

CODA MAGAZINE

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SATHIMA BEA BENJAMIN * MARILYN CRISPELL * JAZZ VOCALISTS * SHEILA JORDAN
CARMEN McRAE * JAZZ LITERATURE * VIC VOGEL * IN PERFORMANCE * STEVE LACY
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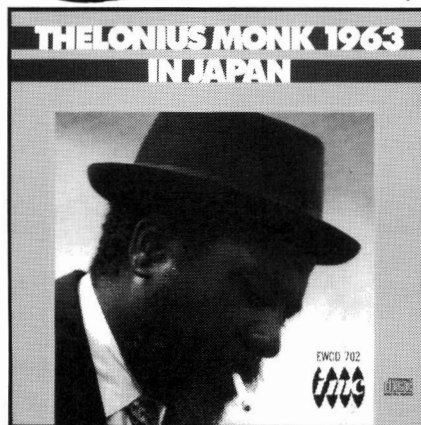
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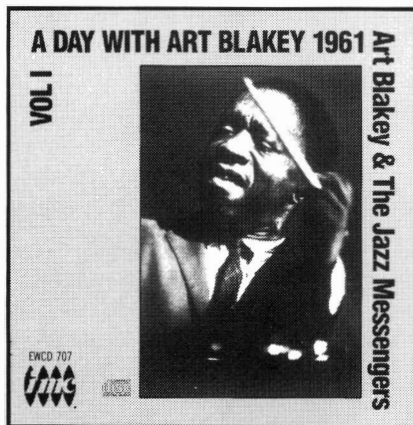
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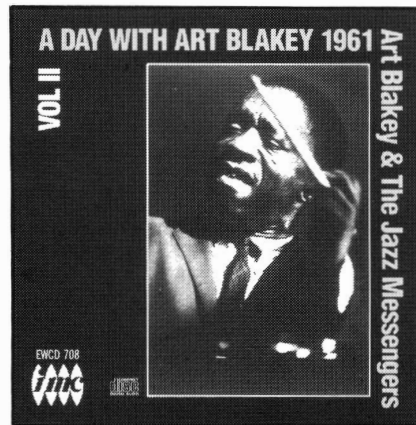
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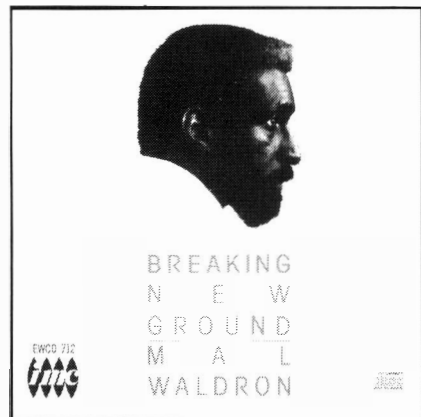
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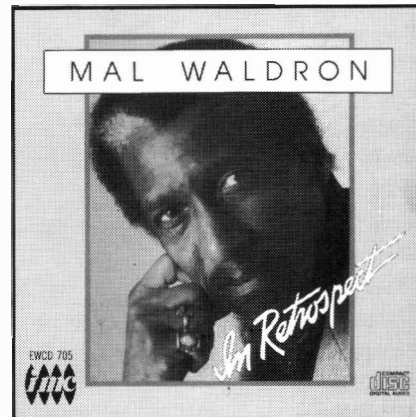
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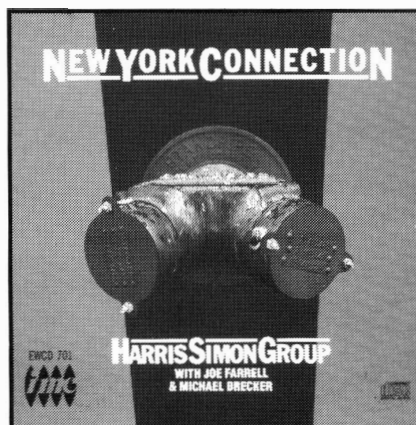
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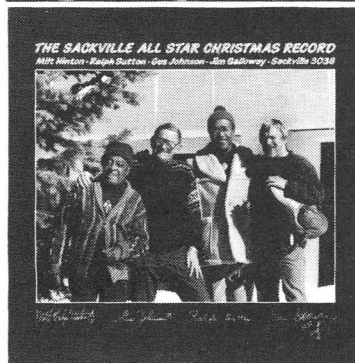
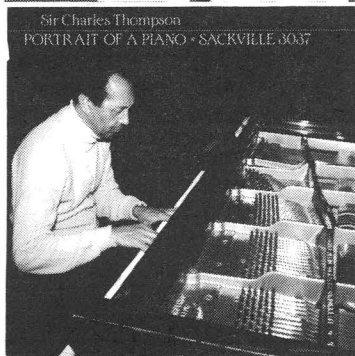
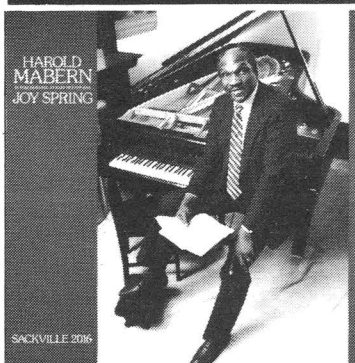
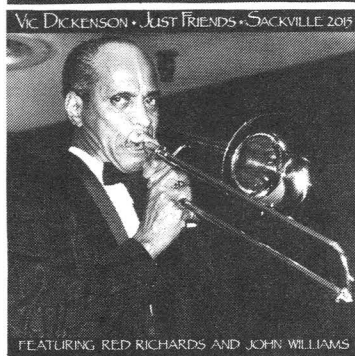
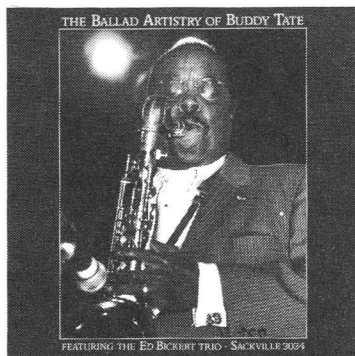
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SATHIMA BEA BENJAMIN * AFRICAN SONGBIRD

While visiting her South African home in 1974, singer Sathima Bea Benjamin had a dream vision. In it, she says, "I heard this glorious music, and saw these silver sands, they were endless. And I saw all the peoples of the world, holding hands, and I guess the people were singing, but I couldn't really hear what they were singing. I don't believe it was chanting, they were singing, but I don't know what exactly. And there was this wonderful feeling of peace. I woke up, and then the light came into my room and lit up the whole room. All I could do was put my head on the ground. I was totally overwhelmed, not afraid, but I felt more than awe.

Sathima wrote a piece about it, but she says, "I'm really very shy about it. I'm afraid people will think I'm nuts." So the song remains unrecorded, but the dream inspired the title of her projected fifth Ekapa record, "Lovelight", which she recorded in September with pianist Larry Willis, bassist Buster Williams, and drummer Billy Higgins. The experience has also guided her career and put previous events in perspective for her. She realizes that "Ellington gave this to me [the LoveLight], and Winnie Mandela has it. And my musicians, I've been led to them, because of this LoveLight. It makes energy, it makes harmony, and it makes this glorious sound. I'm not really doing this, you see, I'm just another light."

In conversation, Sathima Bea Benjamin displays a combination of humility and dignity which you rarely find in Americans. They are qualities she owes to her African origins and her strong Islamic faith. There is a shyness about her, but also a strength. Her bearing is that of a patient survivor sustained by an inner, spiritual vision. Talk of her personal struggles always reaches up toward her god and outward toward her people. The personal meshes with the religious and the political. This is true of her singing and songwriting as well.

"It starts with yourself," she says, "You can't know anything until you know yourself. It's very important that you admit all of these things to yourself. At a certain point you have to debrainwash yourself. You have to pick yourself up and say, 'What am I going to do about this?' No matter how great the odds, how painful, you must love in spite of

everything. It isn't easy.

"The Creator let me know how to get through. I'm attracted to the practical side of Islam. It's very simple. 'There is no God, but God.' And you have your direct connection with your Creator. It's so personal. But it extends to the community, so you embrace. It's so direct. I can't think of anything more beautiful.

"So I try to say all those things with my music. I hope I can touch more people that way. They might just turn on to a sound and a word. And start opening their hearts that way."

Sathima began singing standards and show tunes with local Cape Town bands at variety shows and dances as a teenager. The music of Frank Sinatra, Doris Day, and Nat Cole was on the radio. The older generations sang pre-World War I songs at gatherings and sing-alongs. In the late '50s, when she met Abdullah Ibrahim, the pianist and her future husband, Sathima also began listening to Billie Holiday. "I wasn't alone in listening to jazz in the '50s when in South Africa, jazz became kind of visible, and little groups started working with it and we had concerts and events around this music. There were quite a few other singers, singing the same sort of material, but I don't know what happened to them. And not only in Cape Town, but in Johannesburg, and Port Elizabeth, and elsewhere. None of them recorded, however. Somehow I feel lonely as the sole survivor of that era, out here still doing it," she says.

Together with Abdullah, she began making music which was more personal and less commercial. Lack of work and the increasingly repressive racial climate in South Africa forced them to move to Zurich in 1962, where they got their first big break, under extraordinary circumstances, from Duke Ellington.

The Orchestra was in Zurich for one night and Sathima went backstage to meet Ellington and urge him to come hear Abdullah's trio, which was playing nightly at the Africana Club. She waited until nearly midnight for Ellington to emerge from the concert hall. As they arrived at the club, the musicians were just locking up for the night. But the door was quickly reopened when they saw who Sathima had brought with her. Abdullah played and Sathima sang. As a

result of this informal midnight performance in an empty Zurich club, Ellington arranged a recording session for them in Paris two days later. The material which Abdullah recorded was released as "Duke Ellington Presents the Dollar Brand Trio". Unfortunately, Sathima's material, with Billy Strayhorn on piano, was never released.

Sathima sang on several later occasions with the Ellington Orchestra, including the 1965 Newport Jazz Festival. Reviewing the Newport concert in *Downbeat*, Dan Morgenstern wrote, "The addition of guest vocalist, South African singer Bea Benjamin, was warranted for *Soliditude*, which she sang movingly, in a very personal style, but her encore was unnecessary." Sathima perhaps shed some light on the harsher words regarding her encore in an interview with Sally Plaksin. Describing the concert, she said, "There was no rehearsal. I remember ...he said, 'Do you know *In A Mellotone*?' I vaguely knew it, even though I had never sung it before in my life. I was positive of the melody, even though I didn't have all the words together. And he said, 'Of course you know it, let's go on.' And the band started playing, and I stood there, I repeated the words of the verse twice, and no one knew the difference." Apparently Morgenstern knew the difference, but he has remained a fan of hers since.

Ellington remains one of Sathima's most important musical and personal influences. As she describes it, "We had a wonderful feeling, the three of us together [Ellington, Abdullah, and her]. There's a closeness you can't even talk about or try to explain. Whatever you felt, he knew it. He said one especially good thing, and I'll stick with it, as long as they label me a jazz musician. Ellington didn't like labels, but he said when they label you that way if affords you the freedom to do anything you really want. Any direction you chose to take, the freedom is there. So he let it work for him."

Sathima sang with Abdullah's Universal Silence and other of his groups between 1965 and 1975. After 1970, when their son, Tsakwe, was born, more and more of his energy and time were diverted by the baby, housework and, on occasion, teaching in public schools to help make ends meet. She worked on stage less

frequently. Of this situation she says, “I don’t perform often, not as much as I’d like. My career, in a sense is all the things that I do. I haven’t been able to be selfish and say all I really care about is singing. So there has to be these gaps in between. While I’m doing something else, something else again is happening. God blesses me in that sense. I’d like to be performing more, but children still have to be raised. And as long as I’m doing that job, it wouldn’t be 100% focusing on music. If you’re really involved in the music, I don’t suppose it matters. I still do what I want to do, when I do it. Somehow I think this is the way God intended it for me to be. As long as I have a project in sight... I tell you, I would get very depressed if I thought I couldn’t do it any more. If I felt empty. But I don’t think I ever feel musically empty. I feel musically frustrated sometimes, because I wish I could be out there and just go and work. But for me, it will never be a question of going to a club and working every night.

“When you have a break, you have to build it up all over again. I’ve always been somewhat of a shy person and if I haven’t been around musicians for a while, it takes me quite a moment to get back into it. Once I’m there again, I don’t even want to come out of it.”

Both her son, Tsakwe, and daughter, Tsidi, were born in South Africa. Tsidi was born in 1976, just after the Soweto riots. The trip home that year, changed Sathima’s life dramatically. She explains, “When both children were conceived, we had to move to Europe, where Abdullah felt more secure as a breadwinner. With both of them we travelled a lot. And when the sixth month came around, something in me always said, ‘you have to go back to Africa.’ With Tsidi, we were living in Vienna at the time, and we turned on the TV and saw the Soweto riots happening. And I looked at Abdullah and said, ‘We have to go home.’ And he said, ‘Serious, Sathima?’ and I said, ‘Right, we have to go home.’ A couple of weeks later, we were home.

“By the time we arrived, the student unrest situation had reached Cape Town, and there was so much activity. The kids were being mowed down. We arrived in September, and Tsidi was born in November. At the time, going through the experience, seeing how committed these children were, going through this terrible thing, it was terrifying. We saw it every day. We woke up to it — the sirens and



police. Sometimes, the kids would run into the garden of our house, and we would let them in to hide them.

“At the same time, it gave me a different perspective on everything. It was at this time that I really became so committed to the struggle. I knew that as soon as Tsidi was born and we were able to travel, I wanted to leave home and become, in a sense, a cultural worker and incorporate into my music my feelings. It’s strange that I was pregnant at the time, because I also became pregnant with ideas. I shouldn’t say ideas, but with feelings which were very strong. There was no way you could have lived through that, seen that, and come out without being a very different person. I saw so much courage there, all the time.”

Since 1977, Sathima and her family have lived in New York City. Since her devotion to her family kept her from regular performance, in 1981, out of sheer urgency, she and Abdullah founded Ekapa Records, so she could record and, in her words, “Let the records do a little bit of traveling for me, since I had to stay home.” These records give the listener a complete picture of Sathima as a mature artist. On them you will find the old songs of her youth, Ellingtonia, and original tunes about the political strife and also the beauty of her native land.

Africa is always on her mind and in her singing. “I think the basis of everything I do is Africa,” she maintains. “There’s a sense of rhythm, that if you listen carefully, is there. I’m really thrilled that I come from Africa, I feel good

about it. I know that when you say that I’m from South Africa and I’m a singer that people might get a preconceived idea of how you look and how you sing. And being the sole survivor out there doing it, without a point of reference, I get all these weird reactions from people. They don’t know what to expect. But I say all you have to do, since I’m singing to you from my heart and my life experience, is to throw away all those compartments that you have and just sit there and let it flow.

“Children should never be dying of hunger in South Africa. Never, never, never, never, never. The country is full of resource, you know? It’s incredibly rich in all ways. Education should be free for everyone. Everyone wants to learn. Everyone can learn. But they cannot under apartheid.

“I think the world should be concerned, not just us. Although it is our concern to *see* to it that we *liberate ourselves*. It is. But it is the concern of the whole world because the whole world is involved with South Africa. We always say if the thing gets going in South Africa, the lights go out in New York City. That’s the truth.

“I don’t think my path has been easy, but I have been blessed all along the way: I have Abdullah, I have my children, I have the wonderful musicians I work with. I wish I could be out there singing more, because I like to give of myself, and singing is one way I can do that. But when I can’t be out there singing, then in my daily life I have to give of myself, and that’s singing, too.”

— Ed Hazell

MARILYN CRISPELL * RHYTHMS HUNG IN UNDRAWN SKY

It's May 1979, and the Moers Jazz Festival in Germany is in its pre-production madness, or should I say excitement. The project which has brought us to the festival several days ahead of the advertised schedule is the knowledge that two orchestras with the same personnel, but under the separate direction of composers Leo Smith and Roscoe Mitchell, will rehearse the material in a nearby public building. I have always enjoyed being present at other musicians' rehearsals, and when the orchestra includes many friends such as Kenny Wheeler, George Lewis and Pheeroan Ak Laff, plus the opportunity to be introduced to many of the new voices of the future, one realises the magnitude of the occasion that is unfolding. The pianist in this amazing project is Marilyn Crispell. We were to see each other several times over the ensuing years, giving me the opportunity to be delighted by her playing in various circumstances. Once in Montreal with the Anthony Braxton Quintet at the Rising Sun, earlier this year at the Music Gallery in Toronto at their Piano Festival, and then in June at the Toronto Jazz Festival with the Reggie Workman Quartet, a group that is still part of her current activities.

In a period where much of the conversation is centred in the idea that there is little new creative music being performed, Marilyn Crispell is a breath of fresh air, for her attitude, instead of being part of the steady stream of complaints that seem to be the musicians' language of this time, is one of joy and expectation for the music.

She was born in Philadelphia, grew up in Baltimore, and developed her art over a period of thirteen years in and around the Boston area.

MARILYN CRISPELL: I studied at the New England Conservatory as a composition major for the first year. It was a lot of work and I was never able to get caught up in all the work I had. A lot of it seemed very academic, like orchestration classes, because what I really needed to do was listen more, to hear the different instruments, rather than reading about them in a book. That seemed so absurd. So in my second year I switched to being a piano major, and felt like my technique got freed up, certain techniques, relaxation and everything else

that the teacher showed me at the time. When I graduated from the conservatory in 1968 I was fed up with music and stopped playing for six or seven years. What got me back into it, when I was twenty eight years old, was that I was living with a man on Cape Cod who was a jazz musician, he played me lots of records and I fell totally in love with it. [The recordings were of John Coltrane, Monk, Cecil Taylor, Keith Jarrett, McCoy Tyner, Bill Evans, early Chick Corea.] I at once sat down and said if I were to improvise, then this is the kind of music I would improvise. But nobody would ever listen to it, they would think I was nuts. One night I was in the house alone and I put on John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme", and something happened that was almost like an otherworldly experience, something caught me, and I started playing the record over and over and over, and thought I have to learn to play that kind of music. Just for myself. I never had any idea about doing it as a

career. That night I started to try to transcribe all the McCoy Tyner solos off of that record. I spent days trying to figure out how he did it. How did he get that sound?

Soon after that I heard about a teacher in Boston, his name was Charlie Banockus, so I moved to Boston to study with him. I worked with him for about a year and a half. He was a complete slave driver. He made me do all the traditional things, everything from A to Z, every voicing, chord changes in all twelve keys etc. And if there was anything you didn't particularly want to do, and asked him did you have to do that, he would make you do it twice as much because he figured that is where you were weak, and that was why you didn't want to do it. He was right. There was a thick book of transcriptions. I had to do all these McCoy Tyner things. When I first started to improvise I was really trying to imitate the sound of McCoy Tyner, and since then I have very consciously gotten away from that, because so many people are doing it. When I improvise classical music for dance classes, which I have done since I was thirteen or fourteen, I used a lot of fourth chords, Hindemith kind of harmonies, so I went over very easily into the McCoy Tyner feeling. After I studied with Charlie for two years he said he thought I was ready to go off on my own. I had heard of the Creative Music Studio from a saxophone player who I was friends with at that time called Charlie Mariano. He said — "I know this place where you can play your kind of music and nobody will think it's weird." So that's how I first heard of the Creative Music Studio. Then I met Karl Berger when he was visiting Boston and he invited me to come up to Woodstock. It was a very hard decision to make after living in Boston all those years.

I first went to Woodstock in 1977. In a sense I was still a student musician. I had my own ideas about the kind of music I wanted to play since I was thirteen or fourteen, before I had ever listened to jazz, or heard Cecil Taylor or anything like that. I actually was performing that in the Boston area on my own and with friends. But, I was a student in the sense that I had never really been part of an ensemble. I had never worked with any of those people that I would consider masters. I had never made the jump over



from my own personal musical life into the musical stream. So when I first went there, I went there to sit in on people's classes, watch what they were doing, take part in ensembles. I didn't go to basic practice. When I arrived I thought that I was ready to play with these people, and if there had not been a Creative Music Studio I would have gone to New York and tried to make it on my own. If I really want to do something, I just do it, I'm not shy in that kind of way. So it is possible that I would have eventually run into those people, but it's much more difficult. If you meet them in New York there is a lot more tension and preoccupation, and Woodstock is a very relaxed place. New York is being on the scene, and with the type of music that I'm playing, people know about it, and so if they want a specific thing, they will call me. It makes it a little bit hard to rehearse. Every time I have to play with Reggie Workman I have to make a three hour trip to Brooklyn, but as far as people asking me, it may make a difference but probably the people who really want me to play are asking me anyway. Woodstock is very isolated. There are a lot of musicians up there but not many who play together on a regular basis, or even hang out together. A lot of the clubs that were there have closed down or changed hands, and they tend to have more rock and roll, and blues – more popular music.

The Creative Music Studio is where I met everyone who I know, and play with now. Three years ago the studio went under and does not exist anymore, so the whole scene is gone, but by that time it had become home to me, my personal ties are there. It seems as good to live there as anywhere. Looking back on it, I think of it as much more useful than I did when I was there. The most remarkable thing about it was that it brought all these people together. You had to sort out what was happening. There were some things, that to me, did not feel worthwhile, and other things like the African musicians, and Turkish and Indian musicians who came through, and having the chance to play in ensembles and play music with people like Leo Smith, Anthony [Braxton] and Roscoe [Mitchell].... Cecil Taylor came there for a week to teach with his band; where else in the world could you do that? Nowhere that I now of. So even though there were a lot of fuckups, things that

were supposed to happen that didn't happen in the curriculum, it was a centre where people came together.

BILL SMITH: *For a modern piano player such as yourself, Cecil Taylor has been a major influence. Presumably he has influenced you....*

Marilyn Crispell: He is my idol. If anything I would say I belong to the Cecil Taylor school. I have the same sort of experience that you had years ago with John Coltrane [one of awe]. He is just one of the few people in the world, in whose presence I just could not open my mouth. Because I am really in awe of him. I think he is one of the greatest geniuses of the century. Not just musically, but in every way. He knows about everything. He's a poet, he's a dancer, he knows about architecture... he's like a Leonardo da Vinci or something, to me. I think we are even the same astrological sign. I feel he is such a soul mate artistically, that I am in complete communion with him. When he came up to Woodstock I wanted desperately to play for him, but I was very shy. So I went to a practice room, closed the door, and played my heart out, like I would play to my musical soul mate, knowing that every note would be heard and understood the way that probably nobody else in the world could. Afterwards I came out and he kissed my hand. He came to hear the quartet when I played with Anthony Braxton at Sweet Basil in New York a couple of years ago. He stayed for the whole thing. Sat in the front with a bucket of champagne. Afterwards he gave me a big hug, said a lot of complimentary things, and I thought, well, this is the pinnacle, I can die now.

Bill Smith: *Archie Shepp once told me that the thing about Cecil that really fascinated him was that all the other musicians were writing music, even the avant garde, in the song form still, and Cecil had a complete orchestra concept. Even solo piano. The main difference being that Cecil's music was a very long form. There is a terrible idea that his music is cacophony, and it is very difficult for a lot of people to grasp the content, which is so clear to the people who are aware of what is in it.*

Marilyn Crispell: I think you have to listen to him a lot, and the more you listen the more you hear. When I first heard him [the same period as her jazz record discoveries] I was stunned, because the aesthetic sensibility was so

similar to mine, and yet I was saying - well this is what I would play but nobody would listen to it - and here he was doing it. The more I listened to him over the years, the more I heard all these different things. Blues – he swings, rock and roll – so many things in there. His phrasing is astounding.

I have this idea that people either express something, or are attracted by something that is in synch with their own inner spirit. So I would think that Cecil's experience is a very complex one. I know that mine is. I don't know what is inside anybody else's head, but I know I have a very complex emotional, psychological, philosophical, artistic life experience, from the time I was a child. A lot of emotional suffering over one thing or another. From the time I was thirteen or fourteen I was attracted to contemporary music. I didn't listen to Beethoven or anything, I liked pop music and I liked Schoenberg. I skipped everything in between. Which I am now just coming to grips with. Finally I like Chopin after all these years. But I refuse to play it. I think that the people with these kinds of experiences that we are talking about, are in the minority, because if it were otherwise then more of them would be able to relate to this music. There are certain fields of art that always have a limited audience, even Bach's great art had a limited audience in its own time. Karl Berger used to talk a lot about Ornette Coleman, because Ornette is to Karl what Cecil is to me. He said Ornette wants to reach everyone in the whole world. So he would ask a record company if they expected to sell 10,000 copies or 100,000 copies of a record, and they would say "Oh yes". And he would refuse to record for them, because what he wanted them to say was "Oh no, we won't rest until we have sold a copy to every person in the universe." I don't feel that way, I don't feel the necessity, as my whole life, whatever I've done or felt, seems to have been in the minority, so I'm used to that and I don't care. Some of my best friends hate my music.

Marilyn Crispell may be contacted via P.O. Box 499, Woodstock, N.Y. 12498. Recordings of her music are available from NorthCountry Distributors, Cadence Building, Redwood, N.Y. 13679 (315-287-2852) and New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012 (212-925-2121).

JAZZ VOCALISTS ON RECORD

MARLENA SHAW / *It Is Love* / Verve 831 438-1 * NINA SIMONE / *Let It Be Me* / Verve 831 437-1

SHEILA JORDAN / *Crossings* / Black-Hawk BKH 50501-1 * BILLIE HOLIDAY / *Strange Fruit* / Storyville SLP 4002

CHRIS CONNOR / *Classic / Contemporary C-14023* * ELLA FITZGERALD / *The Irving Berlin Songbook* / Verve 829 533-1

THE PER HUSBY ORCHESTRA / *Dedications* / Affinity AFF136 * LAILA DALSETH / *Time For Love* / Gemini GMLP 51

Each year the number of releases that fall under the banner of jazz grows by leaps and bounds making it all the more difficult for the discerning listener to wade through this deluge of vinyl and determine what is of lasting importance and what is not. As a rule, the recordings which fit into this category and receive the greatest amount of exposure are instrumental in nature leaving a large portion of the vocal variety to slip through the cracks receiving little or no attention at all. The following comments deal with a small grouping of vocal albums which have crossed my turntable in the last several months.

MARLENA SHAW like a large percentage of vocalists associated with the jazz tradition has never exactly suffered from overexposure. "It Is Love" as far as I can recall is her first release in quite some time. Recorded live at the Vine St. Bar and Grill in Hollywood California, it is a relaxed informal set with a "you are there" quality that draws the listener into the festival atmosphere. Ms. Shaw makes the most of a standard repertoire infusing the material with a natural bluesiness while toying with both song structures and lyrics, altering them to fit the mood of the moment (her humorously hip commentary preceding *Go Away Little Boy* is a prime example). She swings hard setting an infectious groove that hits home with the appreciative and responsive audience. The accompaniment is first rate, especially the sterling piano work of Buddy Montgomery whose occasional solos are an added delight. This record should please Marlena's earlier fans while making her some new ones.

Another live performance recorded at "Vine St." recently involves songstress **NINA SIMONE**. While not one of my personal favorites, she is a unique individualist with a substantial and loyal following. Often identified with the jazz idiom, her style seems to have more in common with the folk music scene which came to prominence in the mid to late '50s and early '60s. Things get off to a good start with the opening *My Baby Just Cares For Me* followed by a bright version of *Sugar In My Bowl*, but the momentum gradually slips away allowing the remainder of the session to plod along at one monotonous level. Ms. Simone's keyboard approach owes a greater debt to the classics than to any jazz, blues or gospel influences. The support supplied by the other members of the trio is at best adequate. This one is strictly for the most ardent of Simone

devotees.

Commencing with her earliest recorded appearances (an engaging version of *You Are My Sunshine* on George Russell's 1963 "Outer View" lp and the classic "Portrait of Sheila" on Blue Note) **SHEILA JORDAN** has exhibited a striking originality rare among today's crop of aspiring young vocalists. "Crossings" is a most welcome addition to her rather sparse discography. In the midst of a superb cast of players, including her longtime associate bassist Harvie Swartz, she is at the top of her game. Each track offers its own special rewards. Following Swartz's bowed intro, *Inch Worm* moves into an easy lilt as Jordan's delicate vocalizing floats over Tom Harrell's flugelhorn. Harrell's presence enhances other selections as well, his mellow lyricism at times bringing to mind Art Farmer. The autobiographical *Sheila's Blues* focuses on Jordan's jazz roots revealing a deep respect and affection for Bird, Diz, Monk and all of the titans of the bop era. Speaking of bop, there is an appropriately brisk treatment of Miles Davis' *Little Willie Leaps* where Sheila's playful scatting effortlessly mingles with Swartz's nimble bass lines. It is easy to see why the talents of pianist Kenny Barron are in such constant demand. An exceptionally facile improviser as well as a top flight accompanist, he never fails to please. Check out the sensitive interaction between Barron and Jordan on the hauntingly beautiful *You Must Believe In Spring*. Drummer Ben Riley is the epitome of taste and professionalism. Never raging out of control, he keeps the time firm and steady.

One of the greatest jazz singers of all time, **BILLIE HOLIDAY** was always at her best in a small group setting. It is precisely that type of situation which is found on "Strange Fruit". Culled from

various sessions recorded in 1939 and 1944, it features Billie with the combos of Frankie Newton and Eddie Heywood. Missing however is the inspired, good natured jamming that sparked so many of "Lady Day's" earlier dates. While there are fine instrumentalists in both bands (leaders Newton and Heywood, Tab Smith, Doc Cheatham, Vic Dickenson et al), they elect to remain in the background, supplying an occasional obbligato and short solo here and there. The program is made up entirely of standards including such Holiday signature pieces as *Fine And Mellow*, *I Cover The Waterfront*, and a dramatic reading of the title selection. The tunes are handled in a straightforward manner, however it is Billie's horn-like phrasing, her special way of lagging behind the beat and her passionate, bittersweet treatment of the ballads that make this an especially worthwhile experience. An exquisite helping of vintage "Lady Day".

Following a stint with the orchestra of Stan Kenton, vocalist **CHRIS CONNOR** recorded for such labels as Bethlehem and Atlantic, creating somewhat of a stir with tunes like *All About Ronnie*, *The Thrill Is Gone*, and several others. Absent from the recording studio for a number of years, she was slowly fading into just a memory. This current release marks her triumphant return, and a most impressive return it is. Choosing a well balanced assortment of standards, Connor avoids the obvious and overworked. Her voice contains a warm, luxuriant vibrato which stands out in bold relief against the exceptional accompaniment supplied by such players as trumpeter Claudio Roditi, the irrepressible Paquito D'Rivera, Mike Abene, Rufus Reid, Akira Tana and Richard Rodney Bennett. Displaying an unforced confidence, she eases her way through medium and up tempo numbers

without ever losing stride. However it is the ballad which has always been Connors' forte. Using the verse effectively, she is adept at getting inside of a song, spinning a seductive web of love and romance. Shining examples include *Laura*, *In Love In Vain*, and *Blame It On My Youth*. After an overly long hiatus, this latest date should insure Chris Connor's continued visibility for some time to come.

Recorded in 1958, the double disc re-issue **ELLA FITZGERALD: The Irving Berlin Songbook** pairs "America's First Lady of Song" with one of America's greatest songwriters. Although not on a level with her Armstrong and Ellington collaborations, it is nevertheless a pleasant excursion through a good portion of Berlin's extensive output. A large orchestra arranged and conducted by Paul Weston serves as an ideal backdrop. Ella's choice of material includes the well known as well as the more obscure. Her splendid interpretations move at a leisurely pace maintaining a soothing sense of relaxation that wears well through the 32 tracks.

"Dedications" is my first encounter with the work of the multi-talented **PER**

HUSBY and what a sleeper it turns out to be. Husby has put together an exceptionally swinging aggregation made up for the most part of world class Scandinavian musicians and featuring British reed player John Surman along with vocalists **KARIN KROG** and **GEORGIE FAME**. Norway's Karin Krog has gained a considerable reputation on the international scene working and recording with many major jazz artists including Dexter Gordon, Archie Shepp and Warne Marsh. Fame on the other hand is not as well known, however he is definitely no slouch and can more than hold his own in fast company. Together they tackle a demanding collection of tunes which includes a medley of Tadd Dameron's *Good Bait* and *Lady Bird*. This set also contains four other newly resurrected Dameron originals that more than likely have never been recorded until now. Incidentally, Fame wrote the lyrics for a pair of these recently unearthed treasures. Surman is featured on *Prima Vera/Lasse*, his masterful baritone solo serving as a fitting tribute to the late Swedish baritone saxophonist Lars Gullin. Husby's skillful arranging and composing allows plenty of elbow room and strong solo

work abounds from all quarters. If your tastes lean toward solid, unpretentious, no frills jazz, by all means seek this record out. You will not be disappointed.

Another captivating voice emanating from Norway these days belongs to **LAILA DALSETH**. In command of a light, almost fragile sound, she is a mature artist capable of transforming a handful of familiar but not overly recorded standards into a movingly personal statement. A warm, glowing, afterhours mood pervades due in no small part to the cozy interaction between Ms. Dalseth and her very able accompanists. The staunch support and melodically intriguing solos of American bassist Red Mitchell figure prominently into the scheme of things as does the keyboard concept of Egil Kapstad, a name well worth filing away for future reference. Drummer Ole Jacob Hansen's loosely swinging, understated style is most effective in this type of setting. His subtle accents and shadings make an impact without disturbing the exquisite intricacies that spring from Ms. Dalseth's vocal interpretations. I can wholeheartedly recommend this recording without any reservations whatsoever.

— Gerard J. Futrick

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SHEILA JORDAN * ANGELS PASSING

The Manhattan sky was sunny and blue, but a bitter windchill hurried people along the snow-narrowed city streets on the January afternoon I talked to Sheila Jordan. She had performed the night before – the fourth night of a six-gig engagement at Fat Tuesday's – and hadn't quite warmed up to the new day when my wife and I arrived; in fact, because of the weather and our drive from Connecticut, she had considered cancelling the interview.

Jordan's apartment feels larger than it really is. Paintings, posters, and photographs make the walls a miniature jazz museum. A baby grand piano sits in one corner, home to more photos and art objects. Jordan directed us to the deep, inviting couch that occupies the opposite wall. Beside it rests a large glass jug filled with pennies and umbrellas. A picture of Jordan as a child – used on the back cover of the Steve Kuhn Quartet's "Last Year's Waltz" album – hangs over the jug.

Sheila served tea and sat cross-legged on the floor next to her glass coffee table, ready to talk, her speaking voice – which ranges from whisper to sudden exclamation to hearty laugh – nearly as expressive as her singing. We talked about her preference for singing with only bass accompaniment (usually Harvie Swartz) or with a small group over singing with a larger ensemble. "You have to adjust emotionally what you do," she observed. "You respond creatively and emotionally to different sounds. I hear something different with one instrument than, say, with seventeen."

Jordan has recorded two bass/voice duet albums, with Arild Andersen, and, more recently, with Harvie Swartz. She views the challenging demands of the duet as an opportunity for fuller expression. The attraction is "the freedom of sound and the freedom of creativity."

"I like it because I think some of the delicate sounds that I love sometimes don't come through when I'm working with a full rhythm section unless they're really tuned into me. When there's just two of you and you're creating, you don't have to worry about whether two or three other musicians will know where you are. It's so much easier when you're just doing it with one instrument. That's one of the reasons, but really it's the freedom of a more open creative approach. And I like working off the silence. That's fantastic when it's happening, like if you get in a concert or even a club (it's very rare in a club) and there's nothing except you and this bass sound, and it's just total silence. I mean – oh God, that's fantastic! And especially if you can do it acoustically; that's even better.

"I love that intensity when it's relaxed. I always feel at a certain musical level with the bass and voice that I don't always feel when I'm with a full group. You have to work harder with the full group to get that.

"A French woman was in the club the other night and it was very special. It was like the second set of the night and she said to me, in her French interpretation of what we did, 'You know this was very special tonight. It was like the angels were passing through.' Isn't that a lovely expression? We all seemed to be on the same wavelength, and everybody could hear each other, and we were all creating together.

"I always feel – when I'm working with Harvie – that the angels are passing through at some point; whereas, I don't always have that feeling with a full group. This has nothing to do with the musicality of the musicians; it's within my own self. When I get that thing happening with a trio, it's wonderful, but it's more rare than when I'm doing bass and voice. I think it's because the more musicians, the harder it is, the harder you have to work."

Sheila's partnership with Harvie Swartz began in the quartet she co-led with pianist Steve Kuhn that included Swartz and Bob Moses on drums. The group attracted attention to Jordan's career and recorded two fine albums for ECM before disbanding for lack of work.

"I had highs in that group you couldn't buy on the street, which is how I feel about the bass and voice, too. Maybe if we had a manager or somebody who was out there working – pulling for us and pushing us – we would have been more successful, because as we went along we were progressing. We grew stronger, our repertoire improved, and we were more apt to switch around between originals and standards. We were always trying out new ideas. I learned a lot with that group about stage presence. Working with Steve's group and with Harvie has taught me to be much more relaxed in front of an audience than I was before; it's given me more confidence.

"I think the thing with Steve happened at a time in my life when I really needed that. I had been underground for a long time, and then he came along and suggested through his manager at the time that maybe I would do a few gigs with the band and see how it worked – and I was thrilled, because I loved Steve's playing. It was like my big brother – even though I'm older than him – asking me to do a gig with him, accepting me. I'm very grateful to him for that. I needed that so badly at the time, and obviously the group needed me, too. We worked very hard, and I was very sorry that quartet never made it."

Our attention turned to Sheila's roots. She was born in Chicago on November 28, 1928 ("Mickey Mouse's birthday"), raised by her grandparents in Pennsylvania coal country, and moved to Detroit as a teenager. In Detroit she first heard the music without which, she says, "I wouldn't be here today."

"The people who were on the scene when I was there as a teenager were Milt Jackson (who had joined Dizzy's band), Tommy Flanagan, Kenny Burrell, Barry Harris, Beans Richardson (a bass player), Phil Hill (a pianist), Art Mardigan (a drummer), and Sonny Stitt (but he was already established, working the clubs).

"We hung out at this club called the Club Sedan run by a couple for the purpose of having jazz for young people. They didn't sell liquor, so teenagers could go there. It was a wonderful place. Of course the cops were always shutting it down because they were a white couple in a totally black neighborhood. Detroit was a hot-bed for racial dispute. The cops hated that. They were always shutting these people down and making them feel almost like they were running a house of ill repute, and that's not what was happening at all. They loved jazz and they supported it, and they wanted to see young people have a place to play and jam together. It was a great place.

"Growing up in Detroit had its pros and cons. Of course I moved to Detroit in my first year of high school – I had visited there every summer – and was there during a couple of race riots which were pretty heavy. Because of the situation I was in, I didn't know where to run, what side to be on. It was very difficult to see black people being tortured and hurt. It was very hard on me and it was very hard growing up in Detroit when I finally moved there to attend high school I saw a lot of ugly, evil stuff. If I had been easily brainwashed I would not be sitting here today; I would be a very prejudiced person. My background never allowed me to feel that way about people because I know the prejudice of putting down people because they don't have what you have or they don't talk the way you do or dress the way you do or their family are alcoholics.

"So I identified very readily with black people. I really felt accepted, and I felt I found my true identity. For years I would go around telling people I was black. I really felt black. I felt black because I was totally involved with jazz music, and I felt I had come into a race of people who totally understood and who I could identify with as far as living: I lived the way they lived."

Musically as well as socially, Detroit changed Jordan's life. There she heard Charlie Parker

and his Reboppers (as his group was known at the time) on a jukebox and saw in person, for the first time (and later, for the last time), the legendary musician who has remained her major inspiration.

"The first time I saw Bird live was at the Graystone Ballroom and then at another club where I forged my mother's birth certificate. I'm not sure. It was so long ago, but I remember there was an artist at the time who years later gave me a picture of me at this concert with Skeeter Spight and Leroy Mitchell, the two young guys I used to sing with. It was a picture of us all standing in front of Charlie Parker at the Graystone Ballroom at this concert. He came to the Club El Sino as well as the Club Sudan, but I wasn't old enough to get in there.

"The last time I saw Bird in Detroit I was already pregnant with my daughter and living in New York. I had been hanging out a lot with Bird because he would come to my loft to play. He didn't know I was coming to Detroit; I really had gone to see my mother to talk to her and to tell her that I was pregnant.

"Bird was at the Graystone Ballroom, so I went there with Skeeter and Mitch — just like the first time I'd seen him. He was playing away when all of a sudden he saw me and flipped out. He took me out in the back and said, 'What are you doing here?' Bird knew I was pregnant. He was wonderful to me while I was pregnant. He would talk to me, tell me to be careful and all that kind of stuff. And that's the last time I saw Bird — at exactly the place where I'd first seen him. That was in January, and he died March 12 [1955]. Isn't that weird? I couldn't believe it. Within a matter of two months he was dead.

"He was a pleasure — regardless of whether he was late or stoned or whatever. I didn't care. If I heard three notes, that would be beautiful, just thrilling.

"I think what I learned from Bird was to listen, to hear chord changes, to get into myself, and not be afraid to try creative ideas or feelings. He taught me everything. Everything I learned about jazz, I learned from Charlie Parker. Bird turned me on to everything. He turned me on to painting; he turned me on to dance — just by talking. I admired him. He was my idol.

"Once Bird told me I had million dollar ears. What a compliment! If I have million dollar ears, I wonder what kind of ears he had?" Jordan laughed deeply, enjoying the memory, and continued.

"He was very special. I went to do the women's festival in Kansas City a couple of years ago with Harvie, and one of my requests was to go to Charlie Parker's grave, just to see where he was buried. He was buried next to his mother under a big tree on a knoll — very peaceful.



"I always look for a face in the crowd that looks like Charlie Parker. Yesterday I saw a man coming in the building where I work, and I thought, 'I finally have my wish,' but the guy passed and he didn't even resemble Bird. He's the only human being in the world that I've never been able to see in anybody else. Bird had a beautiful warm smile and a gold tooth on the side. I loved his smile. He had a boyish look. He was so well spoken; he used to amaze, he knew so much. I used to think, 'How does this man know all this stuff — he's so young?' It was like he was in transit.

"I always felt he was passing through. I also feel that way about Billie, Prez, Trane and Fats Navarro. But the first person that ever made me aware of that was Bird — that he was supposed to be here for a little while, leave this beautiful music behind for everybody to learn from or live from — whichever, whether you listen or whether you're going to be playing it. I always felt he was just supposed to be here for that amount of time.

"I went to his funeral, and I was very upset because I felt that I had lost a family member. Emotionally I was totally destroyed when Bird died — as if he had been more than a family member. He was kind to me, and he taught me through his music. He always had time to talk to me. Anytime he and Duke [Jordan, Parker's pianist and Sheila's former husband] had a gig in New York he always called me up to sing. He always encouraged that in young people.

"He remembered my singing with Skeeter and Mitch in Detroit, and he also remembered this

one tune that Leroy Mitchell wrote. When I came to New York on a vacation, he sang it back to me — and he'd only heard it once when the three of us sang it into his ear during a break at one of the concerts in Detroit. He sang the tune back, so help me God, from memory. I couldn't believe it."

Jordan treats Parker's legacy and her own music as gifts to be passed along. One way to insure the survival of the music is by teaching others how to perform it — students who, unlike Jordan, haven't grown up hearing bebop on the local jukebox. "I love to teach vocal workshops; I enjoy it almost as much as I do singing. I give everything that I have to young singers. This music has to live; it has to keep going."

Jordan worked hard to keep the music going through the lean, rocked-out '60s and the disco-fied '70s. The '80s find her working as hard as ever, but to a growing, devoted audience. Critics' polls list her among the top few singers in jazz. "The Crossing", her current release, on Blackhawk, has been enthusiastically received by fans, reviewers, and jazz stations. A question about Charles Mingus prompted her reflections on the difficulties of the jazz life.

"You start getting respect when you're either crippled by some overpowering disease and you can't do it anymore, or you're so old that it doesn't matter — you've lost your inspiration — or you're ready to die and it doesn't matter. That's the story of this music. It comes to us — a lot of times — very late, so I'm trying to keep a really good attitude and not be uptight and sort of enjoy growing older because I feel at

least in another four years people will start taking me seriously and know that I'm not bullshitting, that I'm not trying to be hip, and that this is the way I really sing."

Jordan admits that the lifestyle can be frustrating but insists that she doesn't allow those frustrations to overwhelm her.

"I'm sure there isn't a jazz musician alive today who's been out there struggling a long time and is still out there trying to make his rent from playing jazz music who's not upset, and who does not feel a certain amount of injustice, because they would be foolish if they didn't. They'd be crazy not to feel that way. It's just the way it is. I saw a supplement in the Village Voice for the American Music Awards and there's not one jazz category listed — not one, not even a group that might be a crossover. Nothing. Zilch. Is this not American music? I refuse to let it get to me. I am not going to let this society destroy my gift and make it impossible for me to give this gift. I will find — somehow, someway — a place and time to do this art. That's why I work in an office. I want to keep the music pure. I don't want to have to suffer. I don't want to have to go out and struggle and not know when I'm going to get evicted or when my next meal is coming. I don't want to go through that. I can't do it anymore. I did it as a child and had no control over it; that's the way I was raised. But as an adult I am not going to let this music suffer, and by that I mean I could get very bitter if I didn't get gigs because I had to pay my rent. I don't want to do that."

[Since we talked, Jordan was laid off from the office job she had worked for twenty-one years, necessitating a full-time plunge into music.]

The gift Jordan is so determined to give is her remarkable ability to embody the emotions in her songs through improvisation. Her honesty and spontaneity allow her to generate instant rapport with an audience. Humor and a sense of optimism permeate her performances. When she sings, Jordan fills the room with a sense of joyful affirmation. She seems to have struggled with untold trials and has come out on top.

"I like to feel that when I sing it takes people away from what problems they might be going through. It gives them a little bit of an uplift — or a sad-lift. I like to feel sad. I love to sing those depressing ballads. I don't think because I feel better about myself now that I can't sing those ballads because they were part of my life. At any given moment I could feel like that again. That feeling never leaves; it's always there. It's just that I'm in control of it now, and I know how to handle it. Perhaps when people hear me sing sad songs — for example, a very touching ballad — there's a part of them that

can identify and remember feeling like that at one time in their lives. If it's a happy song or if I'm singing about kids or scat singing, I don't want people to feel serious and have to understand it. Who understands scat? Except that you can feel the rhythm moving and you can hear the sounds being created as the changes are being played.

"I don't think about anything, I just feel. I let the feeling take over the sound. Sometimes it's funny. I remember once somebody started to laugh, and he said afterward, 'I hope I didn't insult you because I was really laughing.' I said, 'You know, sometimes the sound comes out and it tickles me, because I don't know what it was or where it came from, and it's funny.'"

Jordan has the rare ability to make songs she may have sung many times sound fresh with each performance. Every song becomes a drama in miniature as she enters its world and explores its musical and emotional nuances.

"It goes back to feeling again. I pick songs that I love, and it's like, what I had to say about that song yesterday was then. What I have to say about it today is today. Yesterday was then, that's past. My whole attitude today might be different. My approach to that song — even though I've sung it a hundred times — will be different because I will have a different attitude about myself and about life in general.

"Sometimes a room can influence it, too. An audience plays an important part a lot of times in the extent of the creativity. If an audience is really with you, it's almost like you're improvising off of their breathing. I know that sounds weird, but I can feel a connection between their breathing and my own breathing, and when that happens it's like I become them and they become me — the same with the musicians, like that lady said about the angels passing. We were all breathing together at the same moment. We had all become one instrument. The audience was breathing with us, so the whole room became one sound.

"When we reach that plateau where we're all breathing together and all become one sound, it's almost as if they also are singing the song. I think every singer or musician hopes for that to happen when they perform. It's not very easy to do. I find it's becoming easier for me."

The afternoon was drawing to a close and we sensed a good place to break off. "You get a high like that where everybody is one," she continued, reaffirming the power of jazz, "isn't that like towards the ultimate... what life is, when everybody feels together? It's a high. You leave your body sometimes, it becomes so strong. I like that. I like it when I don't know where I am or who I am, when I'm no longer aware of being this physical thing."

— Robert Gaspar

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CARMEN McRAE ON THE ROAD

Carmen McRae seems irritable and annoyed. Life on the road can get to her at times. And now is one of those times. "I don't *want* to work as hard as I used to," she tells me emphatically, one afternoon in her posh Upper East Side Manhattan hotel room. The week before, she had flown in from L.A. where she lives, to begin another three-week gig in New York. She notes it gets harder to keep getting on the planes for such gigs each year. She used to go out for up to seven weeks at a time. Now she doesn't like to leave home for more than two or three weeks.

Onstage these days, she appears in complete control of herself and of her audience. Her voice has not deteriorated in any way; she seems unaffected by the passing years.

But she mentions a concert she gave recently in Japan. "I sang for 72 minutes — very hard work. I wasn't tired on stage, but the minute I sang the last note, I felt I could collapse... It's the travelling that wears you down. You sit in bloody airports; the plane is supposed to leave at 1:30, but doesn't move until 4. Travelling's not nice anymore."

For her recent New York engagement, McRae has received the kind of reviews that most performers can only dream of: unanimous accolades, and suggestions that she is now at some kind of career peak. She has received excellent reviews, too, for her new compact disc, "Any Old Time" (on the Denon label). But she does not seem particularly warmed by such raves.

"I was 67 in April," she reflects. She is two years younger than Ella Fitzgerald, four years older than Sarah Vaughan. "I hope there's some young ones coming along to take our places after we're gone — but I haven't heard 'em! Have you?" (I can't say that I have.) She briefly mentions one young singer that some people have tried to publicize as a possible successor. "She has a good voice," McRae acknowledges, "but she doesn't *swing*. It's not so important what kind of instrument you have, as what you do with it."

Is Carmen McRae feeling her age? "Since turning 50, age has affected every part of me — *every part* from my big toe on up — *except* for my throat," she says. "And I don't gargle or take any special precautions. I'm probably doing everything wrong. I just sing."

McRae conserves her energy for her art. She rarely gives interviews. When she's not on stage, she feels, that's *her* private time. Some writers have tried — at their peril — to infer her personality from the way she sings certain songs, concluding that she must be "bitter" or "cold." McRae scoffs at such write-ups. "If you're singing about a man who's walked out on you, *of course* you're going to sound bitter. How else should you sound? It's *acting*. Good singers are good actresses. You try to put into reality what the lyricist had in mind." Even when she's singing the blues on stage, she insists, she's really enjoying herself. "If I didn't *like* what I did, I wouldn't be there. I'm having fun. And I'm surprising myself."



When I sit at the piano to accompany myself, I never know in advance what I'm going to sing. That's why I might piddle around for 30 seconds before going into a song."

Born in New York on April 8th, 1920, McRae's original inspiration was the late Billie Holiday, whom she first came to know while still in her teens. McRae wrote the song *Dream of Life* for Holiday, which Holiday recorded in 1939. (McRae stopped writing songs years ago; the motivation simply vanished, she says.) She may have started out as an emulator of Holiday, but she long ago developed her own style, projecting an utter conviction in the words she is offering.

By the 1940s, McRae was working as an intermission pianist and singer at the famed New York jazz club, Minton's.

("I don't know why they hired me," she adds. "I was very limited as a pianist.") She went on to sing with big bands, including Count Basie's (for just a few months, and they did not record), Benny Carter's, and Mercer Ellington's. She says she doesn't even own a copy of the first record she ever made, which was with Mercer Ellington's Band ("It wasn't very good"). She views those early years as a forgettable apprenticeship period. She was not yet a full-time singer, she notes. And spells as a band vocalist were mixed in with stints as a secretary and chorus girl.

Her career began coming together, she says, around 1948, when a two-week booking in Chicago wound up lasting 16 weeks. She never went back to non-singing jobs again. By the mid-50s, she was recording regularly as a single, and had reached the top spot as a jazz singer in the Metronome poll.

Today, she is generally acknowledged to be unsurpassed at what she does. But her basic medium remains the jazz club. She doesn't do films. She rarely gets to appear on television. (And she believes that, say, a tape of her in concert, or working in a club with another jazz singer, would make for excellent television). Club life can be hard, she notes. She has had to frequently put up with indignities that artists of far smaller gifts, in the pop/rock fields, don't have to endure.

"I'm sick of having to get dressed in offices because they don't have proper dressing rooms — or even full-length mirrors — in some of these clubs, and then you discover that the bathroom is about 17 miles away. All of this really detracts. Club owners don't seem to realize that the conditions in a lot of clubs aren't conducive to getting the best performances out of an artist. You take all of that with you, when you step out onto the stage."

"It's not easy, travelling to appear in club after club. She is not treated with the respect one would think an artist who'd received the reviews she's received would get. But that is the way jazz is treated in our culture."

Who does she enjoy, of those artists younger than herself? She likes Betty Carter, she notes, adding that she expects that her next album will be with Carter. But even Carter, a comparative youngster, is now 56. "Jazz singers," Carmen McRae declares, "are an endangered species."

— Chip Deffaa

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JAZZ LITERATURE

WEST COAST JAZZ

by Alain Tercinet

Editions Parentheses, Marseilles, 1986

Series: Epistrophy (Text in French)

West Coast Jazz marked a significant cultural shift after be-bop. The alienated music of a group of sophisticated black musicians, the boppers, became the music of the youth of white America on the West Coast, through the work of young white musicians like Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker, Dave Brubeck, Art Pepper, Shorty Rogers and Shelley Manne – figures with whom the central body of young white people of America could identify in the post-war era. The new music became their music; and this contributed to the enormous surge in the popularity of modern jazz in the late 1950s. Beginning with Sunday jam sessions at the Lighthouse Cafe at Hermosa Beach, the new music was brought to a ready public that did not come initially to listen out of an interest in jazz. This led on to the discovery of the college public through concerts given by Dave Brubeck; and ultimately to the transformation of the jazz public throughout the world in the 1950s, as jazz became a concert music rather than an accompaniment to drinking. The music of the Californian musicians also became the music of the most influential young American writers of the fifties, the Beats and the music of Jack Kerouac's "On the Road" (1957), and "The Subterraneans" (1958), and of Alan Ginsberg's "Howl" (1956). Kenneth Rexroth, the daddy of the Beats, recorded poetry to West Coast Jazz on *Poetry and Jazz in the Cellar* (Fantasy 7002) and *Kenneth Rexroth at the Blackhawk* (Fantasy 7008).

Those days are far in the past, and those who participated in them are in their fifties and sixties – or dead. So it may seem surprising that a history of West Coast Jazz should be published in France (and in French, of course). Yet Alain Tercinet, a former editor of *Jazz-Hot*, has given us a full-length, extremely detailed account of the music, with bibliography, filmography, discography and a wealth of fine photographs.

Tercinet does not give us a series of essays about major figures and call it a history, as so many writers of artistic history do. There are, of course, a variety of ways of writing musical history. For the purist, only works of music are to be mentioned; and their relationship and their development one from the other is what constitutes "history". Tercinet takes a mixed approach, recounting in well-researched detail the circumstances of each musical development, fitting it into the lives of those involved, citing the recordings and how they came about, but offering, as well, acute analyses of the music.

Tercinet, like any other historian of culture, has problems concerning the scope of his subject. What constitutes "West Coast Jazz"?

Tercinet approaches his subject initially as a development out of various influences, giving chapters on earlier jazz in California, the Herman Herd, Miles Davis' Capitol sessions and the music of Stan Kenton. In his second section, "Les Peres Fondateurs" ("The Founding Fathers") he writes about Shorty Rogers, Howard Rumsey and the Lighthouse Cafe, Gerry Mulligan, and Dave Brubeck. He then goes on to explore the cultural background of West Coast Jazz with chapters on the cultural and political situation of the 1950s, on the relationship of white musicians to the jazz heritage, on the origins of cool jazz in earlier jazz (such as that of Joe Venuti's Blue Four) and the development of the use of instruments unusual to jazz; leading into a discussion of formal and compositional experiments rooted in the traditions of nineteenth and early twentieth century Western orchestral music. He also deals with the impact of Lennie Tristano's Capitol recordings (the greatest examples of "cool jazz" and more important to West Coast Jazz than the Miles Davis records) – particularly in respect of the two early adventures in free jazz, *Intuition* and *Digression*.

With page 169, Tercinet reaches the heart of his subject with "Shorty au Pays des Géants" ("Shorty in the Land of the Giants") – a celebration of one of the heroes of the book, Shorty Rogers. He then discusses the work of players associated with *The Lighthouse* and with Shelley Manne and *The Manne-Hole*: Bud Shank, Bob Gordon, Frank Rosolino, Conte Condoli, Stu Williamson, Charlie Mariano, Joe Gordon, Richie Kamuca, Russ Freeman, Andre Previn, Barney Kessel, and Red Mitchell. This is followed by chapters on the small groups of Dave Pell, Marty Paich, Chico Hamilton and Lennie Niehaus, and on the big bands and arrangements of Bill Holman, Maynard Ferguson, Pete Rugolo and Bill Russo. Two further heroes of the book – Chet Baker and Art Pepper – share a chapter; and the book concludes with chapters on players whose work touched West Coast Jazz tangentially, such as Clifford Brown, Warne Marsh or Sonny Rollins, whose *Way Out West* (Contemporary 7530) was made in California with Ray Brown and Shelley Manne; on East Coast recordings in the West Coast manner; and on the later fortunes of some of the book's heroes. There are appendices on vocalists who recorded with West Coast musicians and on the influence of Hollywood.

In all, the book attempts – and largely attains – a comprehensive view of all aspects of its subject and related topics. The detailed knowledge of recordings and events is very impressive. Yet certain lacunae are to be noticed; and these lead to revised perspectives on the book as a whole. The chapter on Gerry Mulligan deals almost entirely with the original quartet; and Mulligan's later doings are not resumed, as are those of Shorty Rogers, Shelley Manne,

Chet Baker and Art Pepper. The Dave Brubeck Octet gets extensive treatment; but the Quartet is left in its infancy, with nothing about its mature musical triumphs, such as *Jazz Impressions of Eurasia* (Columbia CL 1251) and its Hit Parade number, *Take Five*. Indeed, the book seems to imply that Mulligan and Brubeck are not part of its main story. There is no discussion of the Mulligan sextet of the mid-fifties; yet what could be more West Coast than *California Concerts* (World Pacific 1201) with the original version of the classic Sims/Mulligan *Red Door* – or even the exhilarating version they later did at Santa Monica while on tour with the Concert Jazz Band (Verve V-8438)?

The neglect of the Mulligan Sextet and the Brubeck Quartet is in line with the interest that the author has in West Coast jazz. He is at pains to emphasize what he sees as innovation, such as Phil Sunkel's *Jazz Concerto Grosso* (ABC - Paramount 225), rather than the way in which players like Mulligan took jazz back behind bop to the simpler mainstream beat; even though he acknowledges the debt of Shorty Rogers to Count Basie. Yet this bias raises further questions. If Mulligan is seen as a founding father because (like New Yorker, Alan Ginsberg) he *came* to the West Coast, we might ask again what indeed stylistically differentiates West Coast jazz from some of the related East Coast records that Tercinet discusses – records like Trigger Alpert's *Trigger Happy* (Riverside JLP 225); later as *East Coast Sounds* (Jazzland JLP 11) or the two volumes of Manny Albam's *Jazz Greats of Our Time* (Coral 57173 & 57142), where the similarities between the East Coast group and the West Coast group are far more striking than the differences. Mulligan had said that the question was one of where to go after be-bop; and all the new jazz after that was an answer to the question. It could be argued that white jazz of the fifties had a homogeneity that transcended geographical boundaries; and that California was merely the place where many things came together.

The book ends its discussion of the Brubeck Quartet with its college concerts. Yet, in a sense, that is where it should have begun: *Jazz at Oberlin* (Fantasy 3245) was, in its original 10" version, a milestone, marking an important step towards the expansion of the white jazz audience discussed at the beginning of this review.

Nonetheless, this book is extraordinarily good – something of a model of what such a study should be. It will be a happy companion for the recent Mosaic sets of recordings by Mulligan, Art Pepper and Chet Baker; and will show why Sackville reissued *The Fabulous Bill Holman* (Coral 57188 & Sackville 2013). It is in French; and is perhaps not for the likes of civil servants who jabber away in both official languages but can read neither effectively. But, if you can read French moderately well, it is definitely worth the effort. This is a fine book;

and one hopes that it will soon be available in English. *West Coast Jazz* is published by Editions Parenthese, 72, cours Julien, 13006 Marseille, France.
— Trevor Tolley

LOUIS ARMSTRONG: An American Genius
by James Lincoln Collier
(Toronto: Oxford University Press; Galaxy Book (paper) \$13.95 / ISBN 0-19-503377-9)

This book received a great deal of acclaim when first published in a hard-cover edition; and most of the praise it received was deserved. In many respects it is everything a book on jazz should be. It is comprehensive, well-researched and backed by a well-developed sense of the history of jazz. The writer is a brass player himself and understands the technical problems of Armstrong's instrument. The important recordings discussed in the text are the subject of trained musical analysis. This is a book that everyone interested in jazz should read.

When all that has been said, perhaps the appearance of a paperback edition can be the occasion for offering some reservations. This is not the first book on Louis Armstrong. Apart from his own autobiographical volumes, *Swing That Music* (1936) and *My Life in New Orleans* (1955), there have been studies by Albert McCarthy (1960), John Chilton and Max Jones (1970) and Hughes Panassie (1971). Back in 1960 the McCarthy book established what has become the standard position concerning Armstrong's recordings: that the greatest were with his Hot Five and Hot Seven from 1925 to 1928. After this, there was a falling off. This view in part reflects the fact that, between Armstrong's period of early fame in the 1930's and the writing of the books about him, there intervened the New Orleans Revival. In 1958, in their *Recorded Jazz: a Critical Guide*, Rex Harris and Brian Rust warn that, by the time of even the Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings, Armstrong had "departed... from typical New Orleans collectively improvised jazz.. and become more the virtuoso fronting a band".

Armstrong's decline in favour with jazz fans and collectors goes back almost to the time when there first were jazz fans and collectors. Certainly by 1939, after four years of recording mainly trite popular tunes for Decca - backed sometimes by groups such as Andy Iona and His Islanders, the Lyn Murray Chorus or Jimmy Dorsey and His Orchestra - Armstrong's reputation with those interested in jazz was at a very low ebb. Yet the ebb began even earlier. After the first Hot Fives, the Hot Sevens, the Hot Fives with Hines and the magnificent performances to be found among the records he made after coming to New York in 1929, Armstrong's later recordings for Okeh and his recordings for Victor seemed a commercialisation of his talent to achieve and maintain favour with the popular white audience for whom he was now a star. For them he mugged and "Uncle Tom"'d it and used his brilliant

and innovative instrumental technique to astound his audience with exhibitions of (for then) unprecedented series of high notes; and much of this came through on the records.

All this is explained very justly (and at great length) by James Lincoln Collier; and it is true that, in terms of the legacy of recorded work, Armstrong's playing on the Hot Fives and Hot Sevens is what matters today. Yet, to suggest that historically, in terms of the development of jazz, those recordings are what mattered is to confuse the intrinsically valuable with the historically influential. Roy Eldridge may have admired the Hot Seven's *Wild Man Blues* (he later recorded the tune for Vogue); but, in making *Rockin' Chair* one of his big numbers, he was recalling Armstrong's recording of 1929 with the Luis Russell Orchestra. *I Can't Give You Anything But Love; Black and Blue* (1929); *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me; Dinah; I'm a Ding Dong Daddy* (all from 1930): these tunes entered the jazz repertoire as standards because Louis Armstrong had played them and because of the way he had played them. And the way he played them was what influenced jazz trumpet players for the next decade - not the way he played with the Hot Five.

James Lincoln Collier recognises that in 1929 there was a rapid change in the character of Armstrong's trumpet style, and he describes it very well:

In essence, it was a sparer style, built around flowing phrases in the upper register that were far more frequently stretched than condensed, leaving the impression that he was lagging behind the beat... Armstrong plays fewer notes... He also leaves far more open spaces in his solos than before... He

has a strong tendency now to begin his figures on the second or even third beat of measures...

What Collier does not seem to recognise is that these changes constituted the development of the features of Armstrong's style that were to change jazz trumpet playing. In addition, he seems not to think well of the performances of 1929 and 1930 that were so admired and influential in their day: "Between July 1929 and the spring of the succeeding year, he cut over twenty sides with three different bands, none of them more than barely adequate." That period gave us *I Ain't Got Nobody, Dallas Blues, Blue, Turning Grey Over You, My Sweet* and *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me*. How can one call it (as he does) "mostly a wasteland"?

Many of these records were made with the Luis Russell band, while Armstrong's new laid-back style did not allow them to shine as what they were, one of the most driving bands in jazz history, they still play very well with him on *Dallas Blues* and *I Ain't Got Nobody*, even if they do not suit Armstrong as well as did the Carroll Dickerson band. Collier, indeed, does not seem to esteem the Russell band very highly, giving them only a paragraph in his *Jazz: A Comprehensive History*; though hardly any records by Armstrong (or anyone else) are better than the best by Luis Russell: *Doctor Jazz; The New Call of the Freaks; Feelin' The Spirit; It Should Be You; Feelin' Drowsy; or You Might Get Better*.

James Lincoln Collier has certain things he wants to show us about Louis Armstrong. He convincingly portrays him as a man made



permanently uncertain of himself by the insecurity of his early days, and a man who was throughout his life imprisoned in the isolation that this uncertainty and insecurity produced. He presents us with the added paradox of a great performer who needed the adulation of his audience and who was prepared to belittle his genius to give them what they wanted: the humorous, effervescent, simple-minded white man's "nigger". He rightly sees that in this Armstrong showed that he had little conception of the distinction between entertainer and artist, and that he would have had no sympathy with the educated, middle-class notion of making sacrifices for one's art - a notion that, oddly enough, someone like Eddie Condon did have. However, one can be a great entertainer and a great artist too - and even distort one's art to please the public and still retain features of greatness - as Dickens showed. Dickens's stories were serialised; and, if the periodicals in which they were featured were not selling well, Dickens would change the projected story line, rather as producers of soap operas do today. This did not do Dickens' work any good; but it should not blind us to his retention throughout his life of his gifts of character creation and his feeling for dialogue. If Armstrong recorded rubbishy material in rubbishy company for Decca in the 1930's, it should not blind us to the fact that he could and did play superbly when given the opportunity. Nor should we ignore the fact that his having no conception of the role of the artist did not hinder his playing that role in shaping his chosen Art to a degree that nobody else has in the history of jazz. James Lincoln Collier does not seem ready to allow these points; and he even attributes Armstrong's rounder tone of the late thirties - perhaps his most beautiful tone - to the fact that his lip had deteriorated and would not allow him to play in his earlier manner. Only Panassie, of Armstrong's major critics, sees good in the Decca records - Panassie and Stanley Dance, whose LP for Decca, **Louis Armstrong: Rare Items (1935-1944)** (DL 9225) brought together some of the best (and often commercial) pieces from the period.

James Lincoln Collier is a man with a point to argue - or many points, and he seems to enjoy arguing them. "Europe", the chapter on Armstrong's European visits in the thirties, begins with the remark: "One of the most enduring myths about jazz is that, scorned in its native land, it was first appreciated by Europeans who... had to point out to Americans the virtues of their own music." Three pages are devoted to proving that this is not the case. This propensity for argument and for pursuing side issues is one of the book's weaknesses. The book can be praised for its meticulous concern with "background"; and many readers will value it for this. However, at times there is not always perfect balance: it takes two pages to discuss Armstrong's recordings with Bessie Smith, while one page is given to telling

the facts of her life. Almost everybody with whom Armstrong was associated gets this type of treatment, regardless of the relevance of the facts recorded to the subject of the book. Standing back from the work as a whole, one has a sense of overall imbalance. At page 150 in a text of 351 pages, we have not yet got to the Hot Fives, Armstrong's first recordings under his own name; and it takes until page 198 to get to the end of the Hot Fives. The last forty years of the life are dealt with in seventy pages.

In his final chapter, "The Nature of Genius", Collier asks the fascinating question "what the music would have been had Armstrong not existed." Readers will find his answers worth thinking about; though I do not feel that he gets out of his question all that he might have. Armstrong, along with Beiderbecke, almost invented "improvisation" (which, as Collier rightly shows, was not a feature of classic New Orleans jazz). To his music of Afro-American origin, Armstrong brought the conception of thematic variation that surpassed mere melodic decoration and that exploited the possibilities latent in the notion of harmony that was so important to Western nineteenth-century conventional music. Yet this revolutionary re-interpretation of melody went along with an exhibitionist tendency, the high-notes, the display by the featured soloist. We cannot blame Armstrong if the North American white intellectuals of the day seemed to equate jazz with the sort of performance given by him or by "Fats" Waller: in part, for these intellectuals, that type of performance gave an escape from the emotional inhibition that their own puritan inheritance imposed on them. Nor can we blame the Uncle Tom performances for the types of attitude to which they merely catered. Half sadly, too, one must concede that the image of jazz as an essentially happy music made by happy, carefree negroes, with Armstrong and negro entertainment in general projected, did not do the reputation of the music any good. Yet, let us suppose, if we can, that Armstrong had died when he was still with Oliver (a little older than Charlie Christian was when he died), and that Ellington and Beiderbecke had been the dominant geniuses of early jazz. The music would have had a more serious image, and less serious if more superficially entertaining features might not have become so ingrained in the public sense of it. Yet what was most central to Armstrong's contribution might have been missed: the revolutionising of the playing of his instrument, in a technical sense; the sense of swing and a feeling for melody that were combined with an astounding gift for taking melody apart and reconstituting it in a radical way - something that pointed forward to all future developments in jazz, despite Armstrong's later musical conservatism.

Having said all this, let me return to my opening remarks: this is a book that everyone interested in jazz should read. — *Trevor Tolley*

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VIC VOGEL * THINGS TO COME

NUMBER NINE IN A SERIES OF CANADIAN INTERVIEW/ESSAYS * INTERVIEW BY MARC CHENARD

Born in 1935 of Hungarian and German parents, Vic Vogel has been one of the mainstays of the Montreal jazz scene. First as a pianist, then as a trombonist (lefthanded) and finally as a composer and arranger, Vic has pursued a diverse musical career. Not only has he written countless commercial jingles, he has also composed symphonic scale works too, like the music for the closing ceremonies of the 1976 summer Olympic games, as well as fulfilling a yearly commission for a festival in Rostock, East Germany. Yet, his first love lies within the jazz idiom, as he is more active than ever with a 17 piece big band for which he writes, plays piano and emcees in his own inimitable manner.

MARC CHENARD: *Recently, the album that you recorded for Radio Canada in 1982 was rereleased on a small American label with great commercial success.*

VIC VOGEL: Last year, I received a call from Phil Colbert. He used to be a singer and emcee back in the fifties, but now he is an A&R man as well as promoter. It so happened that he was coming up to Montreal to visit some relatives, so he wanted to drop in and see me. When he came by, he asked me what I was doing, so I played him a tape of my record. Since he was impressed by it, he wanted a copy of it, to see if he could swing a deal in the States. Eventually, he found a small company (Pinnacle Records) and closed a deal to release it in the U.S. In typical American style, they called it the "Awesome Big Band", and from then on, it hit the charts. In fact, some recent charts show my band in eleventh place, which is quite a feat for a complete unknown.

But I still haven't made it to the top ten, and I will tell you why. First of all, the big companies would not give us the time of day. Then, when a little independent hits it big, they resent that, especially when it is a complete newcomer in their market that is shaking the shit out of them. For instance, I had problems with WNEW in New York City, because that radio station is part of the Columbia Broadcasting Network. Someone at the station told me he could not play it because "it shouts at you." But isn't that what a record is supposed to do?

As of early July, I recorded a new album for another American label. That too is a studio recording, but it is more like a live one where there were guests at the session, just to give it a little more presence. I can tell you one thing: you think the first record shouted at you, just you wait for this one: it will scream at you!

M.C.: *Before you had this "Awesome Big Band, you had one in the late '60s that was quite well known around town. Can you compare these bands in terms of musicianship? Nowadays, you have a very different type of musician than those of some twenty years ago, and I am wondering about the impact of music schools on the profession.*

V.V.: Back then, I had a 20 piece band with five trumpets, four trombones and one tuba, five saxes and a five man rhythm section. That band relied mostly on older musicians because there were very few educational opportunities

offered to younger musicians. In fact, quite a few of those musicians are now dead. Back then, all of those guys were very active and no one was ever out of work. At that time, there were 1100 clubs in Montreal and Radio Canada was doing a lot of live broadcasting too, which meant that 30 to 35 musicians were employed in those bands. Today, if you have a ten piece band, that is a big deal.

Around 1968, I was playing at a now defunct club called Le Jazztheque, and I knew I had something good going then, because there was a bus stop in front of the club and, in the summer, people would actually forget to take their bus, because they would listen to us through the open windows.

In the last seven or eight years, a new breed of musician has appeared. These players come right out of the universities with an amazing level of technical ability and they can read complicated charts with ease. But, as much as they are skilled, they are also very competitive, unlike the team spirit that was more prevalent in the past. Yet, this young generation owes a lot to the previous one, that was mainly self-taught. Let me explain that to you.

In the early to mid-seventies, there was a wave of pre-nationalism taking shape in our province. There appeared a wave of "chansonniers" on T.V., those guitar scratchers who were poets at the same time. Mind you, they may have been important at that time, because they had a social comment to make. But they also brought along with them some feeble pianists to accompany them and write their arrangements too. Since they did not know how to write, even less to orchestrate, they found a nice way of characterizing their style by calling it "québécois", which was also a way of distinguishing themselves from the American pop thing.

Every time they had a big show, they would use one of each: one flute, one violin, though rarely a trumpet or any other horns. In doing that, they created what I call "the era of the photostat". Somebody just wrote down chord symbols on a sheet of music so everybody could read it in one key, which meant that all transposing instruments were out. Basically then, the groups were more or less the same and they were led by piano players who could not do much anyway.

Now, all horn players were cut out by the band leaders because of that style. So a lot of these unemployed session men created posi-

tions for themselves in the school system, so you had popular music being taught for the first time. Essentially, the teaching of music became a means of employment more than the communication of an art form, which goes to show you that schools are much more of a damn business than anything else.

Nevertheless, I have to recognize that the kinds today are technically far superior than in my day, when the only teaching ground for the young were the clubs. But then again, the schools turn out people who all play alike, the best example being Coltrane for all tenor players. And they all sound the same, because they do not have a story to tell, they have not accumulated that life experience in their craft. So it makes it very difficult for a student to break into the business, when he has been prepared by a teacher — whose reason to teach is the very fact he could not make it on the outside!

In my opinion, they will have to now teach the BUSINESS of music, even though it will take another generation to do that. For instance: how much should an arranger charge for a jingle without losing the contract? What should be the price for this or that gig? That is where the union should get involved, so they can show the people how to get around and learn the ropes. But the union is not keeping up with those realities.

M.C.: *In an earlier conversation, you told me that the Ellington and Gillespie bands were major influences on you. In what way can you characterize each of those influences on your own writing?*

V.V.: Ellington's band was very close to me, because it often came to town and stayed for a whole week. You would just pay two dollars to get in, rather than the twenty-five it costs you today to see a band play a one night stand. I had a chance to grow up with that band, both in person and through radio broadcasts. I even knew some members of the band on a personal basis, like Cat Anderson, who later introduced me to the Duke himself. Once, Cat even asked me to write something for the band, so they could try it out at a rehearsal before Duke could come in. So I scratched out the parts, nine or ten bars each. And as soon as they played it, I realized something important: you could have something written by Stan Kenton and have Duke's band play it, but it would still sound like Ellington! That is when I learned how important individuals were and

how different voices would mesh together in order to produce that something very special. You see, Ellington would write for people and not just instruments and that is what I am trying to do. I may write a piece for a guy in my band, but once he leaves the band, we do not play it anymore. That is the tradition which I want to continue.

For me, Dizzy Gillespie had the most modern band ever, it was even more modern than Kenton's. Diz's band will always be THE band, the experimental one. To me, it was ahead of its time, and it still is too. Last year, my own band had the opportunity of playing those charts at the Montreal Jazz Festival with Dizzy himself as guest soloist. Man, I can tell you that there is some mean shit flying in there. And that was done over 30 years ago! I did not catch the first band he had, but I caught the second one at Birdland in the late '50s. In it, he had a young Melba Liston and Slide Hampton in the trombone section, Ernie Henry as lead alto and, of course, Lee Morgan, the "enfant terrible" of that band. What a monstrous and musical band that was! They could make things work that didn't work harmonically by bending them around the corner somehow. Today, we take all those things for granted, but Dizzy was there first. Nowadays, you can hear a lot of writers using those innovations. Take Slide Hampton: he comes from that, but he developed his own thing too. I like to think that I come from that too, and I feel very fortunate to have performed that music.

M.C.: *Considering your allegiance to the "jazz tradition", I wonder about your outlook on some of the younger musicians belonging to what is loosely called the "avant-garde". How do you view some of these more contemporary players and composers in that mould?*

V.V.: First of all, I think that a lot of this avant-garde stuff came from Europe. Over there, they realize the wealth of their long standing tradition. But their music is rooted in an harmonic tradition, unlike the percussive or rhythmic one we have in America. Though that distinction is not quite as neat as it once was, because the world is getting much smaller.

But I can tell you that I have never heard as much "Freedom-in-F" shit than ever before. Take this guy from Germany, Alexander von Schlippenbach and the Globe Unity Orchestra. I was there when they played in Montreal a few years ago. You have 12 or 13 musicians who just blow together whatever they want, before one of them moves up and solos, and around they go. At the intermission, I was out in the lobby listening to all these "intellectual" jazz lovers who were analyzing the piece. After a while, I just had to put my two cents worth in: I told them that they will be coming back in the second half and playing the same piece over again! Of course, they did not like that very much, but that's how it is.

You know, I used to do that some thirty

years ago with a trumpeter named Herbie Spanier. Between shows at a dance club, we would go to a small cafe, the Little Vienna, and try to drive people nuts by playing anything. Dizzy also did that in the early days of bop, because the musicians of that time needed to go inwards and play for themselves.

That was also the case with Ornette, but he was then (and still is) articulate as hell. He was important in breaking the pulse of the drummer. First, he always gave a structure, then it was up in the air for blowing, but there was always that little section that came in and out. Another musician who knows how to do that is Gil Evans. To me, the greatest bible of arranging to this day is his late '50s album "Big Stuff". Any student who wants to know about writing should go home and copy that, because it is all there: textures, colours, intensities. Those very qualities are also found in a lot of Duke's work.

M.C.: *Speaking about arrangers and composers, tell me about your friendship with Charles Mingus.*

V.V.: Back in the '60s, he played here at a dive that was so small, he had to bend down not to hit the ceiling. Once we hung out and we had something like 24 smoked meats each! Mind you, they cost about a quarter each at that time, but I still had to pay. Despite all of those stories that have gone around about him, he was very nice, at least with me, and in no way was he anti-social as many have said.

M.C.: *Did his music have an impact on you?*

V.V.: For sure. He too had a way of moving things around at will, because he had that flexibility in his writing, that I was looking for. For example, he would change the solo order on the spur of the moment. You could always feel a breath of fresh air in what he was

doing. But he wasn't the only one to influence me at that time. To name but a few, Jimmy Giuffre and his small groups of the early '60s (like the one with Paul Bley and Steve Swallow) and George Russell, who wrote a wonderful piece, *All About Rosie*, that he has not equalled since.

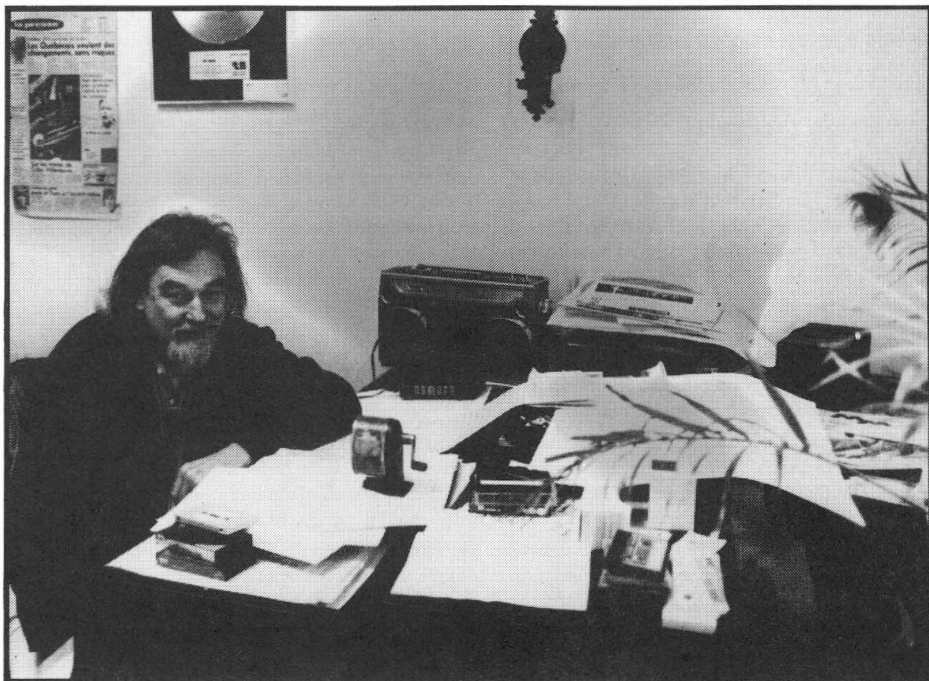
M.C.: *If you had to name but five arrangers who had a specific influence on you, who would you put on your list?*

V.V.: Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Slide Hampton, Charles Mingus and... Johnny Richards for some of the latin stuff he did.

M.C.: *In essence then, how do you perceive the arranger's role within the music?*

V.V.: As a general observation, I would say that jazz composers for a long time never had the access to classical instrumentations, like the added percussion, french horns and double reed instruments. Take the harp: it has happened to me that a director of a show would ask me to write a score and while we discussed the instrumentation, I would stick my neck out by suggesting we add a harp. But I would do that, because I first learned how it worked, by actually touching it, by getting first hand experience on what was physically possible and what was not. I just don't write a chord symbol with a lead and end note; I write the pedal markings too. And the harpist respects that.

Basically, you learn by getting smacked in the face. A good arranger is a logical person who knows what is possible and what is not. For instance, you must give a trumpeter eight bars rest after his solo, so he can get back to the section. That is why your soloists are not your lead players, because you've got to give them the parts where the range is a little lower, which gives them the chance to warm up and blow the hell out in their solo.



IN PERFORMANCE

JIMMY HEATH QUARTET

Atlanta, Georgia
July 5, 1987

The setting was Grant Park in downtown Atlanta. The occasion was one of several Sunday afternoon concerts comprising the Atlanta Jazz Festival. And the word was *authority*. We had just finished hearing a set by the locally-based **Ojeda Penn Experience**, notable for a quirky solo reworking of Monk's challenging *Ruby My Dear* by the pianist-leader. Prior to that Blue Note's new "house band" **OTB** had impressed as a well-rehearsed group of spunky young players doing idiomatic, but mostly original material with conviction. Tenorist **Ralph Bowen** was particularly impressive as a communicator who knows how to blend intellectual and emotional appeal.

It takes nothing away from Bowen to say that Jimmy Heath's first few notes articulated the difference between a young, fiery, creative, technically brilliant player and a wise older tenor man. None of the members of the Heath quartet (**Tony Purrone**, guitar; **Stafford James**, bass and **Akira Tana**, drums) makes much pretension to showmanship. While both Penn and trumpeter **Michael Philip Mossman**, as spokesman for OTB, announced tunes and sidemen, told stories and generally worked to achieve a rapport with the audience, Heath accomplished more by just standing up and playing.

His very first solo riveted the crowd. Forty years in "the bebop business" spoke in a fiery, building solo which was convoluted yet wasted not one note in building to a logical climax and brilliant denouement. Heath's support was excellent. Purrone provided a harmonic underpinning which would be comfortable for any horn player accustomed to a pianist, and shone in his own solo spots, which feature more dense chording than we are accustomed to hearing from jazz guitarists. Tana was crisp, yet driving, and James' big fat sound and choice lines invited positive comparison with Heath's more famous brother and erstwhile co-leader.

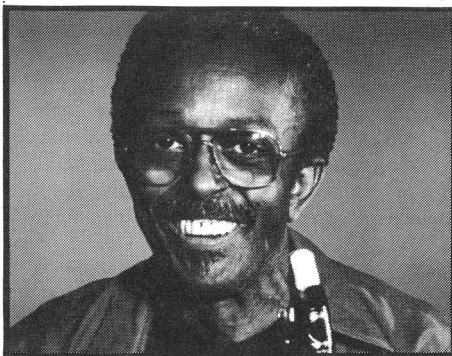
By the end of the first number, it was obvious that the weather was not going to cooperate. Heavy dark clouds gathered and a fierce wind lashed the canvas cover of the temporary bandstand. Stage hands scurried to protect protruding sound equipment. Some people started leaving, though it turned out that more than a few were dashing to stash their blankets and picnic baskets and return for the music. Heath, apparently fearful of not completing the performance, moved Tana's solo slot up in the program.

As the rain began to fall, some sought shelter under vendors' tents or the eaves of buildings, within hearing but out of sight of the band. Others pressed in around the stand, taking advantage of the minimal shelter it afforded. Heath continued through **Eddie Harris'**

"Freedom Jazz Dance," some bop era classics, an original samba and others. A few people began to dance on the by now muddy and slippery ground in front of the stand. The spirit of the crowd affected the music, and a few rhythm and blues licks slipped in. At one point Heath reminded me of Willis Jackson.

It was clear by the end of the set who were the hard core jazz fans of Atlanta — a remarkably diverse and thoroughly soaked lot composed of parents with young children, young adults and people from the leader's generation. Strangers shared improvised shelters. One man handed me his umbrella, saying "Hold this, I gotta clap!", and laid into a backbeat. Heath, never the most demonstrative of musicians, was wearing a broad grin. Through it all his solos remained models of articulate passion. When it was all over, and we were leaving, a woman I didn't know said to me "It was *better* in the rain!"

— Bill McLarney



THE HENRY THREADGILL SEXTETT

Carlos I, New York City
Friday, July 31, 1987

Henry Threadgill, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Frank Lacy, trombone; Rasul Sadik, trumpet; Fred Hopkins, bass; Deidre Murray, cello; Pheeroan AkLaff, drums; Reggie Nicholson, percussion.

Though the name of Threadgill's newest group is a misnomer (in actuality it is a septet), and this misnomer is misspelled (is this for a reason?), the seven individuals it consists of form a cohesive unit which draws from a number of different sources to create a unique sound. Their music is built upon a system of layers, both in instrumentation (i.e. percussion, strings and horns) and melodic and rhythmic lines. This often gives the listener the feeling that it is a music with roots in Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington, which of course it is, though it is also influenced by many other musicians.

The set started off poorly, the first piece being a third stream oriented composition which contained little improvisation, hardly what one would expect from the horn of one of the many great improvisatory artists to emerge from Chicago's Association for the Advance-

ment of Creative Musicians. It sounded like one of Mingus' more arranged efforts, an exercise in polyrhythms and polyphonics, but lacked the bite which characterized much of Mingus' music. Fortunately, this piece was short and not indicative of the rest of the set.

The next two pieces were successful undertakings of a predominantly hard bop/avant garde nature. Though the solos tended to be innovative and fresh, a lack of preparation marred these otherwise fine performances. At times, the musicians fumbled around looking for sheet music and the soloists were often not ready to solo. Sadik quickly covered when it came time for a solo and nobody did, but the lack of organization was visible. At one point, Hopkins looked thoroughly confused when the drummers began a lengthy duet, an effort which, it should be noted, was nothing short of superb. It sounded like battling Elvin Joneses. The duet started off with AkLaff laying down a simple riff which he gradually quickened and embellished. Nicholson punctuated AkLaff's rhythms and set down lines of his own which contrasted and meshed with AkLaff's. Eventually, the percussionists reached an incredible tempo, at which they continued for about a minute before slowing down to a more accessible speed so that the others could join in.

Whether soloing, accompanying, or playing a duet, the string work of Fred Hopkins and Deidre Murray was excellent. The use of cello and bass together in a successful undertaking brings to mind the work of Ahmed Abdul-Malik (bass) and Calo Scott (cello) on the 1957 recording entitled "The Music of Ahmed Abdul-Malik" as well as the interaction of Ron Carter's cello and George Duvivier's bass on Eric Dolphy's recordings. Hopkins, one of the most unknown of the avant-garde virtuoso bassists, would lay down a line and Murray would counter with a line of her own, each one improvising simultaneously but always remaining firmly meshed. In a music which is dominated by men, it is refreshing to see a female musician who is not merely a token or a novelty. Murray's musicianship and creativity were on a par with the other members of the group at all times.

Trombonist Frank Lacy seemed to prefer musical effects as opposed to flowing lines. Throughout the course of his solos, he demonstrated his excellent range, grinding out growls and vocal effects, though he tended not to swing in the traditional sense of the word. Rasul Sadik demonstrated his creativity at a variety of speeds. He showed an ability to improvise both at breakneck speeds and at a slower, more ponderous tempo.

Threadgill wore a suit which looked like something out of Ornette Coleman's closet — it was a collage of different shades of blue swirled together — but musically he combined Coleman's influence with that of Albert Ayler and himself. His solos were flowing and original

but he showed a reluctance to go into the higher registers. At times he would go from an extreme low to a scream worthy of Ayler but this was the exception rather than the rule.

The final piece was *Bermuda Blue*, from the group's recent recording entitled "You Know The Number." This rendition was far more satisfying than the recorded one, however, because the club setting gave the musicians a chance to stretch out. Whereas Fred Hopkins only gets a few bars of soloing at the beginning of the recorded version, at the live performance he opened with a very daring and virtuosic solo which ran almost five minutes. The piece ended by repeating the "A" section of the composition several times, each time increasing the tempo. When this reached a frenzied climax, Threadgill signalled and the group slowed down to the original tempo.

Threadgill's sep/sextet is a group whose ideas are not unprecedented or truly radical. The idea of placing musicians in sections goes back a long way. The use of timbral improvisation is not new. Yet this group does not use others' ideas as crutches but rather as a springboard for their own musical innovation. They may at times seem a little unorganized but the music is fresh and I would rather see a fresh group which at times lacks organization than a stale group which is totally on cue. I highly recommend the Sextett. — Peter Robbins

BILL BERRY BIG BAND
The Wadsworth Theater
Brentwood, California
August 2, 1987

Bill Berry, leader, cornet; Steve Huffsteter, trumpet; Frank Szabo, trumpet; Larry Gillespie, trumpet; Buster Cooper, trombone; Vince Prudente, trombone; Slide Hyde, trombone; Bob Cooper, tenor sax; Bob Efford, tenor sax; Marshall Royal, alto sax; Lanny Morgan, alto sax; Jimmy Nimitz, baritone sax; George Gaffney, piano; Paul Gormley, bass; Frank Capp, drums.

There are few bands today devoting serious attention to the Duke Ellington legacy of big band music. Certainly the importance of Ellington is recognized, as various slices of Ellingtonia are constantly being rendered. But how many big bands, with full instrumentation, do you know of who are playing Ellington?

Veteran big band player Bill Berry, a one-time member of Ellington's assembly, has put together a consortium of all-stars who are currently delving heavily into Ellingtonia. Sunday, August 2nd saw the group in the Wadsworth Theater, one of the finest venues in Los Angeles where jazz concerts are regularly held. Located on the grounds of a large V.A. hospital, the building is operated by UCLA. Entry to "Jazz at the Wadsworth" concerts costs only the three dollar price for parking, thanks to the Musician's Union Music Performance Trust Fund, the UCLA Student Committee for the

Arts and KKGQ, a local radio station.

Berry opened with *In A Mellotone*, featuring one of his own cornet solos and a hello how are you solo by Marshall Royal. *Harlem Airshaft* featured a growling Vince Prudente on trombone, a sparkling Steve Huffsteter on trumpet, and a potent Lanny Morgan on alto sax, (and also on clarinet for a few choruses). Bill Holman's arrangement of Jerome Kern's *Yesterday* followed.

Pianist George Gaffney, just back from a tour as leader of the Sarah Vaughn trio, also played an interesting solo, supported by great bass work from Paul Gormley on *It's Bad To Be Forgotten*. The Nat Pierce arrangement featured subtle riffing, lovely textures, and compact dynamics.

Thankfully, Berry turned back to Ellington, with *Warm Valley*, a favorite solo vehicle for the great Marshall Royal. The veteran standout at lead alto with the translucent orange mouthpiece offered up his classic tantalizing, soulful blend of contrasts. *Oh Beautiful* followed. Steve Huffsteter soloed on trumpet, and veteran tenor saxophonist Bob Cooper blew in his classic, rollicking, clear-toned style.

The theme from *Paris Blues*, a blues with an easygoing tempo written by Duke Ellington, gave rise again to a delicious trombone solo from Dick "Slide" Hyde. This selection was driven by persuasive drumming from Frank Capp.

The not shy Jack Sheldon stepped up to the mike next for the Las Vegas portion of the program, doing *Pennies From Heaven*, *There'll Be Some Changes Made*, and his usual clowning. However you may feel about his act, his trumpet playing is excellent.

After an intermission, the band returned for the live broadcast hour. Starting out with *Off And Running*, the band sounded hot, but seemed aware of being on the radio, and perhaps a little edgy.

I Got It Bad featured a deft solo from Marshall Royal, and a pleasant flugelhorn solo from Steve Huffsteter. The Bob Ojeda arrangement also included a break for unaccompanied piano which developed into a great trio section.

Lanny Morgan ripped out a flurry on *Cherokee*, and "Admiral" Jack Nimitz did the honors on *Sophisticated Lady*. The band loosened up on *Things Ain't What They Used To Be*, giving Buster Cooper, a one-time member of the Duke's band, an extended space for one of his characteristically appealing, mirthful, and seductive solos, which garnered the biggest audience response of the night.

A moody *Blood Count* featured the delicate harmonies of Billy Strayhorn. This was followed by *Fat Alice's Blues*, which ignited Marshall Royal, the 74-year-old practically dancing his way through the tune.

More vocal work and trumpet playing from Jack Sheldon followed, featuring *Do Nothing Til You Hear From Me* and *That Old Black Magic*.

One of the band's best, *Rockin' In Rhythm*, followed by *Take The A Train*, closed the per-

formance. The second half of this concert, the radio broadcast half, felt less intimate and seemed directed toward the radio listeners. Some observations about jazz in L.A. came to mind.

Jazz fans who live in Los Angeles are blessed with the opportunity to hear some of the world's finest professionals pretty much any night of the week. Outside of New York, L.A. has the strongest local jazz scene in the U.S. Discussions about the influence of L.A. on musicians who settle here often suggest a subduing of passion, and the development of a professional polish.

This phenomenon can be confirmed by going to the clubs and checking out the music. It is the norm to hear musicians who are amazingly good, as professional and excellent as you could ever hear.

But sometimes there is predictability. There seems to be a certain routine, a parameter for a lot of jazz music in L.A. It is frequently music which has a sanitized feeling, music which wouldn't offend or bother anyone.

Success in music here seems to demand so much ability, so much flexibility and adaptability to the requirements and situations of playing professionally, that even blowing jazz becomes another role, another professional situation instead of anything higher or deeper than that. The experimentation, freshness and emotion of the best jazz seems to be missing in the dominant jazz mainstream here.

On the other hand, jazz sounds from L.A. have been brought to millions of people who watch television or go to movies. Culture in America has been enriched by the incorporation of jazz styles into these and other media, and musicians are getting decent jobs. For this I, as a jazz fan and supporter, must be grateful. I am.

I am also sad. Too often a musical diet of cotton candy and ice cream seems to be the menu in this city of Hollywood glitter. For some of us the appeal of jazz has included a desire for a spiritual element, an expression of inner feelings and a reflection of life experiences which words cannot describe. The best jazz "tells it like it is." It affirms reality in all its beauty and brutality, its sweetness and bitterness, its highest aspiration and its lowest despair, with an underlying joy and respect that uplifts and educates anyone who opens their heart to it. This kind of music is also very much part of the L.A. jazz music scene, but a minority part, and you have to hunt for it.

To a large degree the demand and support for music reflects the society which produces it. Music which encourages people to shut off their mind is very much in concert with a society over-ridden by greed, escapism and militarism. Jazz is trying to survive and make a living, like the rest of us. Thank God for musicians who persevere to make truthful, honest music. Their contribution may be greater than they know. They eloquently teach and influence people to strive to live truthful, honest lives and to aspire and work toward a better world. — Willie Lubka

FUTURITIES * STEVE LACY'S LYRICS

A POEM SAID ENOUGH TIMES, IT BECOMES A SONG * AN INVESTIGATION BY ROGER PARRY

The release in 1985 by Hat Hut Records of the 'original cast album' (2 LP's) by the Steve Lacy Nine of "FUTURITIES" marks a significant point in Lacy's work dedicated to setting diverse 'lyrics' to music.

With the release is a lengthy sleeve note — dated Mardi Gras, 1985 — subscribed by Pierre Joris which takes the opportunity to present us with a number of quotes from Lacy which shed some light on this aspect of his work; for example, from a conversation which appears (from the context of the sleeve note) to have taken place in late 1982:

"I've been setting lyrics to music for almost twenty years. It took a long time to come to the surface — that stuff has got to age, to mellow out...We used all kinds of texts, some I wrote myself, but also telegrams, letters, things found on the street, children's exercises, slogans pulled off billboards — what you may call found poetry— but it all comes down to poetry or lyrics — to word-setting. Lyrics were sort of petering out in the fifties and that's where I came in. I guess it's my job to bring them back. Now the reason why all this has been possible is that I had a voice to work with — Irene's (Irene Aebi) voice, a voice like an instrument. We started from zero together, me and her and the words made the music, but without the voice to experiment with it wouldn't have happened. She was a gifted voice, a voice you can't ignore or leave idle — it was my pleasure to find things that would fit it. It's been a real adventure for about 18 years now" (i.e. from around 1964).

Probably from the same conversation — "...see, the thing about setting words to music, you have to be able to deliver them over and over again without boredom, without fatigue. You have to place them in musical pictures so that they can be sung. A poem is said again and again and if it is said enough times it becomes a song. That's the way I find the music, by saying the words over and over again until it becomes sing-song or song-sing, whatever, until it begins to take on musical appearances..."

And a third quote, of unspecified date — "What I was after, what I am always after is a kind of consistency AND a free form. Something that's fixed AND open."

Dealing only with material on general releases on record, Lacy has some fourteen issues which include examples of his word-setting covering a period of some twelve years, (1973 to the present). This article looks back over this period and these releases; some discographic and bibliographic details are given at its close.

The most recent release is, of course, "Futurities" (music: Steve Lacy; words: Robert Creeley), on which — again via Joris — Lacy has the followingspecific comments:



"The thing about the Creeley show is...the line. After our first meeting (probably in 1982, and brought about by Joris) he sent me his Collected Poems and it really grabbed me, it was exactly the kind of stuff we worked with, it was so clear and simple and deep, and could be said over and over again..."

"Well, the Creeley poems were great to work with, they were so chiseled, so expertly done, it was amazing. The thing that struck me was the subject matter. Love, the nature of love and the idea of sharing a life with somebody, falling in love, keeping it alive, getting old together, all these various aspects..."

Robert Creeley was born in Arlington, Massachusetts in 1926. In 1954 he began teaching at Black Mountain and as editor of the Black Mountain Review was responsible for publishing the work of many noted writers... (From the publishers note to "Poems, 1950-1965").

For the show, which had its first performance at Festival de Lille (France) on November 15th, 1984, Lacy set twenty sets of Creeley words, derived principally (fifteen items) from his "Poems 1950-1965". The remainder come from his "Later" (three pieces); one piece is from another Creeley book, publisher unknown; and the remaining item, which derives from a postcard sent by Creeley to Lacy, eventually became the curtain-raiser —

'Sad Advice'

If it isn't fun, don't do it. / You'll have to do enough that isn't. / Such is life, like they say, / no one gets away without paying / and since you don't get to keep it / anyhow, who needs it.

All poems are reproduced fully with the release.

The full-blown "Futurities", as first performed, included two dancers, special lighting,

and an 'altar' setting painted by the artist, Kenneth Noland (born Asheville, North Carolina, 1924).

In 1984, Hat Hut Records released the Steve Lacy Two, Five & Six "BLINKS"; and, in the preceding year, the Steve Lacy Seven "PROSPECTUS". Both releases include versions of 'Cliches' (dedicated to musician Joe Maka), a piece which 'began as an African postcard from Aline Dubois (?), who visited Senegal...' (Lacy's liner note of January, 1983 to "Prospectus"). "Prospectus" has two further settings. One is eponymous and is dedicated to pianist McCoy Tyner, using a setting of Lacy's translation to English of a French poem by Blaise Cendrars (pen name of the Swiss-born poet Frederic Sauter, 1887-1961); the other track, dedicated to Bob Marley, is 'Retreat' which derives its text from a statement written by the English painter, Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) and which Lacy has translated back to English from his French source!

The original, which has a certain quaint charm, is as follows —

'I'm sick of Portraits and wish very much to take my Viol da Gamba and walk off to some sweet Village when I can paint Landscips and enjoy the fag End of Life in quietness and ease.'

1982 saw the release by Hat Hut Records of a 2 LP set under the title "Ballets". The second disc is the sextet performance of Lacy's '4 Edges Suite', two 'edges' of which have texts. They are 'Underline' (the 2nd Edge), dedicted to Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968, French artist, mainspring of Dada), which is a setting of a Japanese Buddhist mantra: NAM-MYO-HO-REN-GE-KYO; and 'Deadline' (the 4th Edge), dedicated to Witter Bynner (1881-?), born in Brooklyn, New York, a poet associated with post-1912 'new' American poetry and with the production, in the 1940's, of a translation of the 'Tao Teh Ching' of Lao Tzu; for more details specifically on Steve Lacy's relationship with Tao, see my article published in CODA 204 (edition of Oct./Nov. 1985). Lacy composed 'Deadline' in Tokyo in the mid-70's and later the formula for 'grass', 'supplied by Brion Gysin' (TETRA HYDRO (3x) TETRA CABINOL), was incorporated. Gysin is a U.S. citizen, born in England in 1916; artist, writer and poet.

Brion Gysin was involved with Steve Lacy in the production of the Hat Hut Records 1981 release "SONGS" which provides nine settings of Gysin's words, eight by Lacy and one ('Luvzya') by drummer Oliver Johnson. Gysin can be heard delivering his own lines in 'Luvzya' and in his three 'Permutations':

'Junk is no good baby;

Kick that habit man;

I don't work you dig.

Lacy's voice is heard with Irene Aebi's on 'Blue Baboon'; Aebi is featured in the four remaining titles, one of which is 'Somebody Special', a piece which had appeared earlier on "The Owl" (on the Saravah label, see below). The words of all titles are reproduced on this Hat Hut record sleeve.

Another 1981 Hat Hut Records release is the 1979 recording of "TIPS" performed by the Lacy/Potts sax duo with the voice of Irene Aebi. Lacy uses as his lyrics source the note books (Cahiers, first published in 1948) of the French painter Georges Braque (1882-1963). There are fourteen aphorisms, seen by Lacy as Braque's 'advice to himself as an artist, and to all other artists...(which Lacy) kept repeating... over a period of many years, (until) they began to seem like little tunes...' (from Lacy's own sleeve note to the release). The sleeve reproduces (in reduced format) the manuscript of these settings. "Tips" is dedicated to the memory of Paul Cezanne, French painter, draughtsman and watercolourist (1839-1906).

Further material from performances in 1979 was released in the same year by the Italian label Black Saint under the title "TROUBLES". The release includes three tracks with words; one, entitled 'Blues' has its source in the French translation by Rene Sieffert of the 'Love Songs of Manyo-shu' (both individuals upon whom I have yet to glean information). The "Troubles" track gives the following advice — 'Never trouble trouble / 'til trouble troubles you / you only trouble trouble / and trouble others too' — but, so far, the author and source remain unidentified. There is a version of 'No Baby' on this release which utilises these two words as its text. (It is elsewhere established by Lacy that this title is dedicated to Sidney Bechet.)

Also recorded in 1979 is the 1980 release on Hat Hut Records of "THE WAY", with texts derived from Bynner's version of the Tao Teh Ching. There is also a version of 'Existence', one of the pieces from "The Way" suite by Lacy on a 1979 release by Hat Hut recorded at the Willisau Jazz Festival in August, 1977. As

stated above, this material has been discussed in an earlier CODA article.

The French Musica label released (in a year unspecified) the LP "SHOTS" which has one track, 'The Kiss', with words set to music whose source and authorship are not indicated. Incidentally, the cover design for this release is by Brion Gysin.

Three releases on the French Saravah label make available material recorded in 1974/75 which includes various word settings by Lacy. Most recent of the three is "THE OWL" with six word/songs; one is a version of 'Somebody Special' (words by Gysin), a title already referred to above; another is 'The Owl', derived from the poetry of Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) — reference is made by Lacy to the Austrian composer Anton Webern (1883-1945) in connection with this setting; another ('Wish') sets a poem by the French Dada painter Francis Picabia (1878-1953); another is 'Notre Vie' which uses a poem by Paul Eluard, (1895-1952), participant in the activities of French Dada and subsequently a major presence in the Surrealist movement; the two others are based on writings by Spanish Surrealist painter Salvador Dali (1904-), and Dr. G. Ozahwa, texts whose words and sources I have yet to establish. The middle of these three Saravah releases is "DREAMS" which has, as the one item relevant to this exposition, Lacy's setting of the Gysin permutation-type poem of the same name. The first Saravah release is "SCRAPS", again with a single relevant item, this one titled 'Obituary' — 'Gordon McIntyre was in Rawalpindi travelling with his children when, on Sunday, July 26th he passed away' are the words, from a source I have yet to identify.

The earliest recorded material (January, 1973) to feature a Lacy setting of words is "The Woe" (dedicated to Ho Chi Minh and all the people of Vietnam) which appears as one side of the Quark release "CROPS". According to Lacy's sleeve note (1977), "The Woe" was 'conceived in the horrors of the Vietnam war... a melodrama in four parts ('The Wax', 'The

Wage', 'The Wane' and 'The Wake') for quintet, two tape cassettes of war noise (air & ground), and voice'. In 'The Wake', the voice of Irene Aebi delivers the text used here...from the French poet, (Eugene) Guillevic (1907-): Massacres. 'The Wake' is 'directly inspired by the work of another musician: Lawrence Brown'.

The foregoing paragraphs have taken us on a quick excursion back in time through the disc terrain of Lacy's lyrics and their attendants —

AEBI, IRENE
APOLLINAIRE, GUILLAUME
BECHET, SIDNEY
BRAQUE, GEORGES
BROWN, LAWRENCE
BYNNER, WITTER
CENDRARS, BLAISE (Frederic Sauter)
CEZANNE, PAUL
CREELEY, ROBERT
DALI, SALVADOR
DUCHAMP, MARCEL
DUBOIS, ALINE
ELUARD, PAUL
GAINSBOROUGH, THOMAS
GUILLEVIC, EUGENE
GYSIN, BRION
HO CHI MINH
JOHNSON, OLIVER
JORIS, PIERRE
LAO TZU
MCINTYRE, GORDON
MAKA, JOE
MANYO-SHU
MARLEY, BOB
NOLAND, KENNETH
OZAHWA, Dr. G.
PICABIA, FRANCIS
SIEFFERT, RENE
TYNER, McCOY
WEBERN, ANTON

— who combine to give us a feel for the warp of his weavings; by listening to the material, the weft will become tangible.

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DISCOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Release Title	Label	No.	Recording Date(s)
FUTURITIES (*)	HAT ART	2022	85.0114-18 84.1119+20
(*) The release is sub-titled "Steve's Standards"			
The musicians are — Irene AEBI, voice; Steve LACY, soprano sax; Steve POTTS, alto and soprano sax; George LEWIS, trombone; Gyde KNEBUSCH, harp; Barry WEDGLE, guitar; Jef GARDNER, piano; J.J. AVENEL, bass; Oliver JOHNSON, drums.			
BLINKS	HAT ART	2006	83.0212
LACY, POTTS, AEBI, AVENEL, JOHNSON and Bobby FEW, piano.			
PROSPECTUS	HAT ART	2001	82.1101+2
LACY, POTTS, LEWIS, FEW, AEBI, AVENEL, JOHNSON.			
BALLETS THE FOUR EDGES	HAT ART	1982/83	81.0423
LACY, POTTS, FEW, AEBI, AVENEL, JOHNSON.			
SONGS	HAT ART	1985/86	81.0128+29
LACY, POTTS, FEW, AEBI, AVENEL, JOHNSON with Brion GYSIN, voice.			

TIPS LACY, POTTS, AEBI.	HAT HUT	TWENTY	79.1214
TROUBLES LACY, POTTS, AEBI, Kent CARTER, bass, cello; JOHNSON.	BLACK SAINT	BSR0035	79.0524+25
THE WAY LACY, POTTS, AEBI, CARTER, JOHNSON.	HAT HUT	THREE	79.0123
SHOTS LACY, Masa KWATE, percussion; AEBI.	MUSICA	3024	77.1015
STAMPS LACY, POTTS, AEBI, CARTER, JOHNSON.	HAT HUT	K(/L)	77.0827 (78.0222)
THE OWL LACY, POTTS, AEBI, CARTER, JOHNSON, Takashi KAKO, keyboards; Jean-Jacques AVENEL, kora, cheng, autoharp; Lawrence Butch MORRIS, cornet.	SARAVAH	SHL 1088	75.05
DREAMS LACY, POTTS, AEBI, CARTER, AVENEL, Kenneth TYLER, drums; Derek BAILEY, guitar; Boulou FERRE, guitar; Jack TREESE, guitar.	SARAVAH	SH 10058	75.0512+
SCRAPS LACY, POTTS, AEBI, CARTER, TYLER, Michael SMITH, piano.	SARAVAH	SH 10049	74.0218+
THE WOE LACY, POTTS, AEBI, CARTER, JOHNSON.	QUARK	9998	73.0126?

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Creeley, Robert Creeley, Robert	Poems, 1950–1965 Later	66 / Calder & Boyars, U.K. 79 / New Directions, U.S.
Cendrars, Blaise	Iles II	see: Poetes d'aujourd'hui No. 11, by L. Parrot, eds. Pierre Seghers, France
Leonard, J.L., etc.	World of Gainsborough	69 / TIME-LIFE Books, Ned.
Gysin/Wilson	Here To Go: Planet R-101	82 / Re/Search Publications, U.S.
Braque, Georges	Cahiers	48 / Maeght & Gallimard
Sieffert, R. (trans.)	Love Songs of Manyo-shu	? / Eds. Orientales
Apollinaire, G.	Le Bestiaire	? / NRF
Picabia, F.	52 Miroirs	17? / O de Villanova, Barcelona
Eluard, P.	Le Temps Deborde	see: 44 / Poetes d'aujourd'hui No. 1; Eds. Seghers
Guillevic, E.	? / I have not yet discovered the poem published under the title 'Massacres'.	
General related reference: Auster, P. (Ed.)	Random House Book of 20th Century French Poetry	84 / Vintage/Random House, NY.
Var.	Dictionary of 20th Century Art	73 / Phaidon, London
Vinton, J. (Ed.)	Dictionary of 20th Century Music	74 / Thames & Hudson, London

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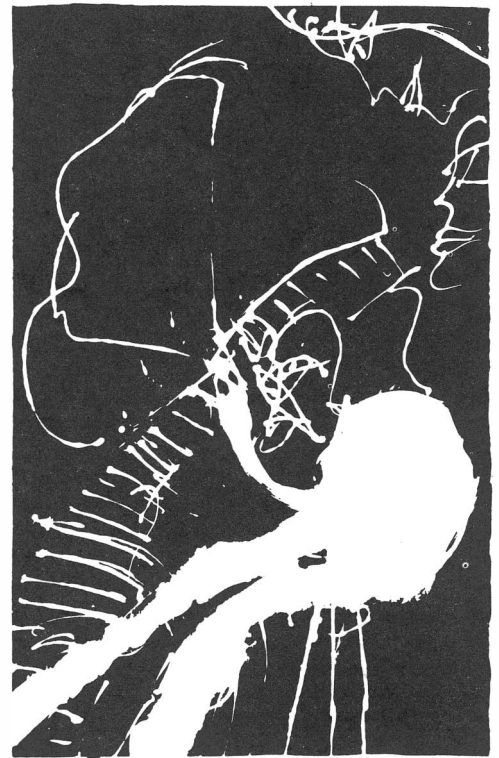
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June 26 - July 5, 1987

Since its inception in 1980, the Montreal festival has now reached a degree of maturity and consolidation both in terms of content and form. Over the last three years, it has opened up a lot of musical venues — though not necessarily many new ones — to a public otherwise indifferent or unaware of the many directions thrust upon it within a very crowded musical spectrum.

In spite of a tight financial squeeze last year, the organizers have overcome, as they always do, and have brought the ship back afloat with yet a new edition chock full of stars, some lesser knowns and a few question marks. Between the opening night marathon double bill shared by Quebec's fusion ticket Uzeb and the *Orchestra national de Jazz de France* — the socialist's idea of institutionalizing jazz — to *Ella Fitzgerald's* heart-warming but jaded closing concert, the festival offered a generous helping of the jazz tradition interspersed with a number of spurious events, mainly crowd pleasers.

Closer to our own interests though, there were numerous headliners worth catching, such as *Johnny Griffin*, the *Jazztet*, *Archie Shepp* / *Horace Parlan*, *Gil Evans* and *Phineas Newborn*. Most eagerly awaited was *Dexter Gordon*. Now basking in the stardom of movieland, he surely is taking advantage of his Dale Turner fame. Yet, for all of his stage mannerisms (raised saxophone et al), Dex has lost a great deal of his vitality, slowing down like one of his mentors, Ben Webster. To that effect, the quartet outdid the leader on most occasions, particularly *Bobby Hutcherson*, whose vibes playing was most assertive.

As for *Phineas Newborn*, who played solo in the 'Piano Plus' series, his lifelong problems have unfortunately overcome him: gazing from time to time in the audience, he meandered through familiar themes, rarely holding a tempo. Occasionally, he would flash an intricate line, but would invariably lapse back into a chopped chordal style, quite unlike his past feats. In essence then, Mr Newborn was a great jazz pianist.

Notwithstanding that disappointment, the other performers of that series fared much better. On the one hand, both *Toshiko Akiyoshi* and *Marian McPartland* were featured in rare solo appearances. Both performed with elegance but with a lack of spark, the former having lost her Bud Powell touch, the latter lacking a bassist or drummer to give an edge to her playing.

In contrast, two Europeans did not lack the support of a rhythm section. First of all, *Tete Montoliou* warrants no introduction: his nimble bop lines are slightly reminiscent of Martial Solal

— in their technical facility — but are markedly less audacious in content. Still, many inspired moments from a formidable musician. Secondly, the Russian *Leonid Chizhik* is surely unknown to most of us, so I checked him out on the closing evening. A formidable technician, he is evidently more comfortable with Bartok and Stravinsky than bebop, though he can distill some stride and Art Tatum when he wants to. Then again, there is some impressionistic Keith Jarrett and Chick Corea, though more daring harmonically. Nevertheless, one still feels a certain coldness in his approach, unlike the North American spontaneity and fire found in most of our pianists.

To round off that series, the 'Plus' side fared the best, in particular the *Mal Waldron* / *Chico Freeman* duet which offered a much greater tonal and melodic diversity than the usual minimalistic blues licks favoured by the pianist. His ballad, *Soul Eyes*, was a treat as both musicians soloed eloquently. *Archie Shepp* and *Horace Parlan* evoked some of the magic contained in their two records, even if their performances were at times perfunctory. Finally, our own *Oliver Jones* took a bit of time to warm up in company of bassist *Michel Donato*, tenor saxophonist *Fraser McPherson* (a condensed version of Zoot Sims) and his guitar buddy *Oliver Gannon*. With the exception of *Les McCann* (whom I made a point not to see), this was potentially the most interesting series, even if the results were variable.

More than ever, the festival is showing increased signs of eclecticism, as demonstrated by the late night 'Jazz dans la Nuit' series. Together with the previous series, these were the sure bets for all jazz enthusiasts. This year, however, marked a significant intrusion of the periphery into the core of the music.

For openers, the Panamanian singer, cum political radical, *Ruben Blades* might have thrilled our local Latin population, but where then is the jazz? Moreover, the outlandish guru of 'avant-garde Latin', *Hermeto Pascoal*, proved to be innovative and a hack at the same time, depending on which routines he used. Finally, the *Kronos Quartet* is today's model of well-behaved music, pleasant in form, but very thin in terms of a 'jazz concept'. Even guests *Jim Hall* and *Ron Carter* seemed out of place.

Between these performances, there was a healthy dose of the hard-bop mainstream. For instance, the *Jazztet* gave us a good mix of the old and the new augmented by some good solo work by *Art Farmer*, *Benny Golson* and, to a lesser degree, *Curtis Fuller*. On consecutive evenings, pianists *McCoy Tyner* and *Horace Silver* remained faithful to their past glories, Tyner in his characteristic open voicings, Silver in his rhythmical blues vamps. With Tyner, altoist *Sonny Fortune* responded with a few hot solos, despite the very standard repertoire

they used, as if it was a pick-up group (which it in fact was).

Silver, for his part, gave us a mainly Blue-Note-revisited evening, augmented by *Andy Bey's* (dispensable) vocals. However, saxman *Vincent Herring* was a standout on alto and by far the most exciting player of the band. Last but not least, *Johnny Griffin*, the consummate hard-bopper, lived up to his 'Little Giant' status at every turn. Aided and abetted by a very deft *Michael Weiss* on piano, a rock solid *Dennis Irwin* on bass and a smooth sailing *Kenny Washington* on drums, it was a true delight to catch Griff's first appearance ever in our city.

Because of the hectic indoor schedule, many a good concert on the outdoor stages and bars gets overlooked by the media. However, I made a point of catching *The Shuffle Demons*, a Toronto-based band of hot blowers (3 saxes, bass and drums) who delighted the crowd with a set of no-holds-barred free bop, a bit a la *Art Ensemble* (costumes included). Moreover, four series of free indoor concerts devoted to local talents were a welcome addition to the proceedings; too bad so much else was going on at the same time! Nonetheless, this year's jazz competition gave us one of the strongest moments of the ten days, that being the *Hugh Fraser Quintet* from Vancouver. Without a doubt, they proved to be a powerful and mature band. As part of their winning the event, they will record an album for *Radio Canada Enterprises*; it will be eagerly awaited.

Elsewhere in the festival, the early evening series proved to be quite mainstream. The *Newport Jazz All-Stars*, under the auspices of *George Wien*, gave a fine evening of classic jazz with *Buddy Tate*, *Al Cohn*, *Norris Turney* and a top rate *Oliver Jackson*, a drummer who is such a natural swinger, that he is a music lesson by himself. Taste is also a hallmark of *Helen Merrill*, as she demonstrated in her recital, that one may have called it the 'Pause-that-refreshes' concert of the festival.

Surely an elder statesman of the art, *Gil Evans* is in no way old hat, musically speaking. At 75, he remains a master of textures and timbres, even though they are all too often subverted by heavy-handed rockers in the rhythm section. But kudos still go to the horn section in general and *Lew Soloff* in particular for one of the gutsiest solos heard in those ten days.

On the more youthful side, *Terence Blanchard* and *Donald Harrison* are serving notice with their quintet that blows hot and long. As special guest, the third *Marsalis* brother, *Delfeayo*, sat in for a couple of numbers on trombone. As for Wynton, he played his cool self in his own concert. Flawless execution for sure, but restrained emotionalism too. However, the band seemed ready to dig in by the end of the second set, which was also the case of the *Mel Lewis Big Band*, which, I am sure, may

have felt out of its usual digs, i.e. the Village Vanguard.

A few plaudits go to **Paquito D'Rivera** (for playing music instead of indulging in unabashed showmanship) and his sideman, trumpeter **Claudio Roditi**, who also played with **Slide Hampton** and **David Newman** in a lack-lustre **Herbie Mann** outfit. Well, you can't win 'em all!

As successful as this festival may be in attendance figures and economic spinoffs, two shadows were cast upon this year's event: the first being the weather; the second, its intent. Weatherwise, the rain played havoc with a good number of outdoor concerts (at least in the first few days). Since the organizers used *Summertime* as this year's theme (an appropriate but obvious choice in this, the sesquicentennial of Gershwin's death), they could have had a better one with *Here's That Rainy Day*!

As for the intent, one must note that festivals do chart a course similar to most artistic endeavours in which there are periods of growth that lead either to peaks and a concurrent stability or else a rapid decline. Now on a firm (financial) footing, the Festival International de Jazz de Montreal has a long life before it, but hopefully not just a stable one (in the artistic sense). Since a lot of music is happening nowadays – maybe too much – it is essential to remain on the lookout for those areas of growth, which have always remained a central concern for all those not content with the status quo. For jazz fans, that may be some good food for thought.

– Marc Chenard

THE 1987 OTTAWA JAZZ FESTIVAL Ottawa, Canada July 15 - 26, 1987

By all rights, 1987 should have been a setback year for the Ottawa Jazz Festival (OJF). Though the overall budget for the ten day event rose slightly from 1986, the increase was less than projected, forcing last minute programming cuts. The National Arts Centre, sponsors for the past two festivals of big name acts like Peterson and Marsalis, this year booked an all-Canadian series that was artistically solid yet commercially modest. Finally, by running between July 17 and 26, the seventh OJF overlapped with dates for the Montreux blowout, making U.S. acts relatively scarce and high-priced.

Instead, savvy organizers, still mostly volunteers, turned a potential liability of the 1987 event, its lack of international stars, into an unquestionable strength. The festival became a superb showcase for the growing maturity of Canada's jazz scene. Ninety per cent of OJF '87's nearly 100 performances were by Canadians, a fact that diminished the festival's customary levels of surprise, variety and quality not a whit.

Pianist **Lee Shaw** led a strong contingent of women performers at the festival. Shaw's relative obscurity is surprising considering her

several decades as pianist to Phil Woods, Joe Williams and others. It's still more puzzling once you've heard the sparkling swing she brings to bop standards and piquant originals. Shaw played a set with her regular trio, drummer, and husband, **Stan Shaw** and **Skip Bey**, and a solo set as part of the festival's **Pianissimo** series.

Another under-rated jazz woman, **Joanne Brackeen**, offered the high-water mark for the **Pianissimo** sessions. In contrast to Shaw's uncertainty when playing alone (she admitted to not having played an unaccompanied set for years), Brackeen revelled in her solitude. At no point during her set did one yearn for a rhythm section; Brackeen's playing was too rich and full.

Brackeen's stylistic range was wide and assured, but no **Pianissimo** performer quite matched the madcap eclecticism of **Joel Forrester**, the pianist with New York's **Microscopic Septet**. His set ranged from skewed stride numbers to a Steve Reich-like, minimalist marathon that he confessed "does go on a bit."

Montreal's **Lorraine Desmarais** returned to the OJF with a solo set as good as any she's played in Ottawa. Free of her trio, Desmarais' lyricism was unsullied by fusion à la Corea and Hancock, and her ability to unravel old chestnuts and give them her own stamp was more evident.

Other return visitors to the OJF turned in better performances than their debuts. **Sonny Greenwich**, diverting at last year's festival, turned in a stunning, almost spiritual, performance on the first night of the '87 event. His edge this year might have been the empathy of sidemen **Fred Henke**, **Andre White** and **Ron Seguin** for his quirky, angular sound and sustained, single-note flurries. **Ray Anderson**, the hit of OJF '86, this year brought along a quartet

that included (though regrettably underused) the brilliant **Anthony Davis**. Anderson's performance was no less flamboyant or unpredictable this year, and offered the same stylistic breadth: from loose funk through lovingly rendered standards to Free pieces revealing Anderson's long association with **Anthony Braxton**.

This, quite unofficially, was the year of the 'Trane at the OJF. The 20th anniversary of John Coltrane's death fell on the festival's opening day, and a brace of Canadian ensembles rooted in early Coltrane styles played. Included were the **Edmonton Jazz Ensemble**, the **Vancouver Art Trio** and **Jane Burnett**, the Toronto soprano and flute player who's rapidly emerged as a major Canadian jazz talent. The **Hugh Fraser Quintet** was probably the most satisfying of the 'Trane riders, combining high-octane firepower with a nervy willingness to take chances.

So charged up were the Fraser unit that it all but took over the festival jam session later in the evening, playing into the wee hours. A jam session was arranged every evening, a first for the OJF, and it yielded some fine moments, including a fiery piano battle between **Oliver Jones** and **Lee Shaw**.

The duets in the One Plus One series were unpredictable and never less than rewarding. Blues tenorman **Houston Person** played straight man to the playful eccentricity of pianist **Ran Blake**. There was a first-time encounter between guitarist **Tim Brady** and **Pete Magadini**, that most versatile of Canadian drummers. And a pupil-teacher encounter between **Oliver Jones** and **Jon Ballantyne** allowed the latter to reveal talents that were buried under lacklustre bass playing and drumming during an earlier set with his trio.



An account of the festival's best moments has to include the theatrically and musically precise performance by the *Microscopic Septet*, who swung from a pendulum that was mischievously off-centre. The festival's closing night was also a highlight, becoming a rollicking outdoor Mardi Gras party led by New Orleans' exuberant *Dirty Dozen Brass Band*.

The *Steve Tibbetts Trio*, led by the Minneapolis guitarist who records for ECM, was artistically the festival's riskiest booking. The gambit failed. "It's not really jazz, is it?", Tibbetts grinned at the end of his first number. It wasn't, and it wasn't interesting ECM fusion either, thanks mostly to Tibbetts' rather undistinguished compositions. The slick conservatism of Toronto's *Manteca*, whose clichés included a dry ice stage smog, made their performance equally at odds with the adventurous nature of the OJF.

There were other minor disappointments, some related to the festival's organization. A mostly free, largely outdoor festival has great appeal. The lack of admission is a great leveller, reducing the tendency to brand performers as big-name or not, headliners or support acts. And thousands of curious passersby are drawn into a music that otherwise tends to remain distant, even elitist. The bane of any outdoor festival is, of course, rain. When it came at the OJF '87, concerts had to be rescheduled at short notice to a number of spots, some too distant to walk to from the festival homebase of the National Arts Centre. Next year a more consistent rain contingency plan is needed.

There assuredly will be another Ottawa festival in 1988. A broader range of sponsors are lined up for festival performances, and the festival is now firmly pencilled into Ottawans' calendars. Slow to gain a city-wide profile, the OJF this year spread to incorporate more clubs than ever, and book and record stores featured jazz displays for the first time. As well, the OJF is beginning to draw in visiting jazz fans, particularly from Montreal, where a highly conservative 1987 line-up for the Montreal festival diminished its appeal for serious jazz fans.

— Paul Reynolds

ALBERT KING

The Harbourfront Blues & Soul Festival
Toronto / July 18, 1987

It used to be said that there is nothing like being black on Saturday night. In my youth, I couldn't wait for Saturdays to come, especially in the summer. I knew my father would be marinating long and thick slabs of pork ribs for the barbecue, and putting beer on ice in a steel wash bucket. My mother would be cooking up a pot of her zingy barbecue sauce, the kind that makes you sweat. And the neighbours would gradually roll in with fists full of Blues albums for the hi-fi.

I used to wish every night was Saturday night, because back then I had a vague suspicion that if there is nothing like being black

on Saturday night, then by definition, there is nothing like being white Sunday through Friday. It wasn't until recently I realized that the folk sayings of my youth don't have to be taken quite so literally. Of course, the distinction between black and white is still hard to get away from in this society, Sunday through Friday. But I've learned one thing as an adult that never occurred to me when I was smacking on ribs and checking out tunes in my parents' backyard: ever since Muddy Waters invented electricity, anybody in the world can be black on Saturday night.

Saturday night at the Harbourfront Blues And Soul Festival featuring Albert King and his band, offered the proof of the pudding. Virtually thousands of Torontonians, black and white and all shades in between, crammed into the stage front right back to the yacht docks and then spilled over into the beer tents, to take in two hours of the man who is synonymous with Saturday night; the behemoth with the pork pie hat.

In our record Toronto heatwave, however, for the first time any of his diehard fans could remember, Albert shed the brim. And while it was the only sensible thing to do, given the swelter, somehow Albert King seems incomplete without his hat.

He at first stood there with a peeled (cavotus) haircut resting on a six-foot-seven-inch frame, and many in the audience doubted it was Albert at all — just some giant replica. I heard someone in the audience exclaim: "That's not Albert King; Albert King wears a black hat. He can't do the show without his hat". Then Albert began to speak: "How ya'll feel tonight? It's Saturday night, let's have a party. This song is dedicated to all the lovers out there. Are there any lovers out there? Oh ya, I ain't seen my main squeeze in six long weeks!"

At this point, the audience knew it was Albert King alright. Only Albert King talks this way. Or, rather, only Albert King can get away with terms of endearment like "my main squeeze". In this day and age, women don't like to be referred to, or be defined, in terms of their squeezability. Yet, when Albert King does it, especially in that throaty, overdubbed voice of his, the audience just gives him a wink and a nod.

This, of course, is all part and parcel of the contradictory forces that Albert King seems to embody. He appears to be a mammoth creature, who at the same time is as cuddly as a favorite teddy bear. And his music is the same. He has popularized a simultaneously brutal and delicate stringbending style on the Flying V model guitar, which has propelled him into the ranks of the most influential players of the Blues, and certain of his generation of guitarists in any genre.

Born in Indianola, Mississippi on April 25, 1923, Albert picked up guitar as a youngster, largely teaching himself. He learned to play left handed, upside down. And he began his

career in the late '40s when he joined a gospel quartet known as The Harmony Kings. As his career moved on he found himself playing drums for an Arkansas group known as The Groove Boys. And he eventually joined a Blues-Jump Band which landed him in Chicago — home of the post-war, electric-age, urban sound. It was here that he became deeply entrenched in Blues and Doo Wop. While he was finding his Blues legs and licks in the Chicago area, he was variously known as Albert Nelson, A.B. King, or Oop Gibson. By the time the burly southpaw settled on his own name, and re-settled in Arkansas in 1957, he had experienced some minor hits on minor labels such as Bobbin, King, and Coun-Tree. But it wasn't until he moved to St. Louis and landed a record contract with Stax Records around 1966 that things started breaking.

At Stax Memphis studios the Albert King style as we know it today, began to crystallize. He perfected his persuasive grainy singing and voice-like guitar sound, which culminated in the epochal "Born Under A Bad Sign" album. The gritty songs from this album — such as *Crosscut Saw*, *Blues Power*, and *As The Years Go Passing By* — are still recreated nightly in Blues Clubs across North America.

Ironically, perhaps, Albert's recording work in the late '60s holds up better than ever as the pinnacle of his recording career, before too much overproduction or recreations of the past clouded the picture. He is an artist (like Ray Charles) who doesn't need artifice. His immense talents merely need to be ladled over a sparse, punchy background. And it is this "less is more" theory which activates Albert's raw power so it can be utilized to its greatest dramatic effect.

In the Toronto audience at the Harbourfront Blues and Soul Festival, we didn't see the years of honing his craft down to pure form; we only saw its pure form. At the age of 64, live performance is still his best medium. And when the concert was underway nobody cared anymore that Albert was bare-headed. We all realized that a bare-headed Albert is better than no Albert at all. In fact a bare-headed Albert is just about better than anything you can imagine.

There was a progressive mesmerizing effect to the concert that reached a peak when Albert and the band went into their bag of tricks and pulled out the heart-wrenching *Don't Burn Down The Bridge*:

"You got your mind set on leavin'
To the house on a one way street
You say you're gonna lock all the doors
And throw away the key
But don't burn down the bridge baby
Cause you must might want to come back
The grass ain't no greener
On the other side of the tracks"

Albert's clean as a whistle guitar licks and pleading lyrics were smothered over top of a rock-steady beat from the bass and drums, all of which was garnished with a springy horn-line.

I turned to see that the bodies of people propped on Harbourfront abutments and billboards were all keeping uniform time with the music. While couples in the ground-level audience were snuggling in the assurance that they too understood the Blues wisdom being offered. And when the song ended, an exhilarated oriental gentleman turned to me knowingly and exclaimed: "Ya! The grass ain't no greener on the other side of the tracks!" Right then and there is was clearer to me than it ever had been before that you don't have to be black to be black on Saturday night — that is, at least not when Albert King is in town.

— Lorne Foster

THE 16TH MOERS INTERNATIONAL NEW JAZZ FESTIVAL

Moers, West Germany
June 5 - 8, 1987

The 16th annual Moers International New Jazz Festival took place June 5-8 in Moers, West Germany, and I'm happy to report that it's in excellent health these days. To be sure, it's no longer strictly a jazz festival, as it was in the '70s. However, after noise and punk elements nearly took over in 1985, jazz has returned as the dominant focus.

Moers has always aimed for a balance between established "stars" and new faces. This

year the former category included Leroy Jenkins, Matthias Rüegg and David Murray, with Murray unquestionably the festival headliner. Appearing in a trio with Fred Hopkins and Steve McCall, he stunned the first-night audience with his sheer emotional power. The man's music is so strong that his formidable technique never dissolves into empty flash. The next night he returned with a 14-piece orchestra that was not a beefed-up version of his octet or big band, but a whole other group with a completely different repertoire. It stomped and roared and never let up for over two hours, and I hope Mr. Bonandrini (Black Saint) records it soon.

Once in a while a concert comes along that takes you so by surprise that when it's over, you're sitting there with your jaw on the floor, wondering how you're ever going to describe it to anyone. Pianist Aki Takase from Japan and singer Maria Joao from Portugal, part of this year's emphasis on woman in jazz, earned the wildest and longest ovation I've seen in my ten years of Moers-going. It went on for about 20 minutes, drowning out the next group's sound check and ignoring an announcement that the pair had already left for their hotel. The music? A mixture of originals and standards, with lots of solo space for Takase's high-energy flights. Joao is not only a fine creative singer, but she also has the charismatic stage presence of, say, Lester Bowie or Sun Ra. I predict that by next

summer there will be a record by this duo.

Pianist Irene Schweizer assembled a group of six free improvisers who played in various combinations. Calling themselves Canaille ("rabble"), they proved that this method of music-making is far from passe. Dutch trombonist Anemarie Roeloffs was particularly interesting, with her vocal range adding a new dimension to the multiphonic technique.

Other highlights: Matthias Rüegg was up to his usual high standard with a Vienna Art Orchestra Special: six instrumentalists and five vocalists. Two very good German big bands appeared: Reichlich Weiblich ("quite female") and the Pata Orchester. The former has a tight ensemble sound and well-written charts, but the soloists have yet to develop their own voices. Pata, on the other hand, had some really quirky players, including a trombonist who seemed to be falling asleep during his solo. Avant-garde trumpeter Jon Hassell teamed up with Farafina, a percussion/flute/dance ensemble from Upper Volta. Hassell wisely stayed in the background and let the Africans take over for much of the set.

A note to any creative musicians who happen to be reading this: Festival artistic director Burkhard Hennen is always looking for new music to present in Moers. Send your cassettes and info to him at Postfach 1612, D-4130 Moers 1, West Germany. Maybe I'll see some of you there next year.

— Jim Laniok

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JAZZ IN ITALY * VERONA / RAVENNA / BOLZANO

Although Umbria Jazz, centered in Perugia, remains Italy's largest and longest running (10 days) jazz festival, other festivals of significant proportion and importance now blanket Italy from north to south throughout late June and the entire month of July.

My Italian jazz holiday began in the quaint, romantic, art-filled city of Verona, located about one hour north of Florence. Verona is an impressive and beautiful city where the combination of modern music, rich historical tradition, and artistic imagery result in an environment that inspires optimum performance. Every artist I spoke to considered Verona's 2,000 seat Teatro Romano (an open air amphitheatre that dates back to Roman times) an uplifting environment in which to create inventive and inspirational music.

Verona Jazz '87 enjoyed the exclusive sponsorship of Pan Am Airways, enabling an expansion of an already sizeable artist roster. Verona's producers, Dr. Nicola Tessitore and Roberto Zorzi, this year assembled one of the most broad-based and artistically pure lineups imaginable. Tessitore is a medical doctor who, while studying at U.S.C. in the early '80s, absorbed much of the Los Angeles jazz scene. He always makes an attempt to bring to Italy West Coast artists who are deserving of global recognition.

Verona Jazz got off to an auspicious beginning: **Ornette Coleman** and **Prime Time** joined forces with the 88-piece **Verona Symphony Orchestra** (under the direction of Ft. Worth-based conductor **John Giordano**) for a 90 minute reading of *Skies Of America*.

Coleman's composition has undergone considerable transition since his recording with the London Symphony Orchestra. Prime Time's harmelodic inventions bring contemporary funk rhythms to many of the composition's segmented movements. Prime Time's soundscape of funky phrases alternated and contrasted with the ebb and flow of orchestral swells, making for a triumphant tapestry of sound. Tempos raced, then paused, as Prime Time's dense textures were interwoven with the orchestra's swirling sound.

Coleman's vibrant alto solos demonstrated that his chops are very much in order. He even included a humorous quote from "Volare", a popular Italian song of years ago. I found the solos of other Prime Time members less satisfying and perhaps unnecessary to the body of this lengthy work. Ornette's unconventional violin improvisation, however, provided an interesting contrast to the orchestra's legato string backdrop.

Although Coleman and company proved a very hard act to follow, the San Francisco-based pianoless quintet **Bebop & Beyond** came out swinging hard, providing the perfect juxtaposition to Ornette's epic work. The band lived



up to its name, opening with leader **Mel Martin's** *Whiz Bang* — an open hard-bop tune that allowed plenty of solo space for Martin's throaty tenor and probing labyrinthic improvisation from trumpeter **Warren Gale**. Guitarist **Bruce Forman** (who recently replaced pianist **George Cables**) contributed blistering rapid-fire solos to this and other well developed original compositions. Bassist **Frank Tusa** and drummer **Eddie Marshall** provided steady and sensitive support and Martin's flute work on *For Duke* was a study in poetic sensibility.

Benny Carter, using a European rhythm section, opened Verona's second night of music. Carter remains the embodiment of both warmth and professionalism — a true gentleman of jazz. His swinging bright sound on alto paced his sidemen through several fresh and vital readings of standards.

Buell Neidlinger's *String Jazz* provided the second evening's high point, successfully fusing bluegrass instrumentation with straight-ahead mainstream jazz elements. Plenty of Ellingtonia was read in a convincingly original manner with saxophonist **Marty Krystall** doing Ben Webster justice on his solos.

The flow of the Adige River and the chiming of distant church bells could be heard from the amphitheatre as the evening continued to unfold, providing the ambience for a set of romantic and compelling originals from **Chick Corea** and **Gary Burton**. Corea's casual tennis attire seemed inappropriate in the historic environment of Teatro Romano — kind of like the stereotypic American who tries to enter the Vatican with swimming trunks on. Chick's awesome abilities at the keyboard, however, ultimately won over his audience.

The following evening's crowd of approximately 1,700 was a bit thinner, but no less appreciative, as **Horace Tapscott's** *Master's Arkestra* took to the stage. One of L.A.'s unsung musical heroes, Tapscott employed two bassists and two drummers for this date. Combined with his percussive attack at the keyboard, this unique rhythm section laid a forceful yet sympathetic backdrop for the "out" excursions of front-liners **Arthur Blythe** (alto), **Gary Bias** (alto & soprano), and **Thurman Green** (trombone). Tapscott, in the tradition of great band leaders, allowed his sidemen substantial freedom for personalized expression.

Horace's Ark sailed through two lengthy compositions. While his arrangements at times lacked clear definition, Tapscott's solos were refreshingly original. He attacked the keyboard with a true sense of bravado. True to his unconventional manner, Tapscott at one point reached inside the piano and plucked out a swirl of dissonant contrasts. Bassist **Roberto Miranda** also took two prolifically complex and daring solos and Gary Bias (who was a last minute replacement for Charles Owens) showed prowess equal to that of Arthur Blythe. Gary's robust solos surged over the band's sometimes dark and somber but always energetic music.

The **Modern Jazz Quartet's** specialized brand of chamber jazz filled the air next, providing a relaxing, soothing contrast to Tapscott's busy, probing excursions. **John Lewis** was his elegant, assured, steady self and **Milt Jackson** infused soulful solos into the group's rich and stately sound. Guitarists **Henry Kaiser** and **Sonny Sharrock** then closed the evening's potpourri of bookings with an eclectic blend of blues and rock-influenced feedback — a la Jimi

Hendrix 1987.

The Oscar Peterson Trio opened Verona's fourth and final night with a predictable but proficient set of standards, including several seamless segues from tune to tune. Oscar's solo reading of 'Round Midnight brought his long set its brightest moments.

Manny Oquendo's Libre — a band deserving wider recognition that has kept salsa alive in Brooklyn and the Bronx dance clubs for the past 12 years — closed the evening and the festival with authentic mambos, conjuntos, and boleros. 37-year-old Jerry Garcia stood out not only as a formidable percussionist but also as a trumpeter of optimum quality in his reading of a beautiful ballad. Libre brought the Italians to their feet, playing long into the night.

From Verona, I traveled southeast to Ravenna, a beautiful city on the Adriatic coast, rich with mosaic, sculpture, and other rare works of art. As capitol of the province of the same name, Ravenna attracts many European tourists during the summer months.

This was the 14th annual Ravenna Jazz Festival, making it one of the oldest continuous jazz festivals in Italy. By the time I arrived, Sonny Rollins had already concertized with the Arturo Toscanini Symphony Orchestra.

Ravenna's producer, Fillipo Bianchi, kept alive his tradition of giving exposure to Italian talent by spotlighting an 18-piece big band from Florence under the capable direction of educator Bruno Tommaso, one of Italy's leading bassists. This band of some of Italy's young up-and-comers was joined midway through its set by multi-instrumentalist Gian-Luigi Trovesi, a leading studio musician from Milano who proved most adept and capable on bass clarinet.

Buell Neidlinger's band regrouped at Ravenna as "Theonious," with Brenton Banks switching from his "String Jazz" violin to piano. Marty Krystall's tone on tenor remained crystal clear. His inventive solos brought a refreshing, highly original approach to Monk's music, sounding unlike Charlie Rouse or Johnny Griffin, yet true to their pure tradition. When Steve Lacy joined the band midway through the set as a special guest, Krystall's vibrant tenor blended magnificently with Lacy's long-lined soprano runs. Bassist Neidlinger (who hadn't worked with Lacy since they recorded together 25 years ago) and drummer Billy Osborne pushed Lacy hard. No abstract pointillism here, just some great hard-swingin' Monk. Bravo, Buell!

The following evening, Ravenna Jazz moved outdoors into Rocca Brancaleone, a 2,300 seat theatre filled to capacity for Freddie Hubbard and the Satchmo Legacy. Hubbard's walk down Bourbon Street was a refreshing return to the idiom's roots, carried off favorably by a front line that included Alvin Batiste and Curtis Fuller. Hubbard was in fine form, working hard and probing the upper register on *Stardust*, then finishing with the universal appeal of a gut-bucket blues. Pianist Kirk Lightsey's solos found him quoting everything from *Tea For Two* to *Beginning To See The Light* within the

framework of *Muskrat Ramble*!

Next, Don Cherry joined Ornette and Prime Time. I hated to walk away from this promising reunion, but the sound engineers pumped up the decibel level to an unbearable point. Rocca Brancaleone has some of the finest natural acoustics in the world. Why distort this beautiful setting with electronic overkill? "That's the way some of the artists want it," I was told by producer Bianchi. Maybe I'm old fashioned, but I value my hearing.

I returned to Rocca Brancaleone the following evening for a thoroughly enjoyable set by Courtney Pine's quartet. The young Englishman surrounded himself with a quartet of capable countrymen. Pine's Coltrane-influenced tenor sounded strong on several modal pieces, and his soprano work seemed entirely original.

Wayne Shorter's new quintet followed Pine with a showcase of material from his recent Columbia recordings, excepting a modern reworking of *Footprints*. Shorter sounded self-assured on tenor but, again, the group's sound volume became a problem. Drummer Terri Lyne Carrington didn't get much of a chance to show off her Elvin Jones' inspired chops in this company. Nevertheless, she was thoroughly impressive in this musical context. Jim Beard's keyboard work was fine as support for Shorter, but his solos lacked inspiration and definition.

From Ravenna, I traveled north to Bolzano, a city near the Austrian border nestled in a valley between the Dolomites. By the time I arrived, Bolzano's Jazz Summer '87 had already presented groups led by Pat Metheny, Phil Woods, Steve Coleman, the 29th St. Sax Quartet, and Italy's young trumpet wizard, Paolo Fresu, in a large indoor sports complex.

I was beginning to realize there was no way to absorb all of the live summer jazz presented in Italy. Fortunately, I arrived in time to witness George Russell's Orchestra. Russell's unit is 14 members strong, combining mostly English players with an American rhythm section. Drummer Keith Copeland is the heartbeat of this powerhouse that featured outstanding solos from trumpeter Palle Mikkilborg and Andy Sheppard, another young English tenor sensation.

Russell's band presented a well-structured and adventurous romp through material that was as accessible to the listener as it was complex for the players. Russell's varied musical menu provided the perfect dessert for my two week banquet of divergent musical styles. As both a composer and organizer of great young talent, he remains at the music's cutting edge.

Given the magnitude of music presented across Italy every summer, one can easily become inundated with too much of a good thing when trying to sample all the musical events offered. It's better to be selective in your musical choices and devote some time to exploring Italy's beautiful surroundings and superb cuisine.

— Gary Vercelli

Gary G. Vercelli is the jazz music director at KXPR FM in Sacramento, California.

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RECORD REVIEWS

Record & Cassette Reviews By Peter Friedman, Al Van Starrex, Gerard Futrick, Scott Yanow & John Norris

THE COMPLETE BLUE NOTE RECORDINGS OF THE TINA BROOKS QUINTETS Mosaic MR4-106

Between February 1958 and June 1961 tenor saxophonist Tina Brooks took part in thirteen recording sessions, all but one of them on the Blue Note label. Those short three years and five months offer us the total musical legacy of an excellent jazz stylist.

In some respects, Tina Brooks reminds me of the late great tenor player Hank Mobley. They were both stalwarts of the hard bop school of jazz. Brooks and Mobley played with and were respected by top level east coast luminaries such as Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Jackie McLean, Sonny Clark, Kenny Drew, Kenny Burrell, Paul Chambers, Philly Joe Jones and Art Blakey. Neither of them became well known outside a small clique of dedicated jazz fans. Both of them died tragic deaths much too young.

Harold "Tina" Brooks was born June 7, 1932 and died August 3, 1974. This marvelous Mosaic boxed set contains four lps. They make up all of Tina Brooks recordings as a leader. Only one of the three sessions was previously available on a North American issue. That one is "True Blue," originally released as Blue Note (8) 4041.

The remaining three records include one that was released in Japan under the title "Minor Move" (Blue Note GXX8162). It features Tina Brooks, along with Lee Morgan, Sonny Clark, Doug Watkins, and Art Blakey. The music is vintage 1958 Blue Note material. Full bodied, soulful, swinging and tasteful. All the ingredients necessary to bring a smile to the face of jazz listeners world wide.

"Back To The Tracks" was the title given to a Blue Note lp listed on inner sleeves and back covers of other albums. It was even given a catalog number (BN 4052). In truth, it was never released. A tape was circulated of the material to be on the record and I have had a copy for many years. I recall hearing from a few persons that they had actually seen a copy of the album. As it turns out, these stories were fictitious. One track from that prospective album was recorded at a separate session and was released on Japanese Blue Note (GXF 3067 under the title "Street Singer") under the joint leadership of Jackie McLean and Tina Brooks. The remaining four tracks are now finally available on record. The personnel on that session includes Blue Mitchell, Kenny Drew, Paul Chambers, Art Taylor, and of course leader Tina Brooks. McLean only appears on that one track as previously mentioned.

The music on the "Back To The Tracks" session is extremely groovy. It is next to impossible to prevent your toes from tapping or fingers from popping while listening to this joyous material. Tina Brooks' distinctive sound and stylistic approach to the horn are much in evidence here. His solo on *The Blues And I* will document this point perfectly.

The fourth and final record in this boxed set

brings totally new material to the light of day. This time the sidemen include Johnny Coles, Kenny Drew, Wilbur Ware, and Philly Joe Jones. Trumpet player Johnny Coles is heard from far too infrequently. It is a pleasure to have him join the proceedings. The rhythm section is solid, as is true on all four of these records.

Once again though it is the unique wailing sound, phrasing and ideas of Tina Brooks that capture the listener. Throughout all four records Brooks plays at a very high level. It makes one wonder what further gems we might have had if Tina Brooks had continued to play regularly and record after 1961. Tina has been gone for more than twelve years now, but his music on these four lps keeps him very much alive.

There remains one more example of Brooks playing still not issued. It is a sextet session recorded for Blue Note under Freddie Redd's leadership with Benny Bailey and Jackie McLean sharing the front line with Brooks. Hopefully, this will be released in the near future.

Along with all the marvelous music this boxed set also includes an interesting and worthwhile booklet with articles on Tina Brooks' life, his Blue Note recordings, liner notes of some of his records and a complete discography of Brooks' recorded work.

This excellent set is highly recommended. It is available from Mosaic Records, 197 Strawberry Hill Avenue, Stamford, CT 06902.

— Peter S. Friedman

THE DUKE JORDAN TRIO Tivoli Two SteepleChase SCS 1193

No Problem / How Deep Is The Ocean / All The Things You Are / Jealous Blues / I Cover The Waterfront / Night In Tunisia / Jordu

Duke Jordan, piano; Wilbur Little, bass; Dannie Richmond, drums.

Duke Jordan is one of the few first generation bebop pianists still active on the current scene. Having helped to lay the basic foundation, he has through the years managed to remain fresh and vital within the general framework of the bop tradition. This latest release follows on the heels of "Tivoli I" (SteepleChase SCS 1189) and is the second installment of a relaxed, good natured session recorded live at the Jazzhus Slukefter, Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. The program offers a well balanced mixture of originals and familiar standards superbly delivered by this top flight trio. A lyrical stylist, Jordan always keeps both hands actively engaged, preferring to dig in instead of just glossing over. The ballads (*How Deep Is The Ocean, I Cover The Waterfront*) are taken at a leisurely gait and graced by occasional Garnerisms and fleeting Powellian touches. There are also traces of Monk, but by and large Jordan's playing retains an easily identifiable stamp of its own. His very capable sidemen supply strong,

sympathetic support while making the most of the generous solo space allotted them. Possessing a big, warm sound and a direct, no frills approach, veteran bassist Wilbur Little develops his lines into articulate, well constructed statements, at times bringing to mind Richmond's former boss Charles Mingus. Richmond is an acutely aware and sensitive drummer responding to the mood and tempo changes in an effortlessly swinging manner. The old Gillespie staple *Night In Tunisia* provides an extended showcase for his considerable percussive skills. Although the terrain may seem a bit overly traveled, this is sincere, heartfelt jazz at its very best.

— Gerard Futrick

SPHERE On Tour Red VPA 191

Dual Force / Beautiful Friendship / Scratch / Tayamisha / Spiral / Well You Needn't
November 1985

When the quartet Sphere was originally formed in 1982, it was assumed that this group would end up as a Monk memorial society. After all, Thelonious' long-time tenorman Charlie Rouse and former drummer Ben Riley were key members and Sphere's initial album "Four In One" (Elektra Musician 9) featured an all-Monk set.

Fortunately Sphere is leaving recreations to others for their members have further messages to offer that cannot be expressed by simply recycling the past. In addition to Riley and Rouse (who has retained his easily identifiable sound), pianist Kenny Barron and bassist Buster Williams (still greatly underrated) contribute many creative solos during "On Tour". The material is mostly modern mainstream with a pair of originals apiece from Williams (including the blues *Tayamisha*) and Barron, with the latter's *Scratch* giving a tip of the cap to Ornette Coleman. A lengthy explorative version of *Beautiful Friendship* and Monk's *Well You Needn't* round out this excellent Italian import.

— Scott Yanow

RUBY BRAFF / SCOTT HAMILTON A Sailboat In The Moonlight Concord CJ-296

A Sailboat In The Moonlight / Lover Come Back To Me / Where Are You / Deed I Do / When Lights Are Low / Jeepers Creepers / The Milkman's Matinee / Sweethearts On Parade
February 1985

Although several decades apart in age, Ruby Braff and Scott Hamilton share several similarities. Both appeared on the jazz scene in their 20s playing in a style already several generations old. While Braff suffered critical indifference in the 50s and 60s and was even branded a reactionary by some for his personal swing style, it was such a novelty during the 1970s for a

young tenor-saxophonist to sound unlike a Coltrane clone that Scott Hamilton received plenty of deserved publicity. It's not too surprising that Braff and Hamilton sound so comfortable together, both on "A First" (Concord CJ-274) and "A Sailboat In The Moonlight" (recorded in the same month). Both are excellent examples of relaxed modern small-group swing that are easy to enjoy. — **Scott Yanow**

COLEMAN HAWKINS **The Immortal** **Pumpkin 118**

So called "state of the art" techniques in recording and remastering have made it possible to bring to life long forgotten or poorly recorded material from the past, particularly privately recorded broadcasts and "live" gigs featuring some of the greatest names in jazz. We've had a lot of these lately, ranging from the outstanding (like Ellington's 1940 Fargo, N.Dakota dance date, on Book-of-the-Month Records) to best forgotten, but mostly in-between. Welcome then these restored rare tapes of the legendary Coleman Hawkins and (on one side) Roy Eldridge together.

Anything by Hawk, under whatever circumstances, is always welcome but the last decade of his career — when these tracks were cut — was hardly his most inspired. Hard drinking, self-imposed starvation and resulting depression turned the saxophone king frequently into a sad parody of himself. Then, just as critics would get ready to write him off, Hawk would surprise everyone with some spine-tingling examples of his craft worthy of the Guinness Book of Records — if they kept records of outstanding jazz solos.

The two sessions in this album, recorded some four years apart, reflect this inconsistency. Side one, recorded in July 1959 — ten years before his death — must have been a routine gig for Hawkins, who was extremely active musically at this time, for he sounds less than inspired, though — as was nearly always the case — he is a treat to listen to. Roy Eldridge, however, is at his exuberant apex, blowing up a storm on both numbers, *Soft Winds*, *Sweet Sue*, that defies Hawkins to quell. Ray Bryant, piano, Tom Bryant, bass and Oliver Jackson, drums, provide able support to the masters, with Hawkins further displaying his arranging talents on *Sweet Sue*, tailored to fit his own unique tenor sax talents.

Side two, recorded four years later in Stockholm, Sweden with a Scandinavian rhythm section, comes as a happy surprise. Foreign locales seem to bring out the best in Bean — if you recall the sides with Django and even the Ramblers, and Hawkins is no exception here. He rips off a string of solos that are every bit as expressive as his classic records. This is particularly true of his ten-minute solo on *It's The Talk Of The Town*, a Hawkins favorite, that sounds as freshly inspired as the one with Henderson, recorded thirty years earlier. *Riff Tide* and *If I Had You* are equally smooth tracks under Hawkins' masterful leadership.

The mastering, on digital tape, is as technically advanced as you can get and expert Jerry Valburn rates kudos for the audio honors and Pumpkin Records (which earlier had brought

out some unissued Hawkins with the Earl Hines Trio, which I haven't heard), deserves thanks for bringing us this music from the old masters.

— **Al Van Starrex**

CASSETTES

COLEMAN HAWKINS

The Genius Of
Verve 823.673.4

OSCAR PETERSON

We Get Requests
Verve 870.047.4

DUKE ELLINGTON / JOHNNY HODGES

Side By Side
Verve 821.578.4

ASTRUD GILBERTO

Look To The Rainbow
Verve 821.556.4

JIMMY SMITH

Bashin'
Verve 823.308.4

BILL EVANS

At Montreux
Verve 827.844.4

GENE KRUPA

Drummer Man
Verve 827.843.4

WES MONTGOMERY

Movin' Wes
Verve 810.045.4

This generation of audio cassettes is a further example of what technology can offer the listener in the 1980s. Until recently it was easier and better to make cassette copies of your own records rather than purchasing pre-recorded versions of the material.

Digital remastering, chrome (and other high quality) tapes and dolby encoded sound now offer the listener music free of tape hiss and with superior audio quality. These cassettes are catering to the growing numbers of people who demand portability of their recorded music. There are also more people who do not own equipment for playing conventional records. It is even being suggested that the conventional cassette will become obsolete — replaced by CDs and digital audio/video cassettes.

Polygram has made available eight cassette reissues of popular material from the Verve catalog. The digital remastering gives the music a crisp, clean sound. They have also enhanced the bass signal — making the music much better suited for use in a car. On home equipment a comparison between the cassette sound and LP/CD configurations shows that the cassette is not the equal of the CD but, with suitable adjustment of the bass output, comes close to equaling the simultaneously reissued material on lp.

Each cassette offers the listener between 30 and 40 minutes of music. The very short playing time is a serious marketing defect for no one wishes to carry more cassettes than they need when on a trip or in their car.

"The Genius of Coleman Hawkins", "We Get Requests" by the Oscar Peterson trio and "Side by Side" by Duke Ellington and Johnny Hodges are all timeless examples of these musicians' art.

The Coleman Hawkins session finds the tenor saxophonist working with Oscar Peterson, Herb Ellis, Ray Brown and Alvin Stoller. It is an uncompromising set of superior standards performed with professional ease but it lacks the intensity and thought found in other Hawkins dates from the same period — notably "Blue Saxophones" (with Ben Webster) and "The High and Mighty Hawk" (with Buck Clayton).

"We Get Requests" comes from a prolific period in the Oscar Peterson Trio's career. In retrospect it is apparent that this trio (with Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen) represented a summation of the elements which Peterson had built into his approach to the art of playing jazz. The framework is organised — giving individuality and variety to the material — while the improvisations are fluently developed. The repertoire, as implied by the title, includes some of the more popular tunes used for jazz interpretation at that time. It counterbalances and complements "Night Train" and "Portrait of Frank Sinatra". The trio's resources are better heard, however, in "The Sound of the Trio" — the second collection of material recorded live at the London House and currently unavailable outside Japan.

"Side by Side" is a sublime example of Johnny Hodges' music. With Duke Ellington at the piano all the ingredients are in place for a program of creatively fresh music. *Stompy Jones* comes from the "Back to Back" session with Harry Edison and Les Spann and is musically equal to the other material from the date. Roy Eldridge, Ben Webster and Lawrence Brown complete the front line for the remaining tunes. Everyone plays with fire and imagination — using the language of the blues and the distinctive compositional talents of Hodges to produce music which reaches out and pulls you along with its emotional, lyrical and rhythmic strengths.

"Bill Evans at Montreux" was a watershed recording and marked the beginning of a resurgence in the pianist's musical focus. Eddie Gomez and Jack deJohnette contribute to the overall excellence of this concert performance. Gene Krupa's 1956 "Drummer Man" is a studio recreation of some of his big band hits. Roy Eldridge and Anita O'Day give the date authenticity. Other soloists include Eddy Shu and Dave McKenna.

"Bashin'" was Jimmy Smith's first recording for Verve — and it was a major money maker. Oliver Nelson's big band orchestration of "Walk on The Wild Side" was one of the first successful attempts to package the music for mass-market consumption. It paved the way for many others — including Wes Montgomery.

"Movin' Wes" was the guitarist's first session for Verve. Montgomery was a masterful musician but the blandness of the music is unsatisfying even though the on-going sales of this music reinforces the notion that many people are only interested in elevator music.

Astrud Gilberto's "Look for the Rainbow" completes these reissues. It is irrelevant to the other music found here — an offering of popular music from Brazil.

— **John Norris**

SATCHMO * AMERICA'S MUSICAL LEGEND

SATCHMO is a \$3 million musical about Louis Armstrong. The subtitle, "America's Musical Legend," says it all. This is entertainment. Although many of us who are serious about jazz may be disappointed with SATCHMO, actually, we have no reasonable basis to assume or expect SATCHMO to be anything more than entertainment. Why? Well, remember seeing Louis Armstrong on television? Did you ever see him play serious jazz?



The general consensus of the jazz community is that there were two Louis Armstrongs: Armstrong the artist (of Hot Five and Hot Seven fame) and Armstrong the entertainer (of *Sleepytime* and *Hello, Dolly* fame). Moreover, people around the world are familiar with (and comfortable with) Armstrong the entertainer while comparatively few own and listen to Armstrong's seminal Hot jazz recordings.

Given this musical state of affairs, isn't it naive to expect illumination and introspection from producer Kenneth Feld, a master of mass entertainment (i.e. the circus). Feld obviously has proven expertise in creating illusion and spectacle — and that's what SATCHMO offers. Given the subtitle and given the producer, the product is no surprise.

This review attempts to look at SATCHMO for what it is rather than for what it isn't or what this review might have wished it was.

SATCHMO succeeds best in its staging and choreography. Maurice Hines' musical staging and choreography is first rate, and the dance sequences in particular are excellent. It is not easy to effortlessly stage and choreograph a cast of 70 or more (not counting the 15 supporting musicians), but Maurice Hines' is a singular success.

The dances, particularly the African and New Orleans inspired sequences, are evocative of the spirit of their origins although not necessarily historically accurate. For example, in Act II, Scene 4 there is a great dance exchange staged between dancers portraying prisoners in a Memphis jail and Armstrong's band who were arrested. Much of the exuberant and exciting dancing in this scene is based on Zulu boot dancing and is exceedingly well done. The scene perfectly captures the joy of dance felt and exhibited by Black people, but Blacks in the south (then or now) were not spontaneously and expert-

ly doing a Zulu boot dance. What Maurice Hines has done is basic artistic Pan-Africanism. When he evokes our African artistic heritage he claims and uses all of Africa, even though it is more accurate to concentrate on the west coast of Africa in the main. Nevertheless, the dance sequences are thrilling and collectively are the high point of SATCHMO.

I wish that the acting was as inventive as the dancing. Unfortunately, while no one does a poor job, there is nothing gripping in any of the performances. Byron Stripling as Louis does a good job in his acting debut and his horn work is sterling. The supporting cast is generally fine. In the final analysis there is not much drama in the script and hence there is a limit to what the actors can do. Besides, most of the actors are really musicians or musically oriented and thus tend toward one-dimensional acting. Given that this is a musical about Louis Armstrong, it's almost intrinsically impossible for the

acting to be anything more than an interlude between songs and dance routines.

Although the music of *SATCHMO* is generally strong, like the dancing it draws on the body of jazz as a whole rather than concentrating on the music that Louis Armstrong created or the music of New Orleans. The band swings mightily, however in general it swings like a Basie machine rather than a New Orleans ensemble. Additionally, there are some jarring stylistic juxtapositions that make absolutely no sense. In particular, a solo for Lil Hardin, "Love, It's Not Easy", is positively wrong. It is stylistically akin to Roberta Flack and, in jazz terms, is at least four generations away from anything Lil Hardin did.

I don't think that writer/director Jerry Bilik totally trusts the power of the music to stand on its own. Rather than use the specific music or evoke the specific style of music, Mr. Bilik composed new music, which often has neither the character nor style of the music of that period. From a total of 27 musical numbers, 11 were composed by Mr. Bilik. All of his compositions are pop oriented and some, such as the recurrent "Red Beans & Rice" theme, are overly sentimental and entirely un-New Orleans in character.

Clearly, Bilik is interested in the entertainment potential of this story. Where Bilik really fails, and hence the play itself, is in its treatment of jazz.

Armstrong's major mark on jazz was made with a series of recordings generally known as the "Hot Five" and the "Hot Seven" sides. Act 1, Scene 9, ("Heebie Jeebies"), presents the recording session of this seminal jazz side, but it is presented incorrectly. This was not cut with King Oliver's band for Okeh Records in June of 1923 as the program notes indicate. "Heebie Jeebies" was actually cut on February 26, 1926 with Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five (Louis Armstrong, trumpet and vocals; Kid Ory, trombone; Johnny Dodds, clarinet; Lil Armstrong, piano; Johnny St. Cyr, banjo).

"Heebie Jeebies" is the first recorded example of jazz "scat" vocals. The legend that Louis dropped the music and couldn't read or forgot the words is just that, a "legend", perpetrated by people for whom scat was a novel and almost inconceivable way of singing. But scat had been around New Orleans for years. Undoubtedly, Louis Armstrong, who started his life in music as a singer and not as a

cornetist, had been scatting a long time. In any case, he wrote the lyrics, which he sang in the first chorus and he did the scatting on purpose, not by accident — the rest is history.

"Heebie Jeebies" sold 40,000 copies within a couple of months of its release — a phenomenal sales figure for the twenties, particularly when one considers that jazz was a relatively new music at that point and that the music industry in general recorded jazz as "race music" at best and more often judged jazz the "the devil's music" or "jungle music", generally not worthy of consideration.

Furthermore, "Heebie Jeebies" was the hit but it was not the most important of those recordings. Jazz scholars generally regard "West End Blues" as the first masterpiece of recorded jazz. Whether one accepts that assessment is not the point; the point is that Armstrong's artistic reputation is based solidly on the "Hot Five" and "Hot Seven" recordings and neither of those groups are depicted in *SATCHMO*. In fact, a recording cut by the Hot Five was presented as the work of Louis and King Oliver's band. This is a dangerous error that should be corrected.

On the other hand, historical accuracy is not necessary in order to make a valid point about jazz. The Chicago sequence admirably illustrates this point. Act 1, Scene 10, "Chicago Jazz," is an essential and pivotal sequence that, more than any other single scene, illustrates the impact that jazz had on America. A group of male white musicians (Bix Beiderbecke is alluded to) want to emulate the jazz of Louis Armstrong. Their "girl friends," who are also singers and dancers, don't understand what all the commotion is about. By playing the music, the musicians show their girlfriends "what's happening." They all end up with a song and dance routine.

In the context of *SATCHMO*, a program in which the great majority of the song and dance numbers are done by Black musicians, this particular scene was received with resounding applause. Why? Because it is done with a great deal of verve and energy. More than any other scene, it depicts how jazz energized the people and music of America, giving birth to the "Jazz Age" — and as is stated, Louis Armstrong was the individual most responsible for this development.

Bilik's script is generally strong on presenting Louis Armstrong as a musical hero and a man of great humanity. Louis'

confrontation with a reporter about a remark he made about segregationists who were battling school children will come as a major revelation to too many people who think of Louis Armstrong as only a master jester who had not a care or concern in the world.

I wish that Bilik had included at least one scene or made mention of the fact that Louis Armstrong was also a literary man who wrote an autobiography and copious letters, almost all of which he signed "Red Beans and Ricely Yours." This piece of information is important to present because many people assume that jazz musicians in general, and Louis Armstrong in particular, were functionally illiterate.

During the course of its story, *SATCHMO* presents an interpretation of the history of jazz as embodied in the life of Louis Armstrong. Undoubtedly, *SATCHMO* will ultimately help garner a wider acceptance of jazz. However, there are some historical lapses which can and ought to be corrected.

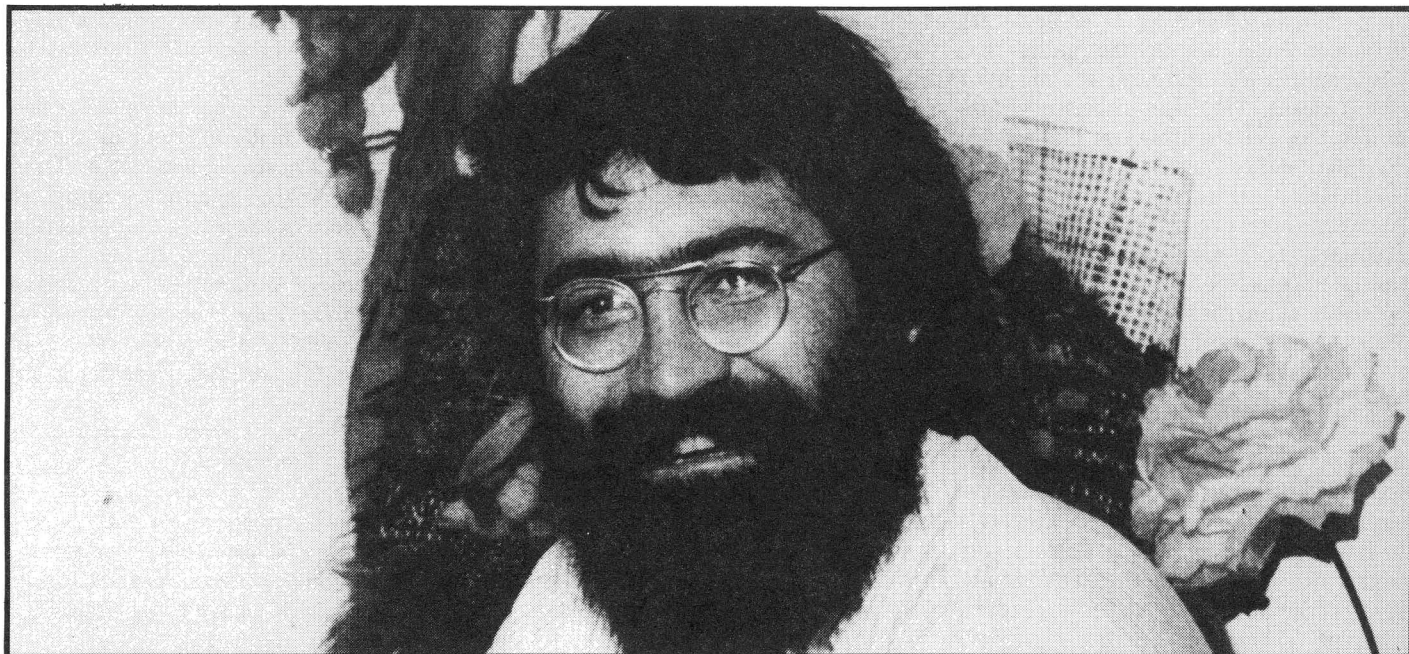
In Act 1, Scene 3 there is a reference to "Callin' The Children Home," which is attributed to King Oliver. Actually, that is the trademark call of Buddy Bolden, the man generally credited as being the first celebrated jazz trumpeter.

Throughout Act 1, to judge from the costuming, one would get the impression that the secondline was the creation and celebration of a finely dressed, Black middle class. That's simply not the case. Then and now the secondline is the music and dance of the working class Blacks. In fact it is only recently in the life of the music that the secondline has been openly embraced by the middle class. Moreover, and unfortunately, among the middle class, that embrace is usually so that the secondline can be used to sell something or make some money from tourists and not because of any love of the music and dance itself.

As a musical *SATCHMO* is bright, lively and uplifting. It's a good show, which can possibly be made into a superb show. *SATCHMO* is several broad cuts above most other examples of mass entertainment. I wish *SATCHMO* was more than entertainment, but I will not condemn it for being something that it never aspired to be. — *Kaluma ya Salaam*

Kalamu ya Salaam is the Executive Director of the New Orleans Cultural Foundation, Inc.

AROUND THE WORLD



CANADA – Summer heat and post festival blues slowed everything down but there have been glimmerings of activity in Toronto. More than 200 people crowded into the Clinton for the inaugural performance of a big band under the direction of **George Koller**. Musical guideposts rather than charts determined the music's direction – along with the imaginations of the musicians. It was a successful extension of the ideas worked on by **Freddie Stone** in his last years.

An exceptionally large crowd was also on hand at the Rivoli on September 2 for the **Steve Lacy/Mal Waldron** duo. They performed an hour long set of introspective, harmonically dense music which explored, at great length, all the possibilities within each structure. Preceding the headliners was the **Solar System Saxophone Quartet**. Their music was full of rhythmic excitement, excellent solos, good organisation of the material and more than a touch of humour. The balance between the four saxophones of **Ernie Toller** (soprano), **Johnny Bakan** (alto), **Paul Cram** (tenor) and **Nic Gotham** (baritone) was evidence of the amount of thought and time these musicians had put into their presentation.

The BamBoo announced a fall mini-festival for September 21 to 25 with Aaron Davis, Kevin Eubanks, Memo Acevedo, The Leaders (Lester Bowie, Arthur Blythe, Chico Freeman, Kirk Lightsey, Cecil McBee, Don Moye) and two nights of Mongo Santamaria.... Pianist **Jon Ballantyne** was at Georges for a week before joining the Woody Herman Band. Neil Swainson, Barry Elmes and Vancouver tenor saxophonist Phil Dwyer completed the lineup. ... The Music Gallery presented Alexander von

Schlippenbach's Trio on September 12. Evan Parker and Paul Lovens completed this unusual combination. On September 19 the Gallery hosted its second annual benefit concert with **Phil Nimmons and Nexus**.... Nimmons, who is director of the University of Toronto's jazz program, will unveil the new version of the UofT Jazz Ensemble at the Edward Johnson Building on December 5.... Slick's Cafe (at the corner of Beresford and Annette in the city's west end) has been featuring jazz on Sunday evenings. Bassist **Kieran Overs** shared the stage with **Lorne Lofsky** and **Brian Dickenson** on successive Sundays in August.... The latest edition of **Maynard Ferguson's** orchestra was at The Spectrum August 27. Memphis Slim, the legendary blues singer/pianist was due at The Diamond the same night but illness forced cancellation of his gig.... "The Jazz Report" is an eight page giveaway designed to cover the local scene. The inaugural issue included an interview between John Scofield and editor/musician Bill King and an article on Bernie Senensky. You can find it at local jazz outlets.

The city of Calgary hosts the 1988 winter Olympics. An ambitious Arts Festival is being presented in conjunction with the event. There are only two jazz concerts. The first (on January 23) presents **Oscar Peterson** in a new work for piano and orchestra entitled (naturally!) *Olympic Jazz Suite*. On February 18 **Rob McConnell** is musical director of a jazz orchestra comprised of "the country's finest young musicians in a unique assembly". They will perform a specially commissioned work by Phil Nimmons. Other music forms at the festival are represented by the country's

finest performers in settings where they function best. Canada's internationally recognised jazz musicians and groups are not to be heard at this event. Culture with a capital "C" has once again played a devastating role in trampling underfoot the indigenous jazz music of this country.

Jazz Calgary's winter concert schedule includes **Bernie Senensky and Kieran Overs** (October 26), **Pat LaBarbera's Quartet** (November 30) and **Peter Leitch's Trio** (with Neil Swainson, Billy Hart) next April 11.

Oliver Jones has accepted an appointment as Professor of Music at Laurentian University in Sudbury. This will not interfere with his increasingly hectic international schedule.... Tenor saxophonist **Fraser MacPherson** was at Montreal's Club 2080 September 10-12 to launch his new Justin Time recording "Honey and Spice". He then spent the rest of September on tour in Quebec and the Maritimes.

Steve Lacy and Mal Waldron crisscrossed the U.S. and Canada following a week's engagement at Sweet Basil in New York City with bassist Reggie Workman and drummer Eddie Moore. A recording from this engagement will be issued. The duo's Canadian gigs were in Halifax, Toronto, Victoria, Vancouver and Montreal and in the U.S. Knoxville, Atlanta, Chapel Hill, Portland and the California cities of Carlsbad, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Oakland.

The second annual festival of **Women Improvisors** was scheduled for October 8-10 and 15-18 at three New York locations – Kraine Club Gallery, The Knitting Factory and

Roulette. Participating musicians included Jane Ira Bloom, Marilyn Crispell, Shelly Hirsch, Kumiko Kimoto, Jeanne Lee and Stephanie Stone.... Joe Williams is the headline guest at this year's Jazz Times Convention. The faithful will gather October 14-17 at the Roosevelt Hotel. Billy Taylor will be the keynote speaker and Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison will be saluted as emerging young artists.... Art Farmer and Benny Golson's Jazztet are in residence for two weeks at Sweet Basil starting October 13. Art Blakey, McCoy Tyner and Phil Woods preceded them at the club.... Jay Hoggard's Quartet (Benny Green, Victor Lewis, Anthony Cox) was at Greenwich House September 18-19.... The Rory Stuart Quartet (Armen Donelian, Calvin Hill, Keith Copeland) was at Fat Tuesday's September 20.... BMI hosted an international music press "Salute to Herbie Hancock" at New York's Tavern On The GreenThe International Art Of Jazz Festival was held in August at Heckscher State Park in Long Island. Freddie Hubbard and Richie Cole shared the stage for the second date (15th) while the Juanita Fleming Trio, the Roger Kellaway Quartet and Tito Puente's Latin Jazz All Stars wrapped up the series on August 29.

Wynton Marsalis was at Binghamton's Center for the Arts on August 9.... "Jazz Impressions from Philadelphia" is a 10 part series on National Public Radio this fall. It was produced by WHYY-FM, is hosted by Grover Washington and showcases more than 140 Philadelphia area musicians.... Phil Woods, Al Cohn, John Coates, Urbie Green and Bob Dorough were among the participants in the tenth annual Delaware Water Gap Celebration of the Arts September 12 and 13.... Ed Thigpen was the keynote speaker of the 1987 NAJE National Leadership Conference held August 15-16 at Detroit's Renaissance Center. The full-scale 1988 convention of the NAJE is scheduled for the same location January 7-10.... Ann Arbor's Bird of Paradise presented Monty Alexander September 10-12. ...The Michael Brecker Band was presented by Eclipse Jazz on September 26.

City Folks is a cultural organisation which is bringing outstanding music to Dayton, Ohio. They kicked off their 1987 season with a concert showcasing the Kansas City style music of Jay McShann and Buddy Tate on August 28. The concert, held at the city's Art Institute, drew a capacity crowd who responded enthusiastically to the familiar strains of a music which dates back to the 1930s. Dayton bassist Lester Bass and drummer John Van Ohlen worked with the two celebrities. The second concert in this year's series featured Houston Person and Etta Jones (October 3) and the David Murray Quartet will be heard November 21. This year's series began August 27 with a reception at Gillie's (an erstwhile jazz club in the city) where music was provided by an enjoyable quintet working within the hard bop language followed by a showing of the movie "The Last of the Blue Devils".... Dayton, unlike most smaller American cities, has an

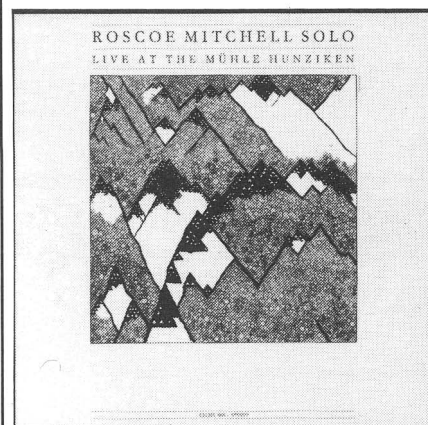
alternative record store (Omega Music, 1929 N. Main Street) where new and used recordings cover the whole spectrum of jazz and other popular musics. It is a positive factor in the interest displayed for the music in the area. The correlation between interesting jazz radio programs, a store which carries the smaller labels and an organisation dedicated to presenting the music in a suitable manner has begun to bear fruit.

Links Hall at 3435 N. Sheffield in Chicago presented Derek Bailey and Eugene Chadbourne in September and Jack Wright and Art Burton's Big Band in October as part of their poetry and music series.... June was declared "Jazz Month" in Baltimore and an evening of jazz was featured in the open air stage outside Chambers Restaurant. Ethel Ennis, Gary Bartz, Carl Grubbs and Bob Gray were among the featured performers. Initiative for this endeavour was the Maryland Center for Creative Music who can be reached at 3509 Old York Road, Baltimore, MD.... The Thelonious Monk Center for Jazz Studies has sponsored its first International Jazz Piano Competition to be held November 18-19 at the Smithsonian Institution's Baird Auditorium. Further information is available from 5000 Kingle Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20016.... McCoy Tyner and Jan Garbarek are among the performers this fall at Elon College's new Arts Center in Carrboro. The inaugural concert took place August 16 with Fred Hersch, Marc Johnson and Joey Barron the performers.

The demise of the six night a week jazz club has forced musicians and listeners to find other ways to present the music. Festivals and Jazz Parties seem the most prominent direction being taken in the 1980s. An alternative to corporate or patron financing was tried recently in Columbia, South Carolina with great success. Benjamin Franklin V reports: "While Columbia, South Carolina, is not known as a jazz center, local music lovers recently staged an old-fashioned jam session with notable modern mainstream players to benefit the Jazz Foundation, a non-profit organization that will help promote jazz in a variety of ways.

"The project began with a handful of the faithful wondering what to do with the Apple, the long defunct Columbia nightclub (originally a synagogue) that gave its name, via the Big Apple dance that was born there, to New York. The Jazz Foundation emerged, with goals of establishing national jazz scholarships, holding annual concerts, creating Louis Awards that will be given to meritorious musicians (which ones aren't?), and establishing a Jazz Hall of Fame museum.

"The first step toward achieving these goals was a success both financially and musically. Five hundred tickets were offered for sale at \$100 each, with almost all of them being sold. A ticket entitled the purchaser to unlimited food and drink at Veron Melona's Elite Epicurean restaurant (the music was performed



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immediately in front of the restaurant, on a blocked off section of Main Street). For the less affluent or the less dedicated, bleacher seats — positioned behind the dining tables and away from the bandstand — were available at no cost. The entire four-hour session was broadcast live throughout South Carolina and to parts of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia on the South Carolina Educational Radio Network.

"Jam sessions might have gone the way of the big bands and the dodo bird (or Dodo Marmarosa), but while the participants were invited and the playing combinations were determined in advance, the ambience was truly that of a jam session and the music was spontaneous and occasionally inspired. The musicians were **Red Rodney** and Columbia's **Johnny Helms**, trumpet; **Urbie Green** and **Carl Fontana** (billed as the world's number one and number two trombonists); **Jimmy Heath** and **Lew Tabackin**, tenor; **Bucky and John Pizzarelli**, guitar; **Derek Smith** and **Dave McKenna**, piano; **Milt Hinton** and **Michael Moore**, bass; **Mel Lewis** and **Butch Miles**, drums. These musicians were divided into two groups that alternated sets; duets by the Pizzarellis provided one interlude, and **Marian McPartland** supplied another. One of the highlights of the evening was the appearance of **Jimmy McPartland**, who had not been announced as a participant, with **Marian**. He played splendidly, and he sang engagingly. The evening concluded with a high-voltage mega-jam, featuring all of the musicians except the McPartlands and **Dave McKenna**, on *One O'Clock Jump*. Players and listeners agreed that the evening had been a complete success; **Bucky Pizzarelli's** wife went so far as to write a letter to a local newspaper praising the event.

"What happens next in Columbia remains to be seen. This evening proved, though, that a substantial audience exists here for live improvised music, although few who attended this session would likely support music by **Joe McPhee**, **Leo Smith**, **George Lewis**, or the **Lounge Lizards**. Still, a good start is a good start. And other communities might learn from Columbia's lesson about how to present good music profitably."

Teddy Charles, **Jane Jarvis**, **Allen Eager**, **Ira Sullivan**, **Frank Wess**, **Bobby Shew** and the **Herk Olson Big Band** were among the headliners at **Cocoa Beach's All Star Jazz Festival** held at the Holiday Inn, September 4-6. Masterminding the event was **Jack Simpson** who celebrates 20 years of broadcasting jazz in the area. His "Jazz on the Beach" is heard locally on **WMIE-FM**.... **The Arkansas River Blues Festival** took place July 25 with **Johnny Winter**, **KoKo Taylor** and **Lonnie Mack** the headliners.... **James Cotton**, **Johnny Copeland**, **Robert Jr Lockwood** and **Pinetop Perkins** were among the participants in the **King Biscuit Blues Festival** held October 9-10 in **Helena, Arkansas**.

Andrew Hill was at **Catalina's Bar & Grill**

September 4 and 5 in **Los Angeles**.... The second **Palo Alto Jazz Festival** was held September 26 and 27 with **Sarah Vaughan**, **Stan Getz**, **Buddy DeFranco** and **Lee Ritenour** the headliners.

The **1987 Zurich International Jazz Festival** takes place October 29 to November 1 with **Willem Breuker's Kollektief**, **David Murray's Big Band**, **John Scofield**, **Sonny Sharrock** and a special **John Coltrane Memorial Band** (**McCoy Tyner**, **Sonny Fortune**, **Freddie Hubbard**, **Reggie Workman**, **Elvin Jones**) the headliners.

Walter Schwager reports on recent activity in **Amsterdam**:

"There was a lot of jazz in **Holland** this spring and summer, with even more announced for the fall. There was a swank jazz weekend in **Noordwijk**, and concerts everywhere. The big event of the summer was the **North Sea Jazz Festival** in July in the **Hague**, which attracted even larger crowds than last year. It caused the media to devote much attention to jazz; one could find page-long interviews with visiting musicians such as **Ruby Braff**. The lineup was the traditional mix, with special concerts by popular heavies such as **Miles Davis** and **George Shearing**, and shorter sets by **Cecil Taylor**, **Ornette Coleman** and varied luminaries. The festival undoubtedly does jazz a lot of good, but as I dislike having to fight my way through crowds to listen to a hurried performance I stayed away. Probably my loss. The reviewers liked it.

"A small jazz festival I did enjoy was the **Meervaart Festival** in **Amsterdam** in August, in a nice and relaxed atmosphere with a lot of good music. The festival changed its format from last year, when it featured a visiting house band, and gained variety and quality as a result. **Ed Blackwell's** group, which included **Don Cherry**, was a historical must, and in addition sounded fine. The **David Murray Octet**, with a heavy reputation to live up to in **Holland**, did its best, but I did not find it very convincing. Other foreign guests included the **John Carter Octet** and the **Brotherhood of Living Breath**.

"This festival was also very interesting for its Dutch element. Both **Ab Baars** and **Paul van Kemenade** led groups playing the compositions commissioned by the Dutch broadcasting foundation **NOS**, the festival sponsor. The **Baars** group sounded good in a very Dutch way, while the **Kemenade** band sounded nice and tight in its ensemble playing.

"The **Ernst Reijseger** group performing the last festival evening predictably contained a lot of **ICP** musicians, such as **Steve Lacy**, **George Lewis**, **Misha Mengelberg** and **Han Bennink**. In a way it heralded the two concerts celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the **Instant Composers Pool**, with **Anthony Braxton**, **Derek Bailey** and **Peter Brotzman** in addition to **Lacy**, **Lewis**, and the current Dutch lineup: **Mengelberg**, **Bennink**, **Reijseger**, **Baars**, **Wolter Wierbos**, **Michael Moore** and **Ernst Glerum**. I attended the second, at the **BIMhuis**,

where Braxton conducted a marvelous anniversary piece for the total group, with outstanding solos by Wierbos and others. Small combinations also played: I especially enjoyed a trio with Bailey, Braxton and Brotzman, with Bailey sounding positively exuberant. And hearing Braxton play Monk with Mengelberg and Bennink was a musical event in itself. This concert, as intended, linked tradition and future in a wonderful fashion. Such a terrific birthday party deserves many happy returns!

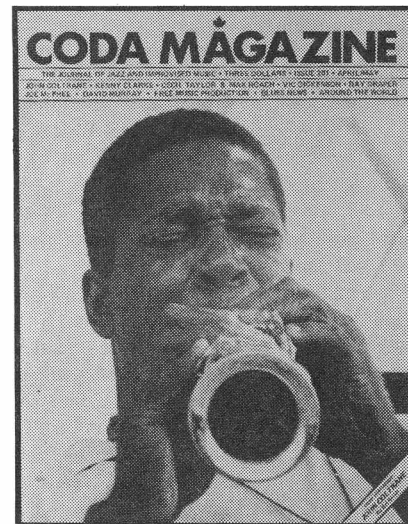
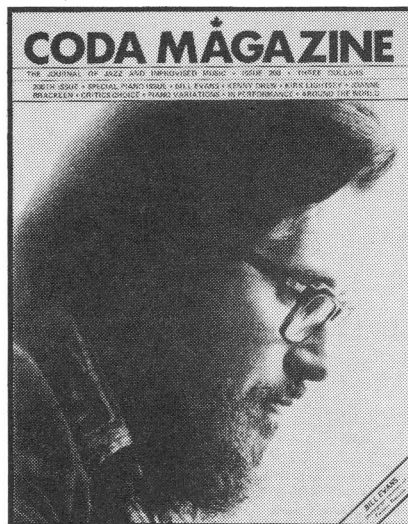
"Over the next two months there will be sufficient local jazz festivals in Holland to keep a reviewer busy fulltime. Many of these festivals feature local talent and more traditional music with a sprinkling of newer music. The Dutch jazz scene contains numerous Dixieland bands, the mainstream and bebop musicians, and the mainly Amsterdam improvised music scene. It is no secret that the last group, centred around the wonderful facilities of the BIMhuis and the government subsidies garnered by the Dutch Jazz Foundation, are not greatly loved by the other groups, and sometimes are referred to as "scratch, snort and squeak" musicians. Still the most important event coming up will highlight these "improvisers." This year the **October Jazz Month** programme celebrates Amsterdam's status as the current European Cultural Capital by assembling influential musicians from both sides of the Atlantic to perform in various combinations and to discuss their art form. Participants will include Cecil Taylor, Anthony Braxton, Evan Parker, Derek Bailey, Ray Anderson, Steve Lacy, the cream of the Dutch crop, and many others. From 16-23 October concerts will be held in Amsterdam and elsewhere in the country. If this works out it could be a historic occasion. We'll let you know!"

International correspondent J. "Pepe" Hosiasson was in attendance at several European festivals this summer and his highlights included the following:

"Tony Scott sitting in with Warren Vache and an English rhythm section, playing *The Man I Love* at London's Pizza Express Club... Ruby Braff's performances with a very swinging quintet (Howard Alden, g; Mark Shane, p; Jack Lesberg, b; Chuck Riggs, d) at the JVC Grande Parade in Nice, France.... Nineteen-year-old Finnish alto player **Jukka Perko**, in Nice's Cimiez park, sitting alongside Sam Rivers, Ralph Moore, Jerry Dodgion and Howard Johnson, in the sax section of the Dizzy Gillespie 70th Anniversary Big Band, and blowing on *Round Midnight*, *Emanon*, and other classic arrangements.... The pleased surprise on **Buddy Tate's** face while watching **Branford Marsalis** doing a very Websterish interpretation of a ballad, in a jam session at Nice's Beach Regency Hotel night-club.... The impressive drumming of Branford's percussionist **Lewis Nash**.... **Kenny Barron**, **Gerry Wiggins**, and **Barry Harris** on the Bosendorfer grand piano in the beautiful Gallo-

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AUGUST 1973 - CODA's 15th Anniversary Issue celebrating LOUIS ARMSTRONG

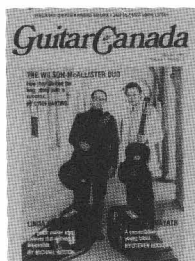
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Roman amphitheatre of the Cimiez park in Nice.... The amazing nightly performances – in an abandoned church in Perugia, Italy – by the seventeen-musician **Gil Evans Orchestra**, which included **Lew Soloff**, t; **George Lewis**, tb; **John Surman**, bars; **George Adams**, ts; and **Ursula Dudziak's** voice and synthesizer.... **The Stan Getz Quartet** (Getz, ts; **Kenny Barron**, p; **Rufus Reid**, b; **Victor Lewis**, d;) sharing a double bill with **Dexter Gordon & the Round Midnight Quintet** (Gordon, ts; **Bobby Hutcherson**, vb; **Cedar Walton**, p; **Pierre Michelot**, b; **Billy Higgins**, d) at the Renato Curi stadium in Perugia. Some eight thousand people were spellbound listening while both groups played strictly straight-ahead jazz (not even a bossa number by Getz!). ...The artistry of **Bobby Hutcherson** and **Billy Higgins** with **Dexter Gordon's** group, both in Nice and in Perugia.... The sight of several hundred people – most of whom did not understand English – giving an ovation after a showing of **Gary Giddins'** video production "Celebrating Bird – The Triumph of Charlie Parker" at the Teatro Turreno in Perugia.... The rousing "finale" of **Umbria Jazz** in the medieval setting of Perugia's main square, several thousand heads moving rhythmically up and down to the scorching music of **Celia Cruz** with **Tito Puente's** latin orchestra."

David Redfern, the noted jazz photographer, has launched "The Jazz & Blues Collection". It's a series of colour and black and white photographs, signed and selected by the photographer from his vast collection. The prints come in various sizes. A complete catalog and price list is available from **David Redfern Photography**, Top Floor, 83/4 Long Acre, London WC2E 9NG, England.

Many new books have been announced for publication. **Macmillan** has **Thirty Years with the Big Bands** by **Arthur Rollini**, **Talking Jazz** with **Max Jones** and **Sidney Bechet: The Wizard of Jazz** by **John Chilton**.... **Oxford University Press** has **Duke Ellington** by **James Lincoln Collier**. It also distributes many of the **Macmillan** books in the U.S. and Canada. **Buck Clayton's Jazz World** is the most recent of these to appear. Also from **Oxford** is **Arnold Shaw's The Jazz Age: Popular Music of the 1920s** and **Gene Lees' Singers and the Song**.... The **University of Illinois Press** has **Goin' to Kansas City** by **Nathan W. Pearson Jr.**, **Langston Hughes and the Blues** by **Steven C. Tracy** as well as the US/Canada rights to the **Arthur Rollini** book.... **Nightwood Editions** of **Toronto** is publishing **Boogie, Pete & The Senator**, subtitled "Canadian Musicians in Jazz: The Eighties" by **Mark Miller**.... "Jazz-bill" is a new magazine of the **National Jazz Club**. Its format is similar to the programs given away in theatres. It lists places to go for jazz in many cities – those who distribute the booklet. The August issue includes articles on **Pat Metheny** and **Ornette Coleman**. The magazine is published by **Third Earth Publications**, P.O. Box 1816, Wayne, N.J. 07470.

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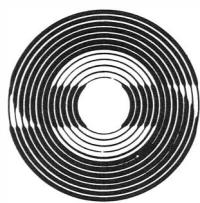
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Jack Walrath's first **Blue Note** recording is "Master of Suspense". **Kenny Garrett**, **Carter Jefferson**, **Steve Turre**, **James Williams**, **Anthony Cox** and **Ronnie Burrage** are his cohorts in this septet outing. Also new from **Blue Note** is a trio date by pianist **Eliane Elias** called "Illusions".... **Catfish Records** (P.O. Box 43844, Austin, Texas 78745-5675) is a new blues label. Their initial release is a collection of barrelhouse Texas piano by **R.T. "Grey Ghost" Williams**.... **Denon**, who only issue their music on CD, has a **Bennie Wallace** recording available called "The Art of the Saxophone".... **Harold Ashby**, **Lew Tabackin**, **Jerry Bergonzi** and **Oliver Lake** are guests on the date.... "Hands On" is the title of **Warren Bernhardt's** newest release on **DMP**.... **Philadelphia** pianist **Mark Kramer** has a trio album on **Encounter** **Audio-philie Records** (P.O. Box 6403, Philadelphia, Pa 19145).... New from the **Fantasy** group are several **Contemporary** releases: **George Cables** plays the music of **George Gershwin** while **Art Farmer** plays the music of **Billy Strayhorn** in "Something to Live For". (Incidentally **Fantasy** are circulating **Art's** illuminating interview with **Gene Lees** which was first published in *The Jazzletter* last December). **Barney Kessel** is back at **Contemporary** with "Spontaneous Combustion". Also from **Fantasy** are **Sonny Rollins'** latest "G-Man" and from **Landmark** **Bobby Hutcherson's** "In The Vanguard" – a live date with **Kenny Barron**, **Buster Williams** and **Al Foster**.... **Gramavision** has released

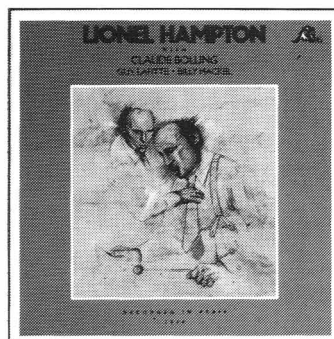
clarinetist **John Carter's** third album for the label, "Dance of the Love Ghosts".... **Carl Halen's** 1982 **Summa Cum Laude Orchestra** is heard on **Jazzology**. **Trumpeter Jim Baby**, clarinetist **Frank Powers** and pianist **Jim Dapogny** are all in this band which revisits material recorded by the original **Bud Freeman** band in the 1930s. The music was recorded at **Cincinnati's Culver Press Club** and the band was put together by **Joe Boughton** of the **Allegheny Jazz Society**. The recording is available from him at 283 **Jefferson Street**, **Meadville, Pa. 16335** for \$9.00.... **Mobile Fidelity** has made available the **Louis Armstrong** and **Fats Waller** **BBC** CDs by **Robert Parker**.... **Polygram** continues to issue gems from the **Verve** catalog. The new reissue of **Lester Young** with the **Oscar Peterson Trio** includes a previously unissued version of *It Takes Two To Tango* in which **Young** sings! "Hamp and Getz" includes two previously unavailable tracks. **Polygram** has also issued ten CDs from the **Complete Keynote Box**: **Lester Young**, **Lennie Tristano**, **Roy Eldridge** (2 CD set), **Ellingtonians**, **Coleman Hawkins** (4 CD set), **Benny Carter**, **Red Norvo**, **The Keynotes**, **The Small Herd** and **Early Bebop**.... **The Complete Dinah Washington** is being prepared for release on **Mercury**. The initial two volumes (each 3 CDs) cover 1946-1952.... New recordings from the label have begun to appear. **Joe Williams** and **Shirley Horn** were both recorded at **Vine Street** in **Los Angeles** and now appear as part of the **Verve-Vine Street** series. ..."Four for All" is a new recording by **Sphere** for **Verve** and **Charlie Haden's** new quartet with **Ernie Watts**, **Alan Broadbent** and **Billy Higgins** also appears on the reactivated label. ...20 new titles in the **Polygram Walkman** series were scheduled for **October/November** release on cassette and CD. The first series included long unavailable material by **Erroll Garner**, **Count Basie** and traditional bands ("Best of Dixieland").... "Viewpoint" is a new **Stash** release under trombonist **Steve Turre's** leadership. **Jon Faddis**, **Mulgrew Miller**, **Bill Hardman**, **Junior Cook** and **Hilton Ruiz** are among the musicians who participated in the recordings.... **Second Sight** is a newly-formed band under the musical direction of pianist **John Esposito**. Their debut lp is called "Flying With The Comet" on **Sunjump** **SJR 01** (P.O. Box 1117, Woodstock, N.Y. 12498).

Pianist **Merle Koch** died last **March 21** in **Carson City, Nevada**. He was 72. **Doug Dobell**, founder of the specialty record store in **London** which carries his name and an indefatigable supporter of jazz, died **July 10** while attending the **Nice Jazz Festival**. He was 69.... **Trumpeter Howard McGhee** died **July 19** in **New York** following a lengthy illness. He was 69.... Pianist **Dick Wellstood** collapsed and died in **Menlo Park California** on **July 24** while preparing to perform there that weekend. He was 59. Trombonist **Frank Rehak** died late **July** following a lengthy fight with cancer.

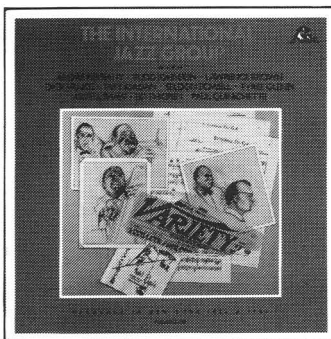
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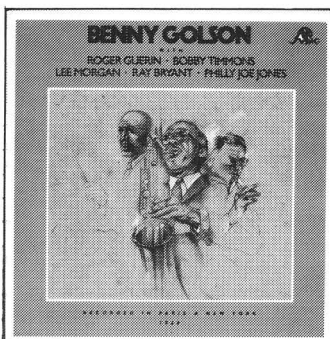
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LUCKY THOMPSON / SW 8404 / Emmett Berry, Martial Solal, Henri Renaud Trio, others (1956) Volume 1
EDDIE SOUTH / SW 8405 / Reinhardt, Grappelly, Michel Warlop, others (1929, 1937) (also on cassette)
CLARK TERRY / SW 8406 / Quentin Jackson, Martial Solal, Kenny Clarke, others (1960)
The International Jazz Group / SW 8407 / Taft Jordan, Vic Dickenson, Budd Johnson, Andre Persiany, others (1956) Volume 1
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EARTHA KITT - DOC CHEATHAM-BILL COLEMAN / SW 8410 / George Duvivier, others (1950, 1956)
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Lawrence Brown, Pinky Williams, Ernie Royal, Joe Wilder, Urbie Green, Al Klink
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