your Love*. Again Green seems to thrive on this stuff. Four of the later cuts feature fuller backing by a larger ensemble led by trumpeter Howard Callender. A nice production contrast to the small ensemble sides.

With only five of the cuts duplicated on the long out of print RCA Vintage Series reissue, this one is a definite hot prospect. Again, Green was a major talent and an influential figure who was ably abetting the transition from early pre-war urban blues to the rocking R&B of the late 1940s/early 1950s.

As part of an extensive **Jazz Tribune** series, RCA France has issued two double lp sets of pre-war Memphis and Chicago blues. In thirty-two cuts **Memphis Blues 1928-1930 (RCA-NL 89276)** provides a good sampling of the rich Beale Street centred Memphis blues scene ranging from soloists like Jim Jackson through to Cannon's Jug Stompers. While in a healthy thirty-four cuts **Chicago Blues 1935-1942 (RCA-NL 89588)** showcases the ensemble production of Lester Melrose featuring the likes of Big Bill, Sonny Boy and Tampa Red.

The first two sides of the Memphis collection focus on guitarists Frank Stokes, Furry Lewis, Jim Jackson and Robert Wilkins with each getting four cuts. There is some beautiful work here including Stokes' *Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do*, with second guitar backing from Dan Sane; Jackson's *This Morning She Was Gone*; Lewis' *I Will Turn Your Money Green*; and Wilkin's two part *Rolling Stone*. Given the selection the stylistic imprint of these guitarists on the 1960s Northeast folk revival is ever so evident.

The Memphis Jug Band sides feature ensemble variants with Will Shade on vocals, guitar or harp; Will Weldon on guitar and vocals; and Charlie Burse on vocals and guitar. Other sidemen include Jab Jones on piano and Milton Robie on violin. Mandolin, jug and kazoo show up to reinforce the jug band sound. Vocalist Minnie Wallace and Hattie Hart are also featured on four of the cuts. Titles include *Sun Brimmer Blues*, *A Black Woman Is Like A Black Snake*, and *The Old Folks Started It*. Hart's *Won't You Be Kind To Me* is an especially good stringband blues with good backing by Shade's guitar and Robie's violin.

Side four is shared by Cannon's Jug Stompers and Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe McCoy. The common denominators with Cannon's sides are Cannon on banjo, kazoo and vocals and the influential Noah Lewis on harp. Included is the classic *Bring It With You When You Come*. The Minnie/McCoy sides were cut in 1930 prior to Minnie's arrival in Chicago, and came out as McCoy and Johnson. Joe Johnson, a brother-in-law of Minnie, is featured on some vocal duets with Minnie, while McCoy's guitar work with Minnie characteristic of the benchmark standard that they laid down. Titles include *Georgia Skin Game* and *I'm Going Back Home*.

Care was taken in choosing material for this collection to both minimize duplication and to fill gaps for the collector. To the recent convert to pre-war blues this two lp set provides a good sampler of the rich Memphis blues scene. There is some superb material here blessed by good to mighty good sound quality.

"Chicago Blues" opens with the rural sounding harp and vocals of Jazz Gillum. Backing is kept relatively straightforward on two cuts with Broonzy on guitar and bass. *Gillum's Windy Blues* has an almost Texas Swing feel to it with George Barnes' electric guitar. Tenor sax and piano come in on the 1939 cut *Against My Will* to reinforce Melrose's urbane design. From a pre-war blues perspective the most interesting of Gillum's five is the 1938 cut *Mule Blues* with a good rural story line.

John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson is next up with four familiar themes including *School Girl*, *Bluebird*, *Jackson Blues* and a variant of *Bottle Up And Go* with guitarist Robert Lee McCoy (Nighthawk) providing vocal backup on the last cut. All four come from a 1937 session with guitar backing from Big Joe Williams and McCoy.

Big Bill Broonzy has four cuts from two 1935 sessions with backing from Black Bob on piano and bassist Bill Settles joining in on two. These cuts feature solid pre-war guitar/piano workouts and range from a good lowdown blues in *Bad Luck Blues* to the uptempo jump *Good Liquor Gonna Carry Me Down*.

Tampa Red gets the most extensive coverage with nine selections from 1936 to 1942 encompassing jive-hokum through to basic blues. Instrumentation ranges from basic Maceo and Knowling through to larger ensembles including Melrose's swing trappings such as clarinet, trumpet and tenor sax in the Harlem Hamfats or Tampa Red's Chicago Five ilk. Of course, Tampa Red throws in kazoo to reinforce a hokum flavour. Five cuts showcase Tampa Red and Maceo's superb work together. On the blues side there are killers like *Georgia Georgia Blues* and *You'd Better Be Ready To Go*; and on the uptempo side there are jumps like *No Baby No* and the previously unreleased *Gypsy Lady Blues*.

Next along are four Washboard Sam ditties from 1938 to 1942. All swing along with help from Broonzy, Black Bob or Roosevelt Sykes, plus trumpet or alto sax. For my taste, a single example of Washboard Sam's formula renderings would have sufficed.

A Harlem Hamfats string band sound comes from the four cuts issued on Bluebird as Big Joe and His Rhythm. Joe and Charlie McCoy on guitar and mandolin form the core of the unit for these 1941 and 1942 sides. Washboard and bass help fill out the sound, and Robert Lee McCoy blows some nice country harp on *Let's Try It Again*. Harmon Roy takes vocals away from Joe McCoy on *Come Over And See Me* and *Sleeping By Myself* — both drawn from familiar pre-war melodies. This is really superb pre-war ensemble material right down to the "Vicksburg" based uptempo workout *It Ain't No Lie*.

Finally, there are the four sides drawn from Johnny Temple's solo Bluebird session (1941). Temple's relaxed and urbane vocals and guitar work are sympathetically supported by Horace Malcolm's piano. Really smooth sailing from the slower tempo *Big Leg Woman* and *Sundown Blues* to the swinging *Jink's Lee Blues*.

In conclusion, "Chicago Blues" is a pretty good pre-war collection that could have been slightly more interesting if less successful Bluebird artists had been included to make for more variety within the confines of the Bluebird Beat.

— Doug Langille



RECORD REVIEWS

TINY PARHAM AND HIS MUSICIANS - VOLUME ONE 1928-1929 / SWAGGIE 831

The Head Hunter's Dream / Stuttering Blues / Clarice / Snake Eyes / Cuckoo Blues / Jogo Rhythm / Voodoo / Skag-a-Lag / Stompin' On Down / Blue Melody Blues / Tiny's Stomp / Subway Sobs / That Kind of Love / Blue Island Blues

TINY PARHAM AND HIS MUSICIANS - VOLUME TWO 1929-1930 / SWAGGIE 832

Jungle Crawl / Lucky "3-6-9" / Echo Blues / Washboard Wiggles / Pig's Feet And Slaw / Bombay / Fat Man Blues / Golden Lily / Steel String Blues / Sud Buster's Dream / Dixieland Doin's / Cathedral Blues / Black Cat Moan / Doin' The 'Jug-Jug

CLARENCE WILLIAMS JUG BAND 1929-1930 / SWAGGIE 827

Shim Sham Shimmy Dance / Organ Grinder / Chizzlin' Sam / High Society / Mister, Will You Serenade? / You Ain't Too Old / Wipe 'Em Off / What If I Do / Ida, Sweet As Apple Cider / My Gal Sal / Gulf Coast Blues / I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate / Jazz It Blues / Somebody Stole My Gal / Crazy Blues / Sugar Blues

LUIS RUSSELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA 1929-1930 / SWAGGIE 828

Savoy Shout / The Call Of The Freaks / It's Tight Like That / The New Call Of The Freaks / Feelin' The Spirit / Jersey Lightning / Doctor Blues / Saratoga Shout / Song Of The Swanee / Give Me Your Telephone Number / Higginbotham Blues / Louisiana Swing / Poor Li'l Me / On Revival Day / Muggin' Lightly / Panama / High Tension

All four of these LPs are by twenties groups led by black pianists. It is indicative of the range attained in jazz by the late twenties that they have little else in common.

Tiny Parham was a Chicago musician and a member of that rare species the jazz composer. The emphasis on his records is on the band rather than the soloists and perhaps for this reason they have been ignored by the majority of jazz writers. For example there is not a single mention of Parham in James Lincoln Collier's exhaustive *The Making Of Jazz*. Yet even a brief listen to a selection of Tiny's recordings will reveal that he was a musician of imagination and individuality.

The band which Tiny Parham used on these records was a working unit and there are few changes of personnel over the eighteen months spanned by the sessions. Indeed the music of Tiny Parham and his Musicians may well be more typical of what "live" jazz was like in the twenties than that of many more famous studio pick-up bands.

Tiny Parham's melodies are distinctive and have a peculiar way of growing on the listener: they seem better the better one knows them. He uses the full resources of his eight piece ensemble: the violin is deployed effectively; textures are varied with two brass and only one reed on all but the last title; imaginative use is made of the brass bass, which is played with great skill by Quinn Wilson; and Parham has the knack of making the band sound larger than it actually is. Individual musicians who stand out in these performances include Punch Miller, the famous New Orleans trumpeter; D'Albert Bright on saxophone and clarinet; Parham himself on piano; and the aforementioned Quinn Wilson on brass bass. Overall the value of these records is the insight they offer into 1920s jazz and into the mind of a minor but intriguing jazz composer.

Clarence Williams was a New Orleans musician who made New York his home for most of his life. He recorded regularly as pianist and vocalist, less often as organist or jug blower. He was a composer, music publisher and manager and the vast majority of his band recordings he made between 1923 and 1941 were by pick-up groups.

Only the Clarence Williams Blue Five

recordings of 1923 and 1924 with Sidney Bechet and/or Louis Armstrong have been given much attention by jazz historians, but much more typical of Williams' output are the series of washboard band and jug band recordings he made in the late twenties and early thirties. Although the personnel on these records fluctuated there was a regular cadre of Clarence Williams musicians who appeared on most of them. Sometimes Clarence would play piano but just as often one or more of the great Harlem stride pianists would be used.

The Swaggie label has a long and honourable record in Clarence Williams re-issues, including a recent and marvellous five volume edition of the 1933-1935 Vocalion Washboard Band series. The earliest tracks on this new jug band LP are the two by the Seven Gallon Jug Band from 1929 and 1930. Bass sax and jug are heard in combination, Willie 'The Lion' Smith is on piano, Ed Allen plays sober and tasteful cornet and on *Wipe 'Em Off* Clarence sings with no less a vocal assistant than Fats Waller.

The Clarence Williams Jug Band of 1933 boasts an unusual instrumentation of clarinet (Cecil Scott), two pianos (Willie 'The Lion' Smith and Herman Chittison), banjo doubling guitar (Ikey Robinson), jug (Clarence himself) and washboard (Willie Williams). Clarence Todd comes in on kazoo on two tracks and Todd, Robinson, Clarence Williams and Eva Taylor are heard in various vocal combinations during the six tracks. This music has a deceptively inconsequential sound, but there is no mistaking its immense drive and swing. Cecil Scott's growling, gutbucket clarinet and William's washboard whacking dominate the band sound. The version of *High Society* is unusual in having a couple of vocal choruses in which the college lyrics are enunciated clearly by Eva Taylor.

The Alabama Jug Band recordings which make up the second side here are rare and many collectors will want this LP simply to have them complete. They were recorded at two four title sessions in 1934 and on all eight the Allen/Scott front line perform beautifully, the marvellous Willie 'The Lion' Smith is on piano and Floyd Casey's washboard adds to the fun. On the second session the jug obscures the brass bass of Cyrus St. Clair and both dates feature a characteristic Williams collection of singers.

Luis Russell was also born in New Orleans and his band was one of the best big bands in the late twenties and early thirties. On recorded evidence it was THE best except for the Duke Ellington Orchestra and here we have their complete Okeh output, recorded when the band was at its peak and playing various residences in New York City. The first three titles are by Russell's so-called Burning Eight with Louis Metcalf on trumpet and 'Bass' Moore on brass bass. This is the band which recorded for Victor under King Oliver's name.

By late 1929 Pops Foster's string bass had replaced the tuba to make up one of the great rhythm sections of jazz history. Henry 'Red' Allen had joined and his mercurial and inventive trumpet, J.C. Higginbotham's roaring and down-home trombone and Charlie Holmes' dry yet punching alto were the great solo voices of the Russell band. Even so fine a player as the New Orleans clarinetist Albert Nicholas takes a back seat to this trio. The two small group titles recorded under J.C. Higginbotham's name (*Give Me Your Telephone Number* and *Higginbotham Blues*) contain the very essence of this 1929-1930 Luis Russell music.

On many occasions the Luis Russell Band has been ignored because jazz history is simpler if the comparatively staid Fletcher Henderson Orchestra is cited as the outstanding eastern band of this period. The road is open then to show that loose swinging big band jazz was a Kansas City product heralding Count Basie, Lester Young and Charlie Parker. Not true. The Luis Russell band of 1930 swung as much as any in jazz history large or small, east or west, and it is still one of the most exciting on record. Even today the drive of this music leaps from the record grooves with undiminished vigour.

All these four LPs from Swaggie's Vintage Jazz Series are superbly produced. This Australian company sets high standards in pressing and presentation and with re-mastering by John R.T. Davies these are indeed ideal re-issues. One hopes that the remaining Tiny Parham titles will soon appear and that Nevill Sherburn will also give us the Victor recordings with Henry Allen fronting the Luis Russell band in equally excellent sound. In the meantime here are four superb collections of early jazz; all are recom-

mended but the Luis Russell is an absolutely essential buy for anyone claiming an interest in recorded jazz. — **Eddie Lambert**

JABBO SMITH

Hidden Treasure, Volumes 1 and 2

Jazz Art Productions TR520699/520700

Jabbo Smith is one of our living legends. After making his sensational series of Brunswick sides in 1929, plus the noted '20s recording sessions with Fats Waller and James P. Johnson, Duke Ellington, and Charlie Johnson, he faded into obscurity until the jazz revival of recent years. He continued to play during most of the intervening years, notably in the Claude Hopkins band for a long period in the 30s and leading his own group in Newark, New Jersey, during the early 40s and in Milwaukee thereafter. But there was little attention and no recordings.

Now, with these two lps, we get to hear Jabbo in mid-career, at a time when he hadn't been playing his horn for some years. It's 1961, Jabbo is 53 years old, the place is Chicago. It's a pair of sessions put together by Marty Grosz, already the accomplished guitarist and an enterprising and imaginative leader. You might suppose in the circumstances that the outcome of these sessions would be more of historical significance than musical quality. And, to be sure, there is historical value, being given the opportunity to hear Jabbo's horn three decades after the classic Brunswick sides and two decades before his recent re-emergence. But, be assured, the music is there. It's a good group that Grosz assembled, with an appealing sound of its own and — most important — Jabbo plays his trumpet in his own distinctive way, using a mute much of the time, with imagination and assertiveness. The brilliant fireworks of youth have mellowed into a mature expressiveness that makes for absorbing listening.

In addition to Smith and Grosz, the third musician to appear for both dates is clarinetist Frank Chace, who plays with more than a trace of Pee Wee Russell in his style. The rest of the group for the first session is John Dengler, playing his noted bass sax, Art Gronwall at the piano and Bob Saltmarsh on drums. Between Grosz' acoustic guitar and Dengler's bass sax, the group has a unique sound that sets off the distinctive trumpet and clarinet. The second session has the Smith-Grosz-Chace trio plus the bass of White Mitchell and the rhythm guitar of Big Mike McKendrick. We also get a couple of tastes of Jabbo's trombone playing on *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me* and *Sweet Georgia Brown*, and his singing on *When A Woman Loves A Man* and *Keepin' Out Of Mischief*, as well as *Sweet Georgia Brown*.

The songs are all familiar ones, others being *Love Me Or Leave Me*, *Sunday, Anything For You*, *These Foolish Things*, *I Want A Little Girl*, *Squeeze Me*, *Rosetta*, *I Found A New Baby* and *Diga Diga Doo*. In several instances, we get multiple takes and a couple of false starts as they work out the kinks. The musicians are clearly taking their music seriously, but in an informal way that gives a comfortable ambience to the proceedings. We are rewarded with genuineness rather than perfection. It all adds up to very pleasant listening to a pair of low-key sessions spent with a jazz great in good form. The records are nicely produced and packaged, with fine sound quality, adding to



their enjoyment. These records can be obtained from Jazz Art Productions, 2 Charlton Street, New York, NY 10014. — **Dick Neeld**

WILD BILL DAVISON

And The Jazz Giants

Sackville 3002

It's been demonstrated over and over again that the only way to hear the classic forms of jazz at their best is to place them in the hands of the originators and their contemporaries. While the current concert and club appearances of their musical descendants serve the purpose of enjoying a live event, recorded sound gives a great advantage to the talented creators of yesterday over the talented followers and imitators of today.

The recordings here, made nearly twenty years ago and now reissued to make them available again, catch several of those pioneering giants — an appropriately named band, The Jazz Giants — at the top of their game. Fortunately for all of us, most of the band are still playing today, though time has taken the pianist of the group, Claude Hopkins, and trombonist Benny Morton. Wild Bill Davison is still busily taking his cornet around the world and Herb Hall continues to play his clarinet in and around his home area of Texas. A front line of Davison, Hall and Morton guarantees good music and Hopkins has Arvell Shaw on bass and Buzzy Drootin on drums joining him for some capable timekeeping. Hopkins also has lots of solo room, calling up his stride roots to flavor his distinctive keyboard style. Hall and Morton, good as they are, are no match for Davison when it comes to asserting one's self. Wild Bill has always been a champion at imposing his joyous rough-edged sound on any group he plays with, and on this album sounds his unfailing, rambunctious self. He has the curious ability of applying his style and sound to bal-

lads without diminishing either. On the contrary, as demonstrated on *Blue Again* and *I Surrender Dear*, his sturdy sound enhances the poignancy of the love song.

The high-powered numbers, *Struttin' With Some Barbecue*, *I Found A New Baby* and *Them There Eyes*, benefit from being played at a well-measured rather than break-neck tempo. This can probably be attributed to the fact that this was a working band — if not constantly at least frequently. Working at a time in our musical history when jazz was at its most invisible, driven from sight by the electronic rock revolution, the band was nearly unique; and certainly their playing together with some regularity enabled them to work up their routines and play to each other's individual characteristics.

Also included among the nine tracks are an all-hands playing of Hopkins' justly famous *I Would Do Anything For You*, one of Hall's favorite features, *Dardenella*, Shaw's rendering of *Yesterdays* with just drums and a touch of piano for accompaniment, and Fats Waller's *Black And Blue*, a very suitable piece of material for Davison's horn.

If one were to wish for better, it would only be in having musicians more aggressive in standing up to the Wild Bill onslaught. Only Claude Hopkins manages to match Davison in asserting himself. However, it's a compatible group doing things right — and perhaps having more bulls in the pen wouldn't help after all.

— **Dick Neeld**

SARAH VAUGHAN

In The Land Of Hi-Fi

Emarcy 826454-1

Over The Rainbow / Soon / Cherokee / I'll Never Smile Again / Don't Be On The Outside / How High The Moon / It Shouldn't Happen To A Dream / Sometimes I'm Happy / An Occasional Man / Why Can't I / Oh My

October 25, 1955

This vintage reissue captures the magnificent voice of Sarah Vaughan when she was thirty-one. Backed by an eleven piece band playing the consistently swinging arrangements of Ernie Wilkins, Sarah is in sparkling form. She uses a slight excess of vibrato on some of her longer-held words but the closing high note on *Why Can't I* more than compensates. Cannonball Adderley, the major find of 1955, has a few solos sprinkled throughout the date, most notably on a fast *Cherokee* and a tradeoff of fours with Sarah on *How High The Moon*.

One of the more jazz-oriented Sarah Vaughan sessions of the 1950s, this Verve reissue is quite enjoyable.

SONNY STITT

Constellation

Muse MR 5323

Constellation / Ghost Of A Chance / Webb City / By Accident / Ray's Idea / Casbah / It's Magic / Topsy

June 27, 1972

Sonny Stitt suffered a period of critical neglect during the 1960s when most of the jazz press was focusing on the avant-garde innovators. Fortunately Stitt's abilities continued to improve and after a 1971 tour with the Giants of Jazz (a co-op sextet that also included Gillespie

and Monk), Sonny recorded two of his most exciting albums, "Tune Up" (Cobblestone 9013) and the recently reissued "Constellation". On the latter he is often in stunning form, alternating alto and tenor features and continually demonstrating his mastery of the bop language. *Highpoint* is the title track, a ridiculously fast romp on alto that finds Stitt soloing with complete coherency at a nearly unplayable tempo. Other particularly memorable selections by his quartet are happy versions of *Ray's Idea* and *Webb City*, a tender tenor ballad statement on *Ghost Of A Chance* and a dramatic reading of *It's Magic*. Barry Harris also has several splendid improvisations; he was the perfect pianist for Stitt. This album belongs in every jazz collector's library.

RALPH TOWNER / GARY BURTON

Slide Show
ECM 25038

Maelstrom / Vessel / Around The Bend / Blue In Green / Beneath An Evening Sky / The Donkey Jamboree / Continental Breakfast / Charlotte's Tangle / Innocenti May, 1985

Although the volume level of these vibes-acoustic guitar duets is consistently low and the emphasis, as one would expect from these musicians, is on the introspective, there is plenty of fire on this album. All of the compositions (except the Miles Davis/Bill Evans tune *Blue In Green*) are Towner's and they vary from the rhythmic patterns of *Beneath An Evening Sky* and the playful *Donkey Jamboree* (with Burton switching to marimbas) to the double-timing of *Around The Bend*. *Continental Breakfast* swings hard and has some particularly hot interplay from the duo. This is one of Gary Burton's better sets and a fine introduction for those not familiar with Ralph Towner outside of the Oregon group.

HELEN MERRILL / DICK KATZ

A Shade Of Difference
Landmark LLP-1308

Never Will I Marry / While We're Young / Lonely Woman / I Should Care / A Lady Must Live / I Want A Little Boy / Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most / My Funny Valentine / Lover, Come Back To Me / Where Do You Go July, 1968

Helen Merrill, an expressive singer with a soft voice who is still best known for having utilized Clifford Brown on a session back in 1954, really took some chances on a pair of recording dates during 1967-8. Backed by Dick Katz' small group arrangements that used some of the innovations of the avant-garde Merrill, by singing with authority and feeling, flourished in the challenging settings. The earlier album, last available as "Something Special" (Inner City IC 1060) is worth searching for. "A Shade Of Difference" has a few arrangements (notably *Never Will I Marry* and *A Lady Must Live*) that almost recall George Handy's revolutionary charts for Boyd Raeburn in the 1940s. The latter tune is partly bitonal (played in two keys) and at one point finds Thad Jones, Hubert Laws, Jim Hall and Katz's piano all soloing independently of each other. Ornette's *Lonely Woman* is definitely in the spirit of

Coleman with atonal piano runs and a brief spot for Gary Bartz's wailing alto. Half of the selections find Merrill backed by various parts of the rhythm section; some of these are more conventional but all have moments of interest. This album became an underground classic due to its lack of availability and high quality. No longer underground, "A Shade Of Difference" still retains the "classic" status.

MAX ROACH

Jazz In 3/4 Time
Emarcy 826456-1

Blues Waltz / Valse Hot / I'll Take Romance / Little Folks / Lover / The Most Beautiful Girl In The World September, 1956 / March, 1957

Although jazz musicians have played waltzes in commercial settings as far back as the 1920s and Fats Waller's *Jitterbug Waltz* became a standard in 1942, Max Roach's "Jazz In 3/4 Time" was the first album to exclusively feature jazz songs in waltz time. This gives it a strong historic value but because there is stiffness to the rhythms (particularly from pianist Billy Wallace) and a certain amount of struggling from the soloists, this album is of limited interest. Sonny Rollins fares best, sounding quite exuberant on *Valse Hot* but there are stronger examples of Max Roach's quintet elsewhere. It's not a bad album, preceding Dave Brubeck into the area of "odd" time signatures (in fact the intro of Max's *Little Folks* sounds suspiciously like Paul Desmond's *Eleven Four* of four years later) but there are other Roach recordings I'd recommend first.

STEVE GROSSMAN

Love Is The Thing
Red VPA 189

Naima / Easy To Love / My Old Flame / Easy Living / I Didn't Know What Time It Was / 415 Central Park West / What's New May, 1985

From the songtitles on "Love Is The Thing", one would think that this would be a John Coltrane tribute album but oddly enough Steve Grossman frequently sounds exactly like Sonny Rollins in the 1950s. Backed by the Cedar Walton trio (which also includes bassist David Williams and drummer Billy Higgins), the tenor-saxophonist plays many inventive solos during this set of standards (plus Steve's original *415 Central Park West*). Once Steve Grossman develops his own personal sound (which occasionally emerges during these improvisations), his message will be a lot stronger.

ROLAND KIRK

We Free Kings
Mercury 826 455

Three For The Festival / Moon Song / A Sack Full Of Soul / The Haunted Melody / Blues For Alice / We Free Kings / You Did It, You Did It / Some Kind Of Love / My Delight

August 16-17, 1961

Although Roland Kirk had recorded three previous albums, "We Free Kings" was the first one to fully display his remarkable talents. Since Kirk has been in danger of being forgotten in recent times, let's remember that in

addition to his ability to play three saxes at once and take non-stop twenty minute solos (via circular breathing), Kirk could also play his horns in any style. On "We Free Kings" he sometimes sounds like Sonny Rollins on tenor, sings through his flute (extending the Sam Most/Yusef Lateef innovation) and on his lyrical manzello resembles Lucky Thompson on soprano, and nothing at all imitative about his playing. Also, his ability to switch between horns, often playing ensemble harmonies while plotting his next move, is unprecedented. Since "We Free Kings" is quite bop-oriented and more tightly focused than some of his later albums, this is a perfect introduction to the unique sounds of Roland Kirk. In addition, it's a classic.

TETE MONTOLIU

Lush Life
SteepleChase SCS-1216

Airegin / You Don't Know What Love Is / Yesterdays / Lush Life / Margaretta Take 1 / Dia Inolvidable / Margaretta Take 2 / Willow Weep For Me / Imagination September 25, 1971

While listening to Tete Montoliu's marvelous solo performances on this lp, it was difficult not to think of Oscar Peterson. Not that Montoliu and Peterson sound that much alike, although they do explore similar territory; it's just that both give the impression of complete control of the piano. One gets the feeling that both of these masters can play anything they wish. Neither Oscar or Tete would be considered innovators as far as blazing a startling new path for improvisers; they'll have to be content to be called giants. Tete is consistently dazzling throughout "Lush Life", a record that should have been released fifteen years ago but is still welcome today. It's remarkable how much music Montoliu packs into the 2 3/4 minutes of *Airegin* and how he completely takes apart *Willow Weep For Me*. Highly recommended.

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY

Jazz Workshop Revisited
Landmark LLP-1303

Primitivo / Jessica's Day / Unit 7 / Jive Samba / Mellow Buno September 22-23, 1962

Landmark, under the direction of Orrin Keepnews, is in the midst of a seven-volume Cannonball Adderley reissue program from his Riverside years. "Jazz Workshop Revisited" is Volume 3 and makes available an excellent live session by Adderley's 1962 sextet, the finest group he ever led. In addition to the leader's exuberant alto and the emotional flights of his "brass section" Nat Adderley, pianist Joe Zawinul and Yusef Lateef have plenty of solo space. Lateef, in particular, adds a lot of variety to the group with his oriental-sounding oboe and versatile flute (both featured on *Primitivo*), along with his stomping tenor. On such tunes as *Jive Samba* (the original version), Quincy Jones' boppish *Jessica's Day* and a previously unissued version of Sam Jones' *Unit 7*, the sextet is in top form.

PRECEDING SHORT TAKE REVIEWS BY
SCOTT YANOW

AROUND THE WORLD



CANADA — Sonny Greenwich comes to Toronto February 21 for a concert at the Premiere Dance Theatre. Fred Henke, David Piltch and Claude Ranger will perform with the guitarist.

The overwhelming support for the week of contemporary music at the Bamboo in November was clear evidence that there is an audience hungry for the music. The doors had to be closed for both the **Cecil Taylor Unit** and **World Saxophone Quartet** dates. Now it is the turn of the beboppers to demonstrate their support of their music. Don D.T. Thompson, Leo Schotte and Spike McKendry have organised a Jazz Party to be held at the Westbury Hotel March 14 and 15. **Anita O'Day, Red Rodney, Dizzy Reece, Clifford Jordan, Jimmy Knepper, Nick Brignola, John Hicks, Walter Booker** and **Gus Johnson** are the headliners who will share the stage with an impressive cross-section of Canadian musicians. The full line-up is listed elsewhere in this issue.

Local 149 of the AF of M - The Toronto local - celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. "100 Years of Jazz" is the title of a concert to be held at Massey Hall on Sunday March 29 featuring a variety of jazz performers from the city representing an historical cross section of the music.

Contemporary Music Projects presents a series at the Walker Court of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Wednesdays at 8 pm. Admission is free. The series begins on February 11 with Paul Cram and Don Druick; Feb. 25 James Pett and Jack McFadden; March 11 Peter Lutek and Philip Bush; March 25 Ron Allen and Zulema Clas; April 22 Bill Beauvais and Susan Latimer... **The Bill Smith Ensemble**

will perform with guests every Monday in March upstairs at the Clinton Hotel on Bloor Street West at Christie. Don Druick and Bill Smith will perform together on Friday, April 10 at KAAI, 21A Queen Street, Kingston, on Saturday, April 11 at Oboro, 3981 St. Laurent, Montreal, and on Thursday, April 16 at ARC, 658 Queen Street West, Toronto.

The University of Toronto Jazz Ensemble under the direction of **Phil Nimmons** will be heard in concert March 28 at the Edward Johnson Building in the Faculty of Music's winter series.... Rick Wilkins, Doug Riley, Bernie Senensky, Alex Dean and Pat LaBarbera share the stage with **Moe Koffman** at George's Spaghetti House in the near future.... Trumpeter **Sam Noto's** Quintet was recorded for Unisson Records following his week-long engagement at George's last November. Pat LaBarbera, Gary Williamson, Steve Wallace and Bob McLaren completed the ensemble.... Bassist **Major Holley**, in town on vacation, was heard at Cafe des Copains during the first week of Jay McShann's stay at the club. Harold Mabern, Dick Wellstood, Joanne Brackeen, Red Richards and Kenny Barron follow behind **Jack Wilson's** first appearance at the club which begins February 9.

The Music Gallery presented a cross section of piano styles in January. Michael Snow (January 16), Marilyn Crispell (Jan. 25) and Bill Dobbins (Jan. 30) were among the performers.... **Koko Taylor, Etta James** and **Ellen McIlwaine** were the first three artists to perform at Harbourfront's "Women in Blues" concert series.... **Margie Evans**, another woman of the blues, was at Albert's Hall

November 24-29. Unfortunately her mighty voice was quietened by a throat infection for much of the week.... CKLN Jazz D/J Yvonne Seguin is hosting a group of jazz fans to Cuba's 8th International Latin Jazz Plaza Festival in Havana.

The French Quarter Jazz Band performs regularly at Kitchener's Holiday Inn. Sunday solo piano concerts began at the same hotel in October with a performance by Oliver Jones. Jon Ballantyne and John Arpin were there in November/December. Ballantyne's concert followed behind an appearance at the Paris Jazz Festival with his trio — one of the prizes he gained for winning the CBC's New Talent contest last summer at the Montreal Jazz Festival. His trio has also recorded for CBC's Jazz Image label. The CBC's Jazz Beat program featured the regional finalists during January with performances recorded last summer in Montreal.

The **Montreal Jubilation Gospel Choir** paid tribute to Mahalia Jackson in its December 14 concert at St. James United Church. Sharing the stage with the choir was guest soloist **Almeta Speaks**.

December 6 marked a notable anniversary — 20 years of the **Montreal Vintage Music Society** (MVMS), who held a special reunion meeting on that day. MVMS has been an important centre for vintage jazz in Canada and for research into the history of popular music in Canada and the Canadian recording industry. For over a decade it has hosted the Canadian Collectors Convention in collaboration with the Mississauga Jazz Muddies. The MVMS was founded by Jim Kidd, and over the years it

has been rather exclusive in its membership, confining admission to those of proven discographical interest. Its members have included Jack Litchfield, author of the definitive *Canadian Jazz Discography*, and Peter Johnson, the Harry James discographer. Its presidents have included *Coda* contributor Trevor Tolley and Ottawa disc jockey Ron(des vous) Sweetman.

Oliver Jones and **Skip Beckwith** were at Calgary's Stage West December 8 in the first of a series of piano recitals. Jon Ballantyne performs February 2 and Tommy Banks appears April 6.... Jones/Beckwith moved north to Edmonton's Yardbird Suite for December 10-13.... Jones' Justin Time album "Lights of Burgundy" won the Juno for best jazz record of 1986. "Big Band Jazz - Rocks & Swings... 17 New Pieces for the Working Jazz Group" is a collection of original tunes by Daniel Janke. The book costs \$20.00 and is available from Scratch Records, P.O. Box 5381, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 4Z2.

— **John Norris**

ATLANTA — As the Atlanta Jazz Festival concentrates increasingly on pop music acts (Kool and the Gang is "jazz?"), the South's largest urban center is left singularly devoid of jazz activity. There are a few clubs and theaters, mostly featuring vocalists who might or might not fit your definition of "jazz". (Important exception: Wynton Marsalis November 14 at Center Stage). Windstorm Productions and a few other entrepreneurs put on occasional concerts, working mostly the new age/jazz/pop fringe. If it weren't for Quantum Productions, there would be more full-blooded jazz available on the average small college campus than in this metropolis.

Described by its founder as "a Mom and Pop operation", Quantum Productions is the cheerful obsession of Rob Gibson, who at 28 boasts over a decade of professional experience in jazz radio.

On November 7, Quantum finished their fall concert series "Sound Legacies" with an outstanding solo concert by **Cecil Taylor**. (Other certifiably jazz presentations in the world music-oriented Sound Legacies series featured the Steve Lacy group and the Sheila Jordan-Harvie Swartz duo). The concert reached an unplanned climax when Taylor got up for what was evidently intended to be a dance interlude. Some in the audience mistook it for the end of the performance and began to applaud, which was taken up by the majority. Taylor, wearing an impish grin, returned to the keyboard and treated the audience to three more fake finales before exiting for real.

The reaction to Taylor suggested an audience that was not as hip as it might be, but willing to try. Gibson insists that "the jazz audience is there. They've just gotten used to doing without". Quantum's spring series, featuring exclusively jazz artists, will test that hypothesis. After closing the year with **Evan Parker**, Quantum will present the duo of **Hank Jones** and **Tommy Flanagan**, the **Bobby Watson-Curtis Lundy** and **George Adams-Don Pullen** groups and the **David Murray** octet.

As an indicator of how low Atlanta has been "doing without", consider that the Quantum concert represents the Atlanta debut

as leaders for such veterans as Jones and Flanagan (as it did for Cecil Taylor and Sheila Jordan). Gibson doesn't think clubs are the main answer to Atlanta's problem. Opining that "clubs aren't making any money on the music; they make it on the drinks", he elected to "go the non-profit route". Through Quantum he has done so impressively, with a handsome series brochure, co-sponsorship of the spring series by radio station WCIK, and support from half a dozen state and local arts groups.

The Sound Legacies series found the artists in a variety of venues, including the Nexus Theater downtown, Emory University's Cannon Chapel, the Seven Stages Theater in Little High Points and the High Museum of Art. By the time the spring series opens, Gibson hopes to have "our own hall, with the ability to sell beer and wine at intermission. I think we're on our way to becoming a successful non-profit in the sense that the Atlanta Symphony is one. I gave myself three years to get to that point, and I foresee a change in the next 12 to 16 months. If in the end I'm wrong, I'll go out and get a 'real job', and somebody else can carry the torch."

For tickets or further information write Quantum Productions at P.O. Box 170380, Atlanta, Georgia 30317 or phone (404) 377-7777.

— **Bill McLarney**

BOSTON — Having missed the last issue necessitates a long rundown of events over the past four months, which unfortunately means treating many outstanding performances in less detail than they deserve.

During September and October, Boston heard a number of historic firsts and many concerts by a wide range of working groups. The first of the historic events was two nights of solos and duets by **Steve Lacy** and **Roscoe Mitchell** on September 9th and 10th at 1369 Jazz Club. They were evenings of accomplished, focused, and challenging music by two strong personalities who worked well together without compromising their respective styles. Another historic first meeting was the **Leo Smith-Ed Blackwell** duet at Brandeis University on October 23rd (instead of the quartet originally announced). Smith's massive blocks of sound and space, elliptical references to the blues and reggae, and Blackwell's African sensibilities produced category defying music with global implications. Just brilliant. The third historic event was the inauguration of the Jazz Coalition's Jazz Legacy Series with the world premier of three new works for big band and strings in tribute to Ben Webster, Lester Young, and Paul Gonzales by David Murray. Lawrence "Butch" Morris conducted the twenty strings and sixteen piece big band with Murray, Greg Osby, John Purcell, Bill Saxton, and Don Byron on saxophones, Hugh Ragin, David Gordon, and Frank Gordon on trumpets, Al Patterson, Bob Trowers and Craig Harris on trombones, Sharon Freeman on french horn, Jon Sass on tuba, Sonellus Smith on piano, Fred Hopkins on bass, and Ralph Peterson, Jr. on drums.

Amina Myers Trio opened the season at Charlie's Tap on September 13th, followed by Billy Bang Quintet with Roy Campbell, Oscar Sanders, William Parker, and Zen Matsuura on September 19th and 20th, the Ray Anderson Trio on September 26th and 27th, the Roy

Haynes Quartet on October 4th and 5th, the Oliver Lake Quartet with Geri Allen, Santi Debriano, and Freddie Waits on October 17th and 18th, and Abbey Lincoln and a trio on October 23rd to 25th. Bang's writing, arranging, and the group's soloing was especially imaginative, satisfying, and exciting. Lincoln's sets mixed standards and originals in a well-paced, intimate presentation, but the band didn't seem to know the material as well as it should have.

The Tap's schedule continued with Jean Paul Bourelli Trio with Fred Hopkins and Andrew Cyrille on November 7th and 8th, Wilberforce with leader Wilber Morris on bass, Gust Tsilis on vibes, Joe Daley on baritone horn and Reggie Nicholson on drums on November 14th and 15th, the Joe Henderson Quartet on November 20th to 22nd, the Joe Morris Trio on November 28th to 29th, and the Dewey Redman Trio with Fred Hopkins with Charlie Persip on December 5th and 6th. Wilber Morris writes attractive melodies and the instrumentation and soloing was warm, singing, and creative. Henderson was virile and assured like the master musician and survivor that he is. Redman was at his invigorating best, inspired by the dynamic rhythm team he had with him.

In October, the 1369 presented a series of solo piano concerts, starting with Jaki Byard on the 8th, Fred Hersch on the 15th, Ken Werner on the 22nd, and closing with Marilyn Crispell on the 29th.

In November and December at the 1369, the George Adams - Don Pullen Quartet appeared on November 5th and 6th, Ricky Ford and Last Wave on December 5th and 6th, Johnny Griffin Quartet on December 9th and 10th, the Archie Shepp Quartet on December 12th and 13th, and the Paul Motian Trio on December 19th and 20th.

The Regattabar booked the George Coleman Quartet on October 17th to 19th, the Hank Jones Trio on October 22nd to 25th, George Shearing and Don Thompson on November 7th to 9th, and Sphere on November 12th to 15th.

Nightstage booked many important return engagements to the Boston area throughout the past four months. In September and October, the Dave Holland Quintet (September 18th), Ekaya (September 24th and 25th), and Betty Carter (October 3rd) were the highlights. On November 18th, the World Saxophone Quartet played some of their Ellington arrangements and originals with the usual precision and feeling. Exciting solos all around, too. And Sathima Bea Benjamin was finally heard in Boston the way she should be, in the company of her flawless trio, Windsong, consisting of Kenny Barron, Buster Williams, and Billy Higgins, on November 20th.

There were also many concerts in the area. Marilyn Crispell and Ursula Oppens traded solo sets at the Newton Arts Center on October 18th. The Beaver Harris Quartet with Charles Stewart on trombone, Leon Dorsey on bass, and the remarkable Vincent Herring on alto came to Tufts University on September 30th. Johnny Dyani and Witchdoctor's Son, featuring John Tchicai on tenor, Harry Beckett on trumpet, Pierre Dorge on guitar, and Makaya Ntshoko on drums appeared at the Villa Victoria Center on September 19th. Dyani's lines were the powerful heart of two sets of Dyani compositions, which were highlighted by Tchicai's closely reasoned, evocative tenor solos, Beckett's

cleanly executed melodicism, and Dorge's sound explorations. The music's vitality made the news of Dyani's death not long afterwards all the more shocking.

Concerts in November and December included Carla Bley with the Harvard University Jazz Band on November 9th, a November 13th solo recital by Abdullah Ibrahim playing at the very height of his powers, Henry Threadgill with the Jazz Composer's Alliance on November 18th, a free concert by the George Russell Big Band on November 25th, and solos and duos by Evan Parker and Barry Guy at Tufts on December 8th. The Parker-Guy duets were especially rich in detail, sensitive interplay and energy. Out at Brandeis, at The Joint, Ken McIntyre soloed on November 20th, the New York City Artists' Collective appeared on November 23rd, and Bill Frisell played alone on December 18th.

— Ed Hazell

CLEVELAND — Ernie Krivda's premier of his orchestra piece *Resurrection*, November 7 at Harkness Chapell was a giant under-taking. And the music filled the bill. A Concerto for Saxophone and Jazz Orchestra (strings too), which jazz could use many more attempts at. With Ernie's fiery blazing tenor and his mastery over the altissimo range it came off wholly. The standing ovation after, the obligatory back and forth of the principal soloist and the shaking of hands between the conductor, Stephen Miller, and the bowing, was anything but the sterile run-thru experience at philharmonic concerts. Ernie deserved it. And the audience was right

there. The piece itself was nothing innovative, except for the fact of having a jazz soloist play jazz styled horn in front of this type of aggregation. Krivda readily admits the bits of music that seemed influenced by Stravinsky, Bartok, Gershwin, Strauss, and to me a bit of Penderecki, and why not? It being his first venture of this sort. No mean easy accomplishment to pull it all together. The quartet from his recent album "Tough Tenor Red Hot" (Cadence 1028) were also included in this 30-plus orchestra.

Albert King came flying thru in his tour bus from St. Louis and then on to Detroit, playing at Oberlin College's Finney Chapel November 11. His show ripped my head off, sent it swirling, eyes popping out from those searing squeezed notes he launches. I noticed he likes to lean his guitar case almost completely right across the front of his tall amplifier periodically moving it by degrees.

While in Cincinnati over Thanksgiving we caught **Big Joe Duskin**, the boogie woogie pianist that popped out of a time capsule ten years ago with his first album on Arhoolie. I had first seen him at the San Francisco Blues Fest back then, and always meant to catch him ever I got this way. Now his second album is coming out, "Down The Road A Piece" from England, Big Joe couldn't remember off-hand the name of the record company. I didn't care too much for the electric piano he used on this gig there at Dollar Bill's Saloon. But he has several steady jobs around town, and gets a chance to work out on the upright where he belongs. One peculiar spot is this laundromat bar and performance area thing they got going

down there (?). OK. Whatever, a man's got to make a living.

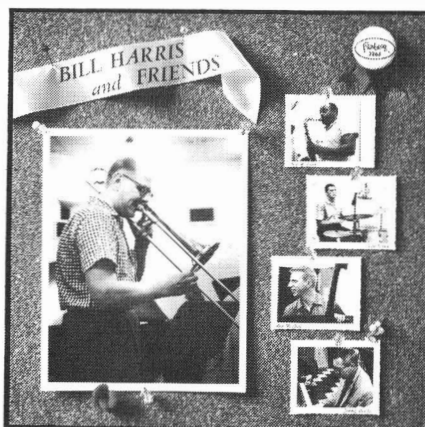
After seeing "Round Midnight" I needed a dose of 52nd Street circa post world war II, that good feel bebop, and in Cleveland there's Willie Smith veteran of that era. Fronting his Big Little Band with bounce and beret. Who grew up playing in the by-gone Euclid and 115th up to 105th Street jazz days at places like the Sky Bar, The Town Casino, The Chatterbox, and the Loop Lounge, along side Tadd and Cecil Dameron and Benny Bailey, all of whom hail from this city. With Willie on alto and Ramon Morris on tenor in front of rhythm section and Reggie Pittman setting in from time to time all is well in the world of Dale Turner. Jimmy Lawson sang a beautiful rendition of *Everything Happens To Me*.

The Northeast Ohio Jazz Society's December 7 monthly "jazz klatch" brought together a panel of local long-time resident musicians to talk the history of Cleveland jazz. And you know I was there, I'd go to something like this for a month of Sunday's. Reggie Pittman handled the moderating chores with Willie Smith, Everett "Roc" Evans, Marilyn Holderfield, Cliff Habian, Kenny Davis and (absent) Weasel Parker (who had a gig in NYC), on the panel and in the audience among other notables was Lunceford trumpeter Wingy McKinnon.

On the local blues scene, after you've paid homage to Robert Jr. Lockwood who gigs regularly at a raft of bars and lounges, other bands among many are Aces & Eights (similar to the best parts of the T-Birds), Mr. Stress Blues Band (aka William Miller and group cele-



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brated 20th anniversary in November), and Ruby Carter with the Magic Touch Band featuring Harvey Hall, g; Greg Brooks, d; Guy Smith, organ; and Julius Roberts elec. b.

James Newton was in town for his October 18 gig with the CWRU Jazz Ensemble directed by Stephen Miller at Kulas Auditorium, C.I.M. (Jim Hall's alma mater). My favorite was a solo James ripped off on *Whisper Not* just right to the gut. Then after performing with this ensemble, a NOJS assembled unit billed as the James Newton Octet came on stage (only one rehearsal) and worked out on some Ellington. This band was Reggie Pittman, trpt; Howie Smith, as; Carl Ector, violin; Ron Busch, vibes; Dave Thomas, p; Kevin Muhammed, b; Tom Goldbach, d; and Rico on 'bone. After all this a bunch of us trooped Newton around to a couple local clubs. At Club Isabella James sat in with the Bob Ferrazza Trio. And then after that over to Joe's Place on Buckeye Road where organist Eddie Baccus holds down a weekend gig. Newton sat in once again hitting on some Ellington. Baccus you'll recall from the Three Blind Mice group with Roland Kirk and (also blind) drummer Cookie. Newton flew out the next morning to play some Honneger with some orchestra somewhere. — **Mark Weber**

HARTFORD — The Vibration Society presented Raahsan Roland Kirk's singular music at the Hartford Jazz Society's December 7 meeting. Junior Cook, Bill Hardman and Steve Turre performed at their peaks in the front line. Cook alternated hard-edged blowing with sweet balladic statements. Hardman's precision matched his passion. Turre, in addition to his fine trombone work, lent a Kirkian novelty to the performance by soloing with creativity and wit on conch shells of various sizes. Vocalists Susan Klewan and Timmy Sheppard added tasteful lyrics to the ensembles and blended smoothly with the horns as they riffed behind the soloists. Hilton Ruiz, Walter Booker and Leroy Williams provided muscular backing for the horns and voices. Although David Murray's Big Band was a hard act to follow, the Vibration Society's effort was more than respectable.

The fare at the 880 Club was more than respectable, also. **Bob Cunningham's** November 6 engagement marked the first time a bassist has performed as a front-liner in the club's All Star Jazz series. Cunningham improvised with incredible skill, intelligently blending a variety of arco and pizzicato techniques into a synthesis characterized by tastefulness and intensity. In this bass fan's feast, house bassist Nat Reeves meshed nicely with Cunningham. Sitting in, bassist Rick Rozie soloed with skill and sensitivity. Cunningham also gave his poem, "The Wind", a histrionic reading while Reeves, Don DePalma and Mike Duquette rustled, whispered and whistled around him. The blend of poetry and jazz proved very effective. One might say Cunningham's entire performance was fresh as a breeze.

Joy Spring's December 3 appearance at the club was equally invigorating. The quintet's front line juxtaposes the laid-back lyricism of Charlie Kohlase with the hot alto, tenor and soprano of Will Bartlett. Bartlett, in particular, sounded in fine form; one idea flowed seamlessly into the next during his smoking choruses. Pianist Terry Eisen's strong inner logic instilled her improvisations with a continuity that

matched their abandon, especially on her catchy original *Now You Know*.

The 880 Club's December line-up presented yet another opportunity to hear two of the most impressive alto saxophonists on the scene: **Kenny Garrett** and **Thomas Chapin**. In his December 11 appearance, Garrett presented himself as a polished, sizzling stylist who inclines toward the outside while stretching out on straight-ahead material. Chapin, on the other hand, blended the everyday with the exotic during his December 18 engagement, blowing with comfort and creative fire on a breakneck *Cherokee*, then teaming with Joseph Celli to perform the most avant-garde work I've ever heard at the club. Celli, the departing director of Real Art Ways, played the mukha veena, an Indian double reed instrument, in flurries, drones and spontaneous exultations with Chapin's alto. Celli and Chapin circled each other through several minutes of high-flying dialogue, Junior Ortiz grounded them with his congas and the house trio returned to the stand to join in the ethereal yet exuberant piece, appropriately titled *Joy*.

Claudio Roditi exuded more than his share of joy during his December 4 appearance. He communicated his indomitable spirit with impeccable chops and taste.

In addition to its jazz programming, the 880 Club hosted the Connecticut Jazz Confederation's Annual Meeting, Bill Pickowitz, one of the Confederation's founders, was elected President, replacing Walter "Stix" Leonard, who is leaving the area. After the meeting, a number of local musicians entertained the members with two fine sets.

Michael Duva's Hillside Restaurant hosted the Confederation's November 28 presentation. The versatile **Larry Young** played trumpet, vibes and alto as he led his quartet through two sets of standards. Although known primarily as a trumpeter, Young turned in some impassioned vibes work with a percussive bite. Young's pianist, eighteen year old Kevin Hayes, played with a rhythmic drive that propelled him into novel variations on his linear approach. Dave Santoro's no frills bass playing offered steady support and solid solos. Drummer Don Chouinard completed the quartet. Despite the quality of the improvisation, the quartet would have improved the quality of its performance by playing less worn material. In a format that showcases their talents, one would expect musicians who perform at a Confederation event to treat the performance as something more than "just another gig."

Carlos Carion met that expectation. The slick vocalist, whom the Confederation co-featured with Young, brought with him an intriguing repertoire, some of it little-known, most of it interesting. In addition to his smooth voice and polished delivery, Carion scatted inventively, incorporating a wide array of percussive effects into his lines. Carion received uneven backing from his band, however. Although displaying fine ideas, tenor saxophonist Kirk Edwards diminished their impact with his tentative approach. Carion's rhythm section seemed uncertain about their cues at times; their uncertainty diminished the effectiveness of Carion's performance.

Don Cherry spent November 16-25 as artist-in-residence at Real Art Ways. During his residency, he lectured at the University

of Hartford, gave a concert at Wesleyan University and celebrated his fiftieth birthday with a concert featuring student musicians at Real Art Ways' performance space.

Capitol Hall began a Sunday evening jazz series November 2 with Rebecca Paris, who features a dry voice and a swinging delivery. Otha Stokes, a soul-oriented saxophonist, alternated sets with the vocalist. November 23 the Rudy Collins quartet with Dick Griffin performed at the hall.... Bobby Naughton was among the artists presenting their work at the Connecticut Composers Festival.... Lloyd's, in conjunction with the Hartford Conservatory, presented the Nick Brignola quartet November 9.... The Bank Street Bistro, a New London club, has instituted a jazz policy. Thomas Chapin, Joe Fonda and Hotep Cecil Bernard have performed at the bistro.

— **Vernon Frazer**

SAN FRANCISCO — The second half of 1986 was filled with music. July was a mixture of new masters with the beloved veterans of African-American music. **Odean Pope** brought his massive sound to Concepts Cultural Gallery in Oakland for two nights. Pope's music is forceful, original, never seeming to run out of energy. He knows the tradition well and pays tribute to it through his considerable command of the tenor saxophone. He appeared in quartet with bay area musicians Eric Vaughan, piano; James Lewis, bass and Eddie Moore, drums.

Another young master is **Bobby McFerrin**, THE VOICE. He appeared accapella at the Great American Music Hall, presenting a ninety minute performance full of spontaneity, drawing his direction from the audience and his own heartbeat. His amazing facility and absolute control of his voice and body allow him to use his mind as a radio, tuning into whatever frequency he wants.

Back at the GAMH, **Pharoah Sanders** blew hard, strong and long with a group of William Henderson, piano; bassist Herbie Lewis and drummer Eddie Moore. Sanders is a fine craftsman moving from the blues to ballad to an explosive rhythmic wave, all of which contained a deeply spiritual quality.

The last week of July brought **Abbey Lincoln/Aminata Moseka** to Yoshi's at the Oakland/Berkeley border. It was an evening of maximum feeling and expressiveness with Phil Wright, piano, Larry Gales, bass and Mark Johnson, drums. The trio was restrained, never getting in the way, all the while propelling Ms Moseka through a fine set. She executes her music effortlessly, with a minimum of strain and thoroughly full dynamics and range.

August brought with it three of the young toughs coming out of New York City. It is once a year at best that the bay area has an opportunity to hear **Steve Turre**, **John Blake** and **Billy Bang**. Turre and Bang anchored the month at Concepts; Turre at the beginning with his second annual "Tribute to Raahsan Roland Kirk" creating a perfect balance between technique and quality of idea. He appeared with Rudi Mwongozi, piano; Herbie Lewis, bass and Donald Bailey, drums. Bang, performing later in the month with his group of William Parker, bass; Oscar Sanders, electric guitar and Zen Matsura, drums, soared into the unknown above the group's pulsating

layer of harmony and rhythm. This is definitely a group to listen for. John Blake whirled into town in the middle of the month at the GAMH. The quartet setting of drums, electric bass, grand piano and Blake out front was just right for showcasing his violin wizardry.

The end of the month, labor day weekend in the states, brought the **Berkeley Jazz Festival** to the Greek Theater in Berkeley. The first day was really 'pop' day and some sad examples at that. Finally, as the sun set and the chill rose over the outdoor theater, **Abdullah Ibrahim and Ekaya** came out — an hour or so late, with only about one-quarter of the audience left. Too bad, for Ekaya with Carlos Ward, Ricky Ford, Dick Griffin, Charles Davis, Ben Riley, David Williams and Ibrahim were the highlight of the festival, just like they were last year. I skipped the second day opting to stay in S.F. and check out Bobby McFerrin's **Voicestra**. This fifteen piece vocal orchestra was organized in the center of the room and arranged into sections of four bass voices, three tenor voices, four alto and three soprano voices. All of this is approximate as the range of the "vocalizers/singers" was wide to say the least. McFerrin himself has the ability to clearly create in all of these ranges.

The trend continued in September. I heard a rather uninteresting set by **Amber Sky**, a group with Paul Horn, Ralph Towner, David Friesen and Paul McCandless and an explosive evening with **Betty Carter**. Both at the GAMH. At the end of the month a rare visit by **Leroy Jenkins and Oliver Lake** playing duets. The last time they were in this area as a duo was about five years ago so the turnout at Concepts was great as were the vibes and the music. Also in September at Herbst Theater in S.F. was a performance of **Max Roach** with the **Kronos Quartet** playing **Peter Phillips'** composition for Roach and string quartet called **Survivors**.

October blasted off with three nights of **Sun Ra and his Omni-verse Arkestra** at Concepts Cultural Gallery. The place, rather small (holding about 85 people), took on the feeling of Noah's Ark as every imagine space was filled for each set (six in all). The arkestra of 15 pieces sounded great. With a front line of John Gilmore, Marshall Allen, Ronald Wilson and the return of Pat Patrick how could it not.

Randy Weston came to Yoshi's at the end of October with the quartet of Talib Kibwe on reeds, Eddie Moore and Kwaku Daddy on traps and hand drums, respectively. It is a rare treat to hear Randy Weston in a setting larger than duo and especially fine to hear him with such a satisfying wind player. The high points in a high evening were Weston's duo with Kwaku on **Portrait of Frank Edward Weston** and the quartet's playing of **Blue Moses**.

Terrance Blanchard and Donald Harrison came to town at the beginning of November at the Great American Music Hall. Later that month at GAMH the World Saxophone Quartet blew into town for an evening. The highlight of the program were the brilliant arrangements of Duke Ellington's music. Gary Burton's Quartet and Oregon rounded out the month at the GAMH. Frank Morgan played Concepts in Oakland November first and Jimmy Witherspoon held down a full weekend at Concepts the 14-16 of November. In December Concepts presented Russel Baba/Jeanee

Aiko Mercer duo and Les Walker solo piano on December 6 and Horace Tapscott's trio featuring Roberto Miranda enriched listeners the week of December 12 and 13.

The New Performance Gallery in San Francisco presented an evening of **Asian-American Improvised Music** with Jon Jang and Quartet featuring Fred Houn. Jang is developing into a powerful voice in the music. His quartet was the strongest I've heard them (each time they get better), especially tenor player Francis Wong. Later that night **Dewey Redman** held forth with a wonderful quartet of Rod Williams, piano; Andre St. James, bass and Eddie Moore, drums. That evening Mr. Redman treated us to the sounds of his eighteen year old son Joshua who can hold his own with any young tenor voice today. On Sunday the 23rd I went down to Half Moon Bay and Pete Douglas' Bach Dynamite and Dancing Society to hear Redman and quartet again, this time at an afternoon/evening performance at the beautiful beach house about twenty minutes down coast from S.F. Branford Marsalis and quartet played an exciting and energetic evening at GAMH on 11.26. If this young man keeps growing musically and maintains his interest in the music and its traditions he will develop into an important voice in the years to come. I hope his commercial success doesn't go to his head (and chops).

Finally the end of December brought the trio Middle Passage to recital at the Flat Iron Saloon in San Rafael. They have a comfortable listening room on the second floor above their bar. Middle Passage with India Cooke, violin; Kash Killion, cello and Anthony Brown, drums have a strong and compelling sound. Their set was balanced with originals and classic compositions in the jazz tradition from Monk, Mingus and Coltrane. We hope to hear more from them in the future.

'86 was good. '87 will be better. Peace and Good Health to all. — **Brian Auerbach**

AMSTERDAM — After the summer festivals and the October Jazz Month died down the normal winter routine for jazz and improvised music has set in. Quite a few places around the country present jazz and improvised music on a daily or weekly basis. Most music seems to be played by local musicians. Although many of them are worth listening to, I have noted an unfortunate tendency to try and copy some U.S. model, such as Wayne Shorter. The result is a music devoid of its roots, having the same relation to its model as ABBA has to real rock 'n' roll.

Fortunately the Dutch scene has much better music to offer. Some groups seem to have a (semi-) steady gig, such as **Hans Dulfer** and his "trash jazz" band, Reflud, comprising two electric guitars, electric bass and drums, apart from Dulfer's own tenorsax. I heard them at de Kroeg in Amsterdam on December 7. The group offered a mix of heavy metal and jazz which was interesting but loud. However steady gigs seem to be the exception. The local practice appears to be to form a group, tour the country for a number of weeks, do a radio broadcast, tape a record, and then go into hibernation until the next tour. This way Loek Dikker and the New Waterlands, Compass, and other groups toured

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the country. This was also the case for the new version of the **Instant Composers Pool**, I.C.P., in one of its many incarnations. Late this summer the group started the winter season with its Thelonious Monk project, orchestrated by **Misha Mengelberg**. I caught the group in Cafe Schlemmer in the Hague, after their European tour, on December 10. After hearing their versions of Herbie Nicol's music a couple of years ago (unfortunately only available on cassette ICP025 until now, though this music deserves five stars or more) my expectations were very high. They were fully satisfied. Misha Mengelberg and **Han Bennink** are relatively unknown in North America, but they are among the most important musicians playing anywhere at the moment. Bennink extracted marvelous music from an elementary drum set, and Mengelberg is uniquely able to extend Monk's music, adding to its intricacy and beauty in a tangy and acerbic fashion. He also wrote the **Sofa Suite** for the band. The other members of I.C.P., Ab Baars, Michael Moore, Maurice Horsthuis, Wolter Wierbos and Ernst Reijssiger, also performed admirably.

The **Willem Breuker** concert in Amsterdam on December 5 was sold out, so I'll have to wait till the Christmas series that will again feature I.C.P., this time with Steve Lacy. Foreign guests seem to be less frequent this winter. The highlight for me at the BIMhuis in Amsterdam was the concert by **Sun Ra** (December 11) which featured many Ellington pieces as well as originals. Sun Ra was in terrific form, as were **John Gilmore** and **Marshall Allen**. Allen's furious solo on *Prelude To A Kiss* showed this ballad in an unexpected form, and Gilmore also demonstrated his powerful musicality on tunes such as *Beautiful Love, I Dream Too Much*, and *I'll Never Be The Same*.

A gentler note was sounded by Astrud Gilberto, who performed at Paradiso December 21. What mainly surprised me here was the audience, which mainly consisted of aspiring Yuppies in their twenties. Is gentility on its way back? Wait for the next installment from Amsterdam.

— **Walter Schwager**

LONDON — Ronnie Scott's is (more or less) the place to be in London if you want to listen to good, established jazz names — even if drinks cost you two pounds a shot. **Art Blakey** played there for two weeks starting on October 27, and had the place packed to standing room only for most nights. The warm up band was called the **Clark Tracey Quintet**. While they were competent, they were not exciting, and even on such compositions as Freddie Hubbard's *Take It To The Ozone*, all the musicians played as though locked into a rigid formula.

However, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers were undeniably cool and gratifyingly accomplished. I learned one thing which I had never realised before (although many of you may already have figured it out) — Art Blakey is God with a Pearl drum kit.

Either that, or just a little gnome who likes to make a lot of noise.

Other Ronnie Scotters have included **Buddy Rich** and his orchestra and the **Ronnie Scott Quintet** — sold out for the week they were performing in late November. While anyone

who has read anything by or about Ronnie Scott will realize that he is an incorrigible joker, he is also a top-notch saxophonist, holding his own with the best of them.

Courtney Pine is the best British bet, being a brash young sax player who claims to have drawn his inspiration from Sonny Rollins. He has been playing quite regularly and has just released his debut album, "Journey to the Urge Within" on CBS.

The only other jazz band worth mentioning was one which I saw completely by accident. I had made plans with a friend visiting from Canada to go to a movie, but when we got to the theatre, we found that the movie had been cancelled. With the gloomy prospect of his last Saturday night in London being an empty one, we wandered around, jumped on the subway, got off somewhere else and wandered around some more until we found ourselves outside a club called The Atlantic in Brixton. Inside, the strains of jazz could be heard, so we went in and found ourselves listening to a very good bebop-type band until around 1 a.m. Unfortunately, we never did find out what they were called, but it just goes to show that you don't have to count on the established clubs and special venues to hear good music.

— **Michelle Beauchamp**

ODDS & SODS

National Public Radio brought in the New Year with a national hook-up of jazz heard on 200 radio stations across the U.S. The seven hour program featured Tania Maria (from Newark), Nat Adderley's Quintet (from Fort Worth's Caravan of Dreams) and Ross Tompkins/Jack Sheldon (from Long Beach).

Turk Murphy's longtime contributions to traditional jazz were celebrated in New York January 9/10. Vince Giordana's Nighthawks performed at a party honoring Turk at the Grand Hyatt (9th) followed by a concert at Carnegie Hall (10th) with Turk's band, Jim Cullum's Band, France's Hot Antic Band and guest performers Lew Green and Wayne Jones.

...**Illinois Jacquet's Big Band** returned to the Village Vanguard for the week of November 25.... Singers **Dakota Staton** and **Sarah McLawler** were honored by the Universal Jazz Coalition December 12/13 at the Jazz Center.... The same venue was used for the premiere of new compositions by **Muhai Richard Abrams** November 21 and 22.... Abdullah Ibrahim, David Murray Octet and Art Blakey were at **Sweet Basil** in December. The club presented the 1987 version of "Music is an Open Sky" January 20 to February 1 with the String Trio of New York, The Group (Abdullah, Marion Brown, Billy Bang, Sirone, Andrew Cyrille), Roger Kellaway, Gil Evans, Frank Gordon, Rova, Ray Anderson, Sam Rivers and "Yaruba Proverbs" with Bill Cole, Julius Hemphill, Joe Daley, Gerald Veasley, Warren Smith and Hafiz Shabazz.... **The Walter Thompson Big Band** was at Greenwich House January 14; two nights later **Reggie Workman's Trio** were in residence at the same location.... The International Art of Jazz held a New Orleans Jazz Party December 28 at the Calderone Theater with **Arvell Shaw** and the Armstrong Legacy.

Brooklyn's **Williamsburgh Music Center**

(367 Bedford Avenue) January showcases included Frank London (11), Roland Alexander (18), Zane Massey playing the music of Cal Massey (25) and the Andy Bey Quartet (February 1).

"Saxophone Colossus", Bob Mugge's film about **Sonny Rollins**, was presented December 5-11 at Brookline, Ma.'s Coolidge Corner Moviehouse.... Ken McIntyre, Bill Frisell and Joe Morris have all performed at Brandeis University's **The Joint.... Abbey Lincoln** will present "Stories About the Old Days" February 6/7 for Hartford's Artists Collective at the Austin Arts Center, Trinity College. The same organisation presents **Ahmad Jamal** March 28 at the Lincoln Theater, University of Hartford.

Henry Threadgill performed his own music November 8 at Detroit's Institute of Arts with a specially assembled Octet of Detroit musicians. Guitarist **Spencer Barefield** and bassist **Richard Davis** performed at the same venue December 5.... **The Johnny Griffin Quartet** was at Ann Arbor's The Ark November 22. Pianist Harry Pickens, bassist Curtis Lundy, and drummer Kenny Washington worked with the saxophonist.... The Harlem Blues and Jazz Band and Tom Gwaltney's Apex Club Ensemble highlighted the 21st annual **Manassas Jazz Festival** November 28/30.... **WTJU Radio** sponsored four concerts in the fall at Charlottesville, Virginia: Tim Berne and Bill Frisell, the late Johnny Dyani and Witchdoctor's Son, Jaki Byard's Apollo Stompers and Cecil Taylor.

The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival takes place April 24-May 3. A soon-to-be-published brochure with schedule details can be obtained from P.O. Box 2530, NOLA, 70176 with an enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.... Austin's **Creative Opportunity Orchestra** presented a concert at the Ritz Theatre on November 21.... **Joe Williams** heads the all-star lineup for the 10th Paradise Valley Jazz Party March 14/15. Kirk Lightsey, Mel Lewis, Kenny Burrell, John Clayton and Rob McConnell are first timers at the event.... **Bud Shank's** quartet were at Hollywood's Catalina's December 5/6.... **Stan Getz**, who was inducted into Down Beat's Hall of Fame recently, appeared at Oakland's plush jazz club Yoshi's in early November.

The **Alton Purnell Trust Fund** has been established to assist the veteran pianist who settled in Los Angeles 30 years ago following many years with the George Lewis band. His deteriorating health prevents him from performing and contributions can be sent to the fund c/o Robert L. Allen, Attorney, 6725 W. Sunset Blvd., Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA 90028.... Bruce Fleury, who can be reached at the Howard Tifton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, La. 70118 is trying to find any air checks of **Billie Holiday** with the **Artie Shaw Band** ins August-October 1936. All efforts to date have proved fruitless!

Cleo Brown, **Melba Liston** and **Jay McShann** received the 1987 Jazz Masters Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts.... **Dizzy Gillespie** donated one of his turned-up trumpets to the Smithsonian Institution.... The original score of **Bob Brookmeyer's** "Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra - A Tribute to Benny" was given to the BMI Archives. The

work was performed by The American Jazz Orchestra at its October 31 concert at Cooper Union.... **Back Forty Records** is a specialty outlet for blues records at P.O. Box 1745, Oxford, Mississippi 38655.... **CBS Records** won a permanent injunction in the U.S. Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in its case against **Charles Garrod** and his companies - Ajax, Ajax and Joyce.

De Media is a cultural arts space at Molenstraat 165, 99000 Eeklo, Belgium (between Ghent and Brugge). They present a broad cross-section of music and arts related events. They also offer touring assistance for groups in Belgium....Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy, the Paris Reunion Band, Airtro/Flora Purim and Hermeto Pascoal were at **London's Town & Country Club** in November.... Alto saxophonist **Jukka Perko** is Finland's "Key" musician of the year.... Martial Solal, Lee Konitz and NHOP were at **Paris' New Morning Club** at the beginning of December. Their two nights were separated by a one nighter from the Barney Wilen-Philippe Petit Quartet.... George Wallington, The Great Basie Eight, the Vienna Art Orchestra, Jackie McLean/Rene McLean, Oscar Peterson, Rare Silk and Adam Makowicz are among the early 1987 presentations by The Brass Group in **Palermo, Sicily**.... The Marlboro Superband played four dates in **Spain** in November. Ron Carter, James Moody, Cedar Walton, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Terance Blanchard and vocalist Barbara Morrison were the personnel for this tour.... **Zurich's** Widder Bar presented Dizzy Gillespie, Dorothy Donegan and James Moody in December.... **Jazz House Musik** (Venloer Strasse 40, 5000 Koln, West Germany) is an independent jazz label with close links to an area musicians' association and a recently opened concert stage in the Stadgartenrestaurant.... In issue 207 of **Coda** we mentioned the **Musiker Handbuch 86/87** - a directory of clubs, festivals and other activities useful for musicians and listeners. The correct price of the book at present is US\$22 and it is available from D-4834 Harsewinkel 100, West Germany.

V.I.E.W. Video (34 East 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010) has videos of Gil Evans, Mel Lewis, Billy Cobham/Louis Bellson, Bobby Short and Mabel Mercer in its catalog.... The Bob Crosby Golden Anniversary Tribute is a video documentary of a 1985 concert featuring Bob Haggart, Yank Lawson, Eddie Miller and Billy Butterfield with a 15 piece orchestra conducted by **Bob Crosby**. Historic film clips augment the recent performances. The video costs US\$32.95 postpaid from Crosby Music Agency, 7730 Herschel Avenue, La Jolla, Ca. 92037.

Atlantic has issued a cross section of music on 15 lps which are divided stylistically to represent various periods of the music. Selections from many long-deleted lps are a tantalising glimpse at the wealth of music recorded by the company in the past. The same is true of the four lps covering "Atlantic Blues". Also from Atlantic is a two-lp set of Ahmad Jamal at the 1985 Montreux Festival and a 2 record compilation of Joe Turner's R&B sides.... New from **BlackHawk** are lps by Jimmy Knepper, Dizzy Gillespie/Mitchell Ruff, Stephane Grappelli, The Leaders, Elvin Jones/McCoy Tyner, Steve Kuhn and Carmen Lundy.... "The Other Side of Round Midnight"

A RARE MAGAZINE AUCTION * NUMBER TWO

This is the second of several auctions of rare out of print jazz magazines which have been acquired recently. They are basically in good condition but covers show marks of their age and there is some discolouration of inside paper for the same reason. Note: the issues of *Metronome* covering the years 1945-1953 are well used and are of lesser physical quality than the other years. (CM) = cover missing; (CD) = cover damaged or cut; (CT) = cover taped.

Minimum bid for *Metronome* magazines is Can \$4.00 per magazine. Minimum bid for *Metronome/Down Beat* Yearbooks is Can \$10.00 per book. Postage (at printed matter rate) is extra. Airmail and first class also available. Only winners will be notified. Deadline for bids is **FEBRUARY 28, 1987**. Send all bids to John Norris, c/o Coda Publications, Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario M4J 4X8.

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Metronome, one of the longest running of music magazines covered a lot of ground over the years.

1937 January
1939 January
1940 January, February
1941 January, June, October
1942 January
1943 January, May, October, December
1944 January, February, March, April, June, July
1945 January, April
1946 January, February, September, October, December (CD)
1947 January, February (CD), March, April, May
1948 January (CT), February, March, August
1949 January, February (CT), March (CD), August, November (CD)
1950 March (CM), June (CM), December
1951 February, September (CM)
1952 January (CM), May, June, September, October (CM), November (CM)
1953 April, June (CM), September (CD), December

1954 January to December (12 issues)
1955 January to December (12 issues)
1956 January, February, March, May, July, August, September, October, November
1957 January, April, May, June, July, August, September, October
1958 January to December (12 issues)
1959 January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October
1960 June, July, August, September, October, November, December
1961 January to December (12 issues)

METRONOME YEARBOOKS

1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1958, 1959

DOWNBEAT YEARBOOKS

1957 (Number 2), 1958 (No. 3 - CT), 1959 (no. 4), 1960 (No. 5 - CT), 1961 (No. 6), 1962 (No. 7), 1963 (No. 8), 1964 (No. 9), 1965 (No. 10), 1966 (No. 11), 1967 (No. 12), 1968 (No. 13), 1969 (No. 14), 1970 (No. 15), 1971 (No. 16), 1972 (No. 17), 1973 (No. 18), 1974 (No. 19).



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is a **Blue Note** release of additional material from the Dexter Gordon movie. A performance of **Society Red** with the New York band (Hubbard/Walton), an ad-lib Wayne Shorter blues performance and a Herbie Hancock solo rendition of **'Round Midnight** were not seen/heard in the film. Only Sandra Reeves Phillips' gut bucket party piece (a Bessie Smith tune) didn't make it to either soundtrack.... Guitarist Stanley Jordan's second Blue Note lp **"Standards, Volume 1"** is solo guitar.... New from **Enja** are Kenny Barron's quintet date with Wallace Roney and John Stubblefield, **"To Duke and Basie"** by Clark Terry and Red Mitchell and David Friedman's **"Shades of Change"**.... Guitarist Henry Johnson's debut **Impulse** lp is now available.... **New World Records** has reissued Roy Eldridge's **"The Nifty Cat"**. Another **MJR** title (Buddy Tate's **"Texas Twister"**) will be available later in the year as well as a two lp set of Steve Kuhn playing ballads. All these releases will be available on lp and compact disc.... **"Solo Flight"** is Bucky Pizzarelli's latest release on **Stash**.... **"Ain't Misbehavin'"** is a solo piano lp by Roger Kellaway on **Bainbridge**.... **Cadence Records** has released lps by Ernie Krivda (Tough Tenor), Norwegian guitarist Thorger Stubo (Rhythm-a-ning) and vocalist Paula Owen.... **Sunnyside's** latest is **"A Reverie"** - solo piano by Armen Donelian.

"Kansas City Connections" is a new release by **Gary Foster** which is available through Jim Nirschl, 9811 West 56th Terrace, Merriam, Ks 66203.... **Art Monroe's** new lp **"I Never Dreamed"** is on V.S.O.P. Records.... Phila-

delphia pianist **Sumi Tonooka** has produced her first lp **"With An Open Heart"**. It features Rufus Reid and Akira Tana and is available from 106 Fort Greene Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.... Trumpeter **Gary Wofsey's** new recording **"In Tokyo"** is with a Japanese orchestra and is available from Ambi Records, Box 2122, Darien, Ct 06820.... **Jazzology** has issued historic material by George Webb's Dixielanders featuring Wally Fawkes and Humphrey Lyttelton.... **The Podium Jazz Trio** has released an lp of music from the 1986 Montreal Festival. It is available from Paul van Kamenade, Enschootsestraat 262, 5014 DL Tilburg, Holland.

CD Notes: Look for many BlackHawk titles on compact disc. The initial release includes Phil Woods, Kenny Barron, Stan Getz, Abdullah Ibrahim and Sheila Jordan.... Blue Note's CD program is now getting under way in the U.S. Already out are CDs of Woody Shaw/Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson and Michel Petrucciani. Due soon are the Don Pullen/George Adams collaboration and The Other Side of Round Midnight. Both the Henderson and the Pullen/Adams CDs have additional material. The same will be true of the January releases: volume 2 of Joe Henderson, James Newton's **"Romance and Revolution"** and Michel Petrucciani's Montreux date with Wayne Shorter and Jim Hall. The US CD of Cannonball Adderley's **"Something Else"** will include the extra title not on lp. 57 reissue titles are scheduled from Blue Note for the first half of 1987 and wherever possible additional titles will be added. Live material by Sonny Rollins,

Art Blakey, Kenny Dorham and The Jazz Messengers which were originally on three lps will be newly available on two full CDs.... Delos, who now only manufacture their recordings on CD, has issued **"Essence"** by the Timeless All Stars (with Bobby Hutcherson, Harold Land, Curtis Fuller, Cedar Walton, Buster Williams, Billy Higgins) and **"Feeling Good"** by the latest edition of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers.... Denon has new CDs by Carmen McRae (**"Any Old Time"**), Phil Woods Quintet **"Gratitude"** (a studio date by the current band) and McCoy Tyner **"Double Trios"** in which the pianist plays both acoustic and electric instruments.... Maynard Ferguson's Mainstream lp **"The Blues Roar"** is now available on a Mobile Fidelity CD. So too is Sarah Vaughan's **"A Time in my Life"**.

Guitarist **Jerome Darr** died October 29 in Brooklyn. He was 75.... **Marky Markowitz** died in New York City November 11.... Saxophonist **Paul Bascombe** died December 2 in Chicago.... New Orleans guitarist **Emmanuel Sayles** died September 5. He was 79.... Folkways Records founder **Moses Asch** died in New York October 19. He was 81.... **Monk Higgins** died in Los Angeles July 3. He was 50.... Blues singer **Sippie Wallace** died November 1 in Detroit at the age of 85.... **Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis** died November 3 in Las Vegas after a lengthy bout with cancer.... Pianist **Eddie Thompson** died in England November 6. He was 61.... Saxophonist **Derek Neville** died recently in New Zealand.... Both trumpeter **Fred Stone** and bassist **Fred McHugh** died December 9 in Toronto.
— compiled by John Norris

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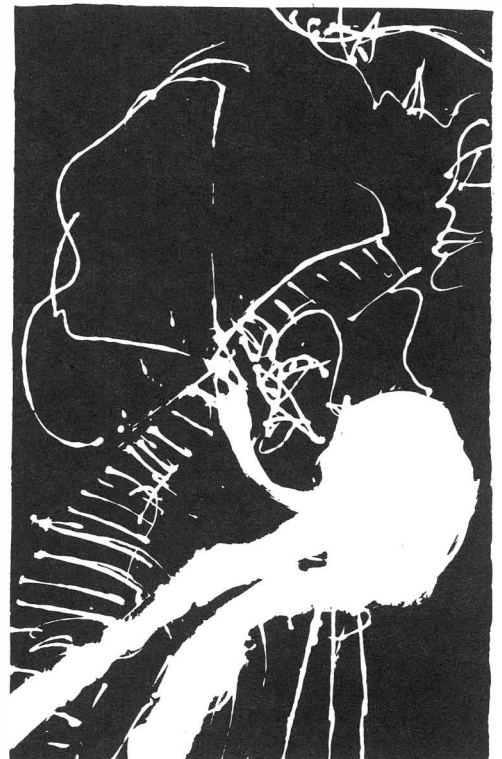
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