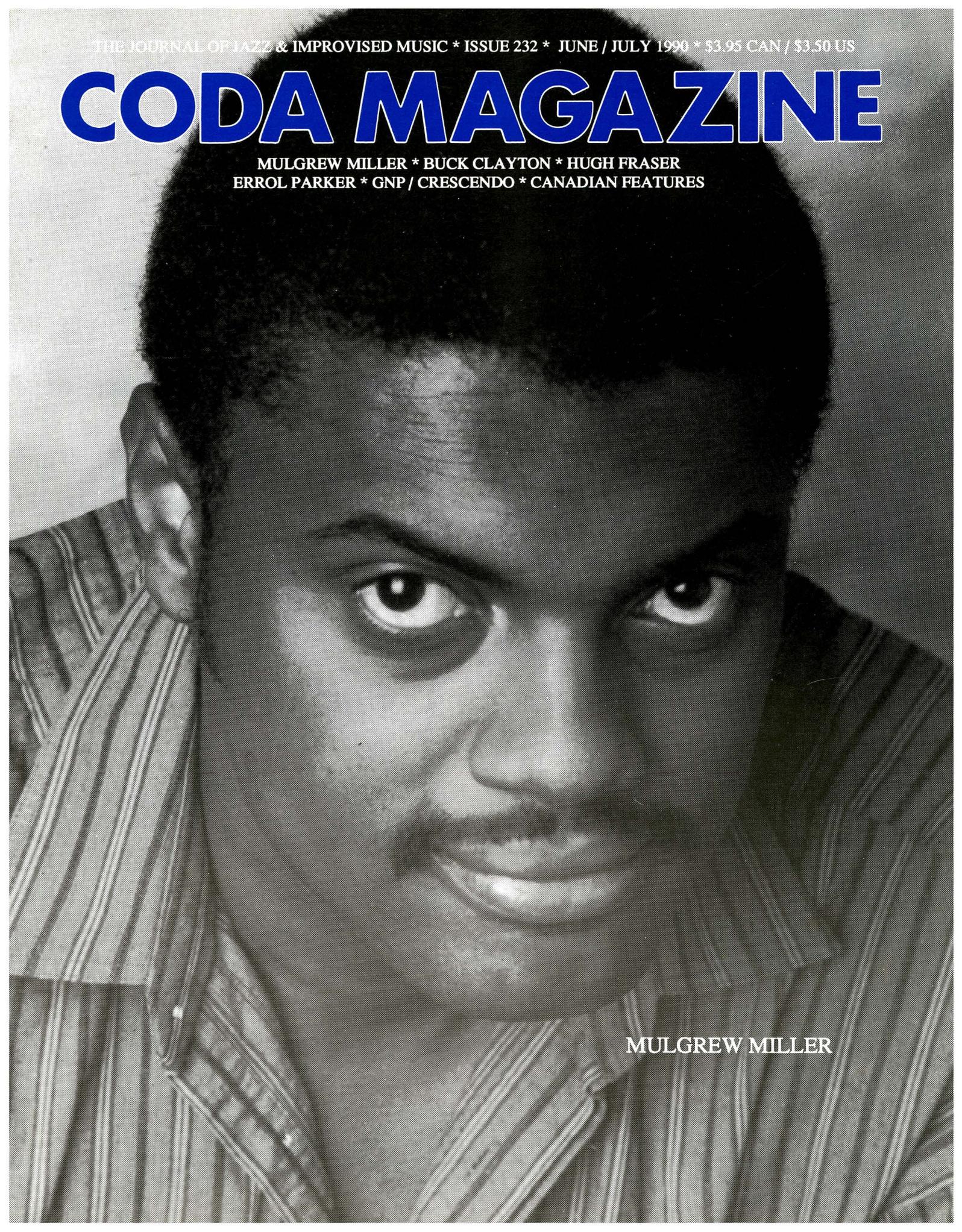


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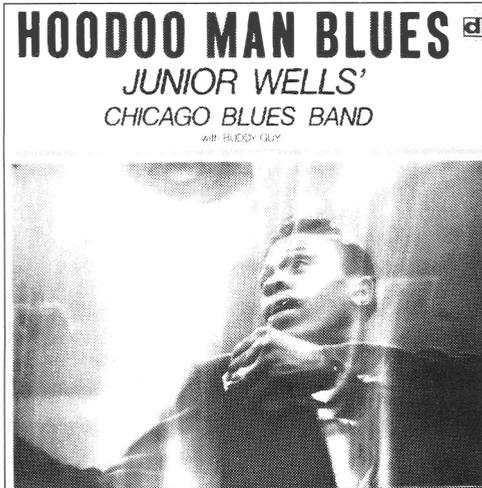
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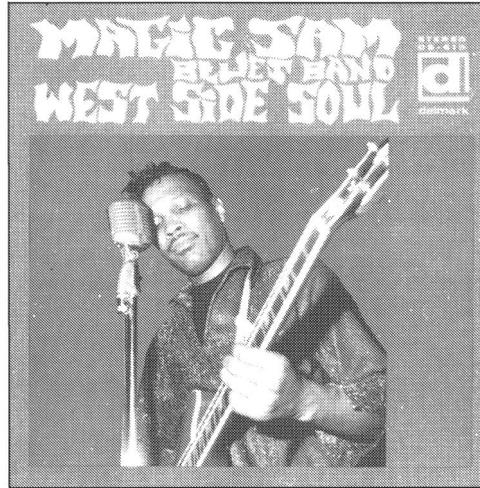
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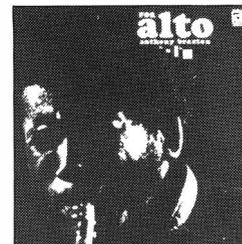
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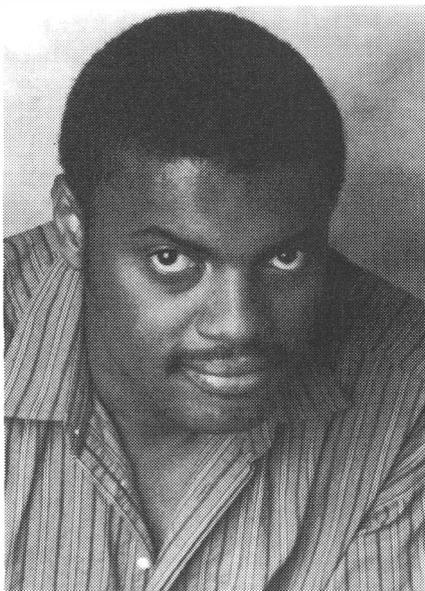
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**MULGREW MILLER**  
By Michael Belenky

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# CANADIAN NOTES

The media launch for Canada's summer jazz festivals was in May but these notes were written several weeks earlier and only smatterings of information have been received!

The Alcan Competition is helping focus attention upon the many talented younger musicians currently performing jazz in Canada. The regional finals were held at the end of April with the winners moving on to the final week of competition during the Montreal Jazz Festival in July. Regional contestants, selected from those who initially applied, were **Densil Pinnock Sextet**, **The Stephen Amirault Group**, **Yannick Rieu Ensemble (East)**; **Five After Four**, **Barry Romberg Group**, **Andrew Rathburn Group (Central)**; **Aurora**, **Lerner/ Roy Group**, **Countdown (Western)**; **Bubbleheads**, **Creatures of Habit**, **Above Ground (Pacific)**.

**Milton Nascimento** headlines the opening night of Vancouver's duMaurier Ltd Jazz Festival on June 22. The Brazilian then heads east for a late evening concert at Toronto's Winter Garden Theatre. Earlier the same night the Concord All Stars will be on the same stage participating in duMaurier Ltd Downtown Jazz. **Rob McConnell's Boss Brass** and **Joe Williams** open the Toronto event at Roy Thomson Hall on June 22. Jack DeJohnette, Pat Metheny, Herbie Hancock and Dave Holland will be at the same venue June 28. Already in place and announced is the Harbourfront concert series. It opens with **Azimuth (22)** and is followed by the **Alex Schlippenbach** Trio with **Evan Parker** and **Paul Lovens (26)**, **Andrew Cyrille** and **Vladimir Tarasov (27)**, the **Sta-Bar-Var Trio** with **Barre Phillips**, **Vinny Golia** and **Alain Joule (28)**, and Herb Ellis and Red Mitchell duo (29).



Two days of jazz programming at Harbourfront on June 29 and 30 focuses attention on the wealth of Toronto talent with continuous music on the Shipdeck Stage and at the Water's Edge Café. Headlining the event will be performances by Ralph Sutton and Jay McShann, "The Last of the Whorehouse Piano Players." As a sidebar event, Harbourfront will feature **Reel Jazz**, five nights of film screenings ranging from archival footage of Armstrong and Teagarden to **Ornette: Made In America**. Two evenings will be dedicated to Rosetta Reitz's presentation of women in jazz and blues. It's also been announced that John Lewis will perform in a solo capacity at Café des Copains on June 25 and 26 and **Chris McGregor's** Trio will be at Berzy Park. George Coleman and Harold Mabern will be at the Underground Railroad for two nights as will Jackie and Roy, Clifford Jordan and the Sam Notot/ Pat LaBarbara combination.

The **Robin Shier** Quintet was on tour in April in support of their recent recording. They performed in Regina, Saska-

toon, Toronto (a week at George's Spaghetti House), Montreal and Ottawa.

Two new clubs are opening this spring in Toronto which promise to liven up the jazz scene. Both The Top of The Senator (on Victoria Street) and The Bermuda Onion (on Bloor Street at The Colonnade) are committed to programs featuring international jazz stars, both as soloists with Canadian rhythm sections and with their own groups. The Bermuda Onion began its new policy with a one week engagement of The **Phil Woods** Quintet at the end of May. The restaurant had already successfully presented a jazz brunch for several months with saxophonist **Doug Watson**. The Senator is scheduled to open in mid June with saxophonist **Dewey Redman**.

Toronto's first ever Jazz Party, held at the Radisson Hotel over the last weekend of March, was enthusiastically received by those in attendance and organizer Gord Fancy has already announced that a second party will be held next year. The patrons (who purchased an overall pass for the weekend) were

served up more than 19 hours of music over the three days as well as two meals. More than twenty musicians performed in a variety of settings within the stylistic boundaries framed by the Swing Tradition. But there were a lot of surprises. The biggest impact came from the new generation of musicians. Harry - Allen, Dan Barrett, Ken Peplowski, Conrad "Connie" Jones and Keith Ingham consistently proved that they are distinctive voices within the idiom who have much to offer the listener. The fans may have come to hear Yank Lawson, Doc Cheatham, Marty Grosz, George Masso, John Bunch and the familiar Toronto faces of Archie Alleyne, Ed Bickert, Jim Galloway, Ian Bargh, Don Thompson and Don Vickery but they left with vivid memories of musical highlights offered by the "newcomers."

The **Dave McMurdo** Orchestra returned to the BamBoo April 23 for another outing. Two weeks before **Peter Leitch** was in for a one-nighter where he shared the billing with Ed Bickert and Don Thompson... A second big band, this time led by trombonist **Russ Little**, has been holding forth Tuesday nights at the Rockit Club (120 Church Street)... **Eugene Chadbourne** and **Bobby Wiseman** were at the Rivoli (April 1) and The Music Gallery (April 2)... Slim Gaillard was at the McMichael Gallery April 4... The Steve Lacy Quintet were at Clinton's April 29 for two shows... Gospel great Shirley Caesar headlines Harbourfront's Gospelfest July 6 to 8... Capitol Records hosted a media bash March 5 to publicize the Blue Note label at the Bottom Line. Flown in specially for the occasion were **Renée Rosnes** and **Ralph Bowen**, along with their bassist and drummer and guitarist Stanley

## COMPILED BY JOHN NORRIS

Jordan. Adding weight to the occasion was label president Bruce Lundvall and producer Michael Cuscuna.

**Karen Young** and **Michel Donato** did a one nighter at New York's Birdland March 5 before giving concerts in five other eastern US communities. An earlier tour had taken the duo into the Maritimes.

The Rising Sun was a slightly schizophrenic jazz outpost in Montreal for close to two decades. In its time The Rising Sun had hosted many major blues and jazz performers. On March 19 the premises burned to the ground and the club's future is in question. A special benefit night was in the process of being

organized for the Spectrum on April 21 where both Willie Dixon and Paquito d'Rivera were scheduled to appear.

The 1990 faculty for The Banff Centre's jazz program includes Abraham Adzenyah, Steve Coleman, Stanley Cowell, Kevin Eubanks, Robin Eubanks, **Hugh Fraser**, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, **Kenny Wheeler** and Cassandra Wilson.. Bobby Shaw, **Oliver Jones**, Courtney Pine, Mike Gillespie, Gordon Towell, **Bill Emes**, **Jane Bunnett**, Milcho Leviev, Steve Lacy and **John Reid** (with the Brian Buchanan Trio) were the March/ April attractions at Edmonton's Yardbird Suite.

**Ton Van Wageningen's** jazz photographs were on display at Vancouver's Alma Street Cafe in April. Saxophonist George Robert was a guest April 19-21 while regular performers at the club include Chris Sigerson, Fraser MacPherson, Oliver Gannon and Ross Taggart.

**Jon Ballantyne's** Justin Time recording of *Skydance* won the Jazz Juno Award for 1989. Just out on Justin Time are **Ranee Lee's** long awaited vocal recording, *Deep Song* (Oliver Jones, Richard Ring, Milt Hinton and Archie Alleyne are the supporting musicians), and **Tim Brady** and John Abercrombie's *Double Variations*.

bass, drums, and two guitars, the group relies on one of the guitars to create the chords that a piano typically provides. This guitar, lacking the piano's resonance, creates a generally thin sound that disserves the group and the compositions.

The quintet most comes to life on Coleman's *Blues Composition* (first recorded on Coleman's *This Is Our Music*, 1960). The theme is attractive, and tenor saxophonist **Phil Dwyer** and one of the guitarists, either **Mark McCarron** or Young, come close to breaking out of the easy smoothness that characterizes most of the playing throughout the rest of the album. With this being the case, one wishes for the group to interpret substantial music by others more frequently than it does on this 1989 recording.

Somewhat more appealing is Unity 105, an album by the group **Vikrama** entitled *Hands On*. Ostensibly a showcase for the compositions and arrangements of pianist **Knut Eide Haugsoen**, the highlight is the flugelhorn playing of **John Macleod**. While Haugsoen's writing is attractive and serviceable and while he, guitarist **Larry Roy**, and tenor saxophonist **Mike Allen** solo adequately, Macleod stands well above the others. Although he lacks the facility, emotional depth, and quality of colleagues of the most sublime of all flugelhornists, Art Farmer, he nevertheless plays attractively and elevates the music of each performance toward his level. In this sense he is like any good teacher: he forces those less adept to reach for him and refuses to descend to them.

Listen, then, to side one of this recording, for there Macleod solos on all four tunes, *D'Accord* (based on *Beautiful Love*), *High Density*, *In A Dream*, and *Gridlock*. Despite

## CANADIAN JAZZ ON RECORD

While such ringers as Joe Henderson, Dave McKenna and Chuck Wayne contribute substantially to the following recordings, most of the musicians are Canadian; thus, the thread that connects these releases. I shall discuss the albums first, CDs, second.

One need only read the liner material to know that John Coltrane lives in **Michael Stuart**, a big-toned tenor saxophonist given to mystical musings on *The Blessing* (Unity 107). The titles of the tunes (all Stuart compositions), such as *The Blessing*, *Dedication* and *Celebration*, recall the titles of Coltrane's compositions for *A Love Supreme*: Stuart's concluding words on the liner, "All praise be to God, to whom all praise is due!" continues the sense of Coltrane's prose in his justly famed 1964 session. And the titles and prose do not mislead. Stuart is both passionate and mystical, although more sub-

dued in both areas than Coltrane. Supported by a traditional rhythm section, including acoustic bass (**David Field**), Stuart might as well be playing solo. He is so strong and dominant that the others hardly matter. In saying this I do not mean to demean the supporting musicians; it's just that their role here is to be subservient, and they are. During their few solos, both pianist **Brian Dickinson** and drummer **Claude Ranger** play somewhat predictably, although Ranger is inspired on *Celebration*. (Field takes an arco solo on *Destiny*.) When playing in the section and not soloing, especially on a tune such as *The Call*, Dickinson resembles McCoy Tyner and drummer Ranger invokes Elvin Jones.

Years from now music historians might well use Stuart's album to document Coltrane's continuing influence more than two decades after his death.

The music of **Barry Romberg** is also derivative. Someone listening to *Second Floor Please* (Unity 106) on a blindfold test would guess immediately that the music is on Windham Hill, or possibly ECM. Romberg's music, apparently mostly composed, combines what I would call new age and space music, with a hint of avant garde. One positive result is a distinctive group sound that is sustained throughout the seven selections; negatively, the sound is predictable. This is due in part to leader/drummer Romberg's desire for such a sound in composing four of the tunes. His influence can also be felt on the composition by guitarist **Geoff Young** (who collaborated on one tune with Romberg) and in the arrangements of compositions from outside the group by K[enny?] Kirkland and Ornette Coleman. The instrumentation, as it is used here, helps weaken the group sound. With saxophone,



almost totally so, but something about it suggests that even the most radical parts might in fact be composed. But whether written or not, this album contains adventurous and possibly disturbing music by Kirkland, Koller, guitarist **Geoff Young**, and saxophonist **Perry White** that deserves attention. (I should add that the two cover photographs of a beaten-up Kirkland are shocking.)

Not before listening to *Sky Dance* (Justin Time 30-1) had I heard of **Jon Ballantyne**, pianist, composer, and leader of a first-rate trio. Not only does he create engaging melodies, but their quality inspires superior improvisation, primarily from the composer and the trio's guest, tenor saxophonist **Joe Henderson**. But do not assume that because Henderson here plays with musicians not widely known that he condescends to humour the provincialists. Rather, the group seems more a quartet than trio plus visiting famous player. Clearly Henderson is inspired by the compositions and his fellow musicians, who include bassist **Neil Swanson** and drummer **Jerry Fuller**.

Each of the five performances on this album delights, from the up tempo *Oh What I've Been Thru* to the angular *Opus IV* to the slightly whimsical *BYO Blues* (with Henderson at his most Rollins-like) to the title tune, which is a beautiful ballad. On the only non-Ballantyne composition, the quartet romps through *You and the Night and the Music* so deftly and with such passion that one marvels that this is not a regular working group while wishing that it were. Although lack of liner notes leaves me wondering about the circumstances surrounding this recording, I assume that Henderson was playing in Montreal in December 1988 with a local rhythm section (Ballantyne's)

the densely textured *Gridlock*, the prevailing mood on these four pieces is mellow. But on the second side of five tunes, Macleod solos only on *Mandarin*. On the remaining four, Allen's unexceptional saxophone, augmented by Haugsoen's piano, is dominant. And unfortunately for Allen and for the group, the least successful effort, both as composition and performance, is on *Vikrama*, which is little more than a throwaway.

Pianist **Bernie Senensky** is the best known of the musicians mentioned so far, and with good reason. Not only has he been active as a recording artist for about a decade, but he plays well consistently and writes attractive lines. While *Friday the 14th* (Unity 104) is not among the all-time great trio albums, it is successful and well worth listening to. The tightly-knit, muscular group (bassist **Kieran Overs** and drummer **Barry Elmes** complete the trio) interprets four Senensky originals, *Don Menza's Steppin'*, and *If I Should Lose You*. Senensky shows the influence of McCoy Tyner, especially in his chording and voicing, but he does not ape Tyner. Rather he has incorporated his borrowings into his own individual, distinctive style, which is attractive in

its own right.

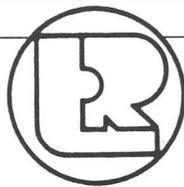
One measure of the success of this album is that as attractive as the fiery numbers are, the most appealing piece is Senensky's sensitive *Pepper's Gone*, which doubtless refers to the death of Pepper Adams. Intropective but not morose, it is more a quiet affirmation of life than a jeremiad. *If I Should Lose You* also brings delights, in part because of the unexpectedly brisk tempo at which the trio performs it. (The most dramatic example of playing up tempo a tune usually performed as a ballad is Ben Webster's *Sleep*, for Commodore in 1944.) In sum, this is a rewarding trio album.

If neo-hard bop is for you, then I can recommend **Bernard Primeau's Propulsion** (Jazzimage 116). This 1989 release by Primeau's sextet features six attractive originals by trumpeter **Alan Penfold** and two by **Jan Jarczyk**, a Pole who does not play with the group. I do not wish here to debate the issue of young musicians probing earlier forms instead of attempting to take music into unknown realms, although it must be mentioned. That issue aside, these six players comport themselves at least adequately in what might be called the Jazz Messenger mode, as annotator

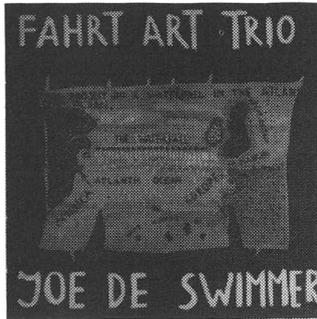
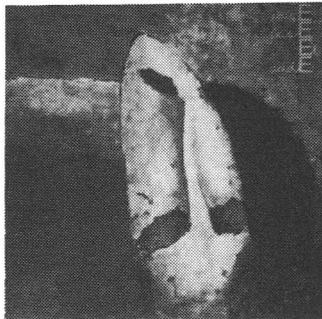
Marc Chenard reminds us, although not one of them is of substantial enough stature to play with Blakey. And despite the album title and the obvious similarity in musical conception to the Messengers, drummer Primeau, while keeping things moving, is no Blakey. Despite these reservations, Primeau and his group (Penfold, saxophonists **Yannick Rieu** and **Remi Bolduc**, bassist **Normand Guilbault**, and pianist **Tim Sullivan**) create attractive music.

One younger musician who tries to expand the musical vocabulary is drummer **Graeme Kirkland**. His quartet, called *The Wolves*, reminds one of the Lounge Lizards, especially in its dissonance, energy, and irreverence. While I do not enjoy all of the performances (such as the tedious *Tear*), I like many of them. Most successful of the eight tunes is Kirkland and **Bobby Wiseman's** experimental *One (Note)*, on which **George Koller** sustains one note on arco bass, like a bagpipe drone, for almost six minutes while others improvise on it. (Wiseman is not a member of the quartet.)

As much as parts of Kirkland's *Sleep Alone!* (Graeme Kirkland Music WRC 1-6143) appeal to me, I am uncertain how much of it is improvised. It appears to be



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and, because of the quality music they made, someone decided to record them. But what ever led to this recording, the contents of *Sky Dance* will surprise and please all lovers of improvised music.

Because of the familiarity of Ed Bickert's trio and guest Dave McKenna, *Third Floor Richard* (Concord 380) promises to be, at least musically, the least surprising of these albums. It is when only the trio is playing; it is not when McKenna joins the group. (Only prospective purchasers of this album who read the liner notes will realize that McKenna plays on only four of the ten selections.) And the musical surprise is not rewarding: McKenna, one of the least inhibited of pianists, is here inhibited by the quartet. Because the prevailing mood is subdued and the rollicking McKenna is not heard, his solos lack individuality. Many pianists could perform his function here with little decrease in quality. The closest McKenna comes to being himself is on the last piece, *This Can't Be Love*, which is taken at a perky tempo.

Perhaps I make too much of McKenna's presence, although the packaging invites one to do so. This album succeeds much more as a trio performance than as a quartet date. Guitarist Bickert, bassist Neil Swainson, and drummer Terry Clarke form a tight group with wonderful interaction and engaging solos by the leader. Granted, they break no new ground, but they do interpret in a mature, non-frantic manner four standards and six seldom-heard tunes, including Ellington's *Band Call*, Brubeck's *One Moment Worth Years* and the chestnut *Louisiana*. This is, finally, an album of pleasant music.

And so is **Trudy Desmond's** *R.S.V.P.* (Unisson DDD 1010), the first of three CDs under

review. In addition to having an attractive voice and limiting herself to interpreting standards, generally taken at medium tempo and slower, Desmond succeeds in conveying lyrics' meaning because she does not attempt more than she can deliver. Because she possesses neither great range nor always reliable pitch, she restricts herself, successfully, to intimacy. She is, therefore, in the storytelling tradition of Billie Holiday (such others as Sheila Jordan and Sathima Bea Benjamin come immediately to mind) rather than in the bravura tradition of Ella Fitzgerald or Sarah Vaughan.

Desmond also enhances her performances by surrounding herself with sympathetic musicians. Here she uses the Ed Bickert trio (although Bickert himself plays on only seven of

the thirteen tunes), pianist **Don Thompson** (who also wrote the arrangements), and guitarist **Rob Piltch**.

Albums such as *R.S.V.P.* proliferated in the 1950s, but they have seldom been released since. And in this conservatism, Desmond's approach is radical.

In his recording debut, pianist **Charles Mountford** shows himself to be a mainstream swinger on *Good Stuff* (Unisson DDD 1009). Annotator Bill Hemmerick notes Mountford's belief that "jazz should be fun," which this release clearly illustrates. With a program including such tunes as *Blue Lou*, *Red Door*, *Strollin'*, and *Fred*, Mountford, saxophonist **Fraser MacPherson**, guitarist **Oliver Gannon**, bassist **David Young**, and drummer **Barry Elmes** dig in energetically on familiar mate-

rial. They romp. Whether the world needs more music such as this might well be debated, but one can argue for Mountford's version of it by observing that the principal instrumentalists, Mountford and MacPherson, are roughly of the generation that created this type of music originally and therefore are merely playing what is natural to them and are not trying to take music backwards, as is the case with some younger musicians.

Much the same can be said about *Point Counterpoint* (Empathy 1007) by vibraphonist **Warren Chiasson's** duo, the other player being **Chuck Wayne**. But while these players obviously have fun, they possess a seriousness and depth that is absent from Mountford's recording. Aside from an original by each man (Wayne plays solo on his own short *Diane*), the program consists of six standards: *Satin Doll*, *Wave*, *Waltz for Debby* (Chiasson only), *Shiny Stockings*, *My Funny Valentine*, and *All the Things You Are*. Throughout, the engaging interplay between Chiasson and Wayne enhances this familiar material and provides freshness in every instance. (This is especially true on *All the Things You Are*.) And Chiasson's solo performance on *Waltz for Debby* is haunting. My only reservation about this release is extramusical: at less than thirty-nine minutes, the listener feels cheated, not in the quality, certainly, but in the quantity of music.

All of the releases reviewed here offer something worthwhile, although most of them are predictable in their general lack of adventurousness. Of them, **Jon Ballantyne's** *Sky Dance* and **Chiasson and Wayne's** *Point Counterpoint* are most likely to be listened to seriously ten years from now.

*Benjamin Franklin V*

# THE ERROL PARKER EXPERIENCE

*Born Raph Schecroun in Oran, Algeria on October 30, 190, pianist, drummer, composer Errol Parker's musical odyssey began to unfold in the late 1940's when, upon arriving in Paris to study sculpture, he was soon caught up in the jazz life, gigging and recording with such notable musicians as Don Byas, Kenny Clarke, James Moody and Django Reinhardt. Several records as a leader on various labels (an organ date and a series of piano renditions of top 40 tunes) led to a contractual squabble that eventually precipitated the name change from Raph Schecroun to Errol Parker. Shortly after scoring a hit with Lorre, his first disc for Brunswick/Polydor, Parker's involvement in an auto accident resulted in the injury of his right shoulder. Several unsuccessful operations followed and it soon became apparent that he could no longer continue playing the style that had contributed to his popularity; hence a new approach to the piano would have to be worked out. In 1968, Parker moved to New York. Before long he was working at La Boheme, a now defunct club that was situated at 69th & Broadway. This was followed by a couple of weeks at the Top of the Gate; however jazz activity in New York was falling into a slump and Parker supplemented his income with occasional R'n'B gigs. Drawn to the strong rhythmic pulsations of R'n'B and Gospel music, this former percussionist once again shifted his attention to the drums. With the formation of his own record label (Sahara) came the opportunity to document the different phases of his ongoing musical explorations, especially his bi-tonal, polyrhythmic experimentations. After a string of dates ranging from solo piano sessions to small group outings (the Errol Parker Experience), Parker hit the right combination with his most current band, the Tentet.*



When I first came to Paris in 1947 to study sculpture at Ecole des Beaux-Arts, a series of 78 RPM discs came out on the French label, Swing. These discs, recorded a year before in New York under the leadership of Kenny Clarke and with arrangements by Tadd Dameron, had a profound influence on me. First of all, the band was a dream band, with Bud Powell in his prime on piano, Fats Navarro and Kenny Dorham on trumpet, and Sonny Stitt on alto. And then, hearing for the first time a bebop group not featuring Charlie Parker or Dizzy

Gillespie, made me realize how much a common language that new music had become among musicians in New York. Hearing it not as a new style but as a common new language made it more accessible to me and in two months, I had completely absorbed it. This early bebop vocabulary has never left me since and is quite evident in my arranging whenever I wish to break up the monotony of bitonalism by letting chromatic harmony come up to the surface for a few bars.

To come back to those early days, I had intellectually understood the music, but I had nobody to practice it with, so when I found myself in recording situations with Kenny Clarke, James Moody and Django Reinhardt, my chops and my experience were not up to the task, and my contribution to those record dates turned out to be, I think, insignificant. Only when I started to play regularly with Don Byas, that was a few years later, was I able to contribute more substantially to the music. However, I must point out that, due to the lack of rhythm sections, I could never develop musically beyond a certain level during all the years I

spent in Europe. I was like a tree that does not get enough sun or water. My growth was stunted for a while and resumed normally as soon as I hit New York, where the African-American environment stirred up my roots.

I started the piano at age 14, after hearing a Django Reinhardt record, and the drums at age 6. It was not trap drums but African drums, like darbukhas and, on occasion pots and pans, played in sessions with kids my age or older. The sloughi is a dog of the desert, greyhound-like in appearance, yellowish in colour and with a u-shaped, turned-up tail. A local saying goes: "If you put the tail of a sloughi for seven years in a cylinder to straighten it up, when you remove the cylinder after seven years, the tail will go straight back to its initial shape." After several times seven years spent playing piano, I have gone full circle, and I am now playing drums again as my main instrument. I am back, so to speak, to the pots and pans of my childhood in North Africa.

When I went back to playing drums 20 years ago, my aim was to produce on a regular trap set the sound of two drummers

# FROM A CONVERSATION WITH GERARD FUTRICK

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at the same time: one American drummer playing jazz on a trap set, and one African drummer playing African rhythms on African drums. To obtain that sound, each part of the trap set (bass drum, 3 tom-toms, high hat cymbal, ride cymbal and snare drum) had to be played selectively for it to sound like the keys of a keyboard. It was like an alphabet of 7 letters with a practically limitless number of combinations (as an analogy, one may think of the genetic code of 4 letters). But in such a set-up, the snare drum, an artificially amplified instrument, did not match the pure sounds of the other parts. So, at first, I turned the snare drum into a tomtom or a timbale. But soon, I found out that a conga head hit with a stick would give me a more distinctive, high-pitched sound, and that was just what I needed.

I have always tried to play the piano percussively, like a set of drums. In the record reviews of my defunct small group, the Experience, the same words would come back time and again... rhythmic... percussive... As you advance in age and experience, you also learn to know yourself better. At one point, it became very clear to me that, in order to function at 100% of my capabilities, I had to be in total control of the rhythm. That's one of the reasons why the Tentet is such a foolproof group. There is no such thing as a bad performance by the Tentet. I am at the drums and I am in control of the rhythm. As Art Blakey would say, I'm "directing the traffic." The same thing goes for the piano. As a pianist, I am at my best playing solo piano, because I am in constant control of the rhythm. At this moment, playing drums with my bands and playing solo piano on the side are very comfortable situations for me because they are foolproof situations.

Sahara Records (Parker's own record company) have been very effective in getting me recognition from critics all over the place, particularly since the emergence of the Tentet, my best work, which is liked by critics of different persuasions. I think it is a positive step that my best work has been generally perceived as my best work by the intelligentsia. On the other hand, the public at large does not know me. It is due to an insufficient number of public appearances and a poor international record distribution. I have a small number of die-hard fans in some countries where I have never set foot in my life, like Brazil or Poland. But the

press can be very effective, and I appreciate very much the help I am getting from *Coda* magazine as well as from other publications in giving me space for interviews.

Now, in terms of getting me gigs overseas or even in clubs in New York (or elsewhere), my records have not been effective so far. I believe that one single tour in Europe would be sufficient to establish my name once and for all. I have not been able to make that tour yet. At this very moment, I feel that, with the help of my teammates, I am unbeatable, somehow like Mike Tyson in boxing. Since such a situation is not going to last forever, I sincerely deplore that it is not taken advantage of right now, while it exists, by festival promoters. Aside from making life easier for me and my teammates, giving Errol Parker a high visibility in international festivals would give the entire jazz scene a tremendous boost, since we are going through a period notoriously lacking in new jazz originals. But I sincerely hope that, with the help of the press those invisible walls that are denying access to international festivals will fall soon.

The Experience sounded good on records because I played both piano and drums on them. In concert, I played only piano, and the band did not always sound as good as on the records. Sometimes it did and sometimes it did not. In other words it was not a foolproof band. There is a built-in defect in the concept of a band that does not sound quite as good live as on record. To eliminate this defect, I had to stay on drums (a more dominant instrument than the piano in a band) and add a few horns to replace the harmonic output of the piano. This is how the pianoless Tentet was formed. It is interesting to note that, if I had not been a multiple instrumentalist, playing both drums and piano on the records of the Experience, I would not have had a chance to notice the problem, let alone find its solution.

When I formed the Tentet in February 1982, the word got around that the charts were unusual. It may have been an incentive for musicians of all ages and calibers to come and sit in with the band. Most of them could not cut the music and dropped out, but the few who could stayed with the band. This is how, by a simple process of elimination, I got my first nucleus of stars, with Stanton Davis (trumpet), Doug Harris (Sop. sax), Steve Coleman (alto sax), and Rory

Stuart (guitar), who are all featured on the first album of the Tentet. Later on Wallace Roney, Graham Haynes (trumpets), Bill Saxton (tenor sax), Robin Eubanks (trombone) came to join the band. Robin's cousin, David Eubanks, was my star bass player. He died tragically in June, 1986. He is now replaced by Ben Brown. Recently, Steve Coleman has left the group to dedicate himself to his own group, the Five Elements, and has been replaced by 23-year-old "young lion", Vincent Herring. Wallace Roney, Graham Haynes, Doug Harris, Steve Coleman, Bill Saxton, Robin Eubanks and Rory Stuart are all featured on the second album of the Tentet.

I do my own bookings in the US and Canada, but I have a tour manager in Europe. I've had him for about a year. He has not got me anything yet, but I like him. He is very aggressive and he believes in me. He'll succeed eventually.

These days I rarely play with the Tentet, mostly with a septet and even sometimes with a sextet. But it is not a drawback. Keeping the same players in the band over the years has paid off. With their cooperation and with minor changes in the charts, I have been able to play the music of the Tentet with smaller groups without altering the character of the music, and I enjoy it.

In 1984, in order to attract attention, I wrote an autobiographical book. Due to the limitations of the jazz constituency, I could not find a publisher for it. Two years later it dawned on me that as a New Yorker, I would stand a better chance if I took advantage of the film industry that is located here. So, I converted the book into a screenplay. It's a comedy with plenty of the music of the Tentet in it and is entitled *A Flat Tire On My Ass*. I got lots of encouragement from directors Louis Malle, Milos Forman and Shirley Clarke, but for different reasons, none of them could participate in the project. Recently, I have been in contact with a famous French director who seems to be interested and available at the same time. I hope it works this time. If it does, *A Flat Tire On My Ass* will be, to the best of my knowledge, the first jazz film entirely written (screenplay and music) by a jazz musician.

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# "THAT REAL GONE SOUND"

In his definitive book, *Swinging in Paradise: The Story of Jazz In Montreal* (Véhicule Press, Montreal, 1988, \$15.95), John Gilmore assesses the history of Montreal's jazz scene in its social context. For over 25 years, Montreal was a "wide open town;" a Canadian equivalent to such flourishing centres of vice and music as Chicago, Kansas City, New Orleans and New York. Yet unlike these U.S. cities, the Montreal jazz scene cannot be judged from the recordings made there:



**Montreal's legacy of recorded jazz is inconsistent and misleading, and any attempt to allocate places in history on the basis of recorded output would be naive. Some of the city's pivotal musicians and bands were simply never recorded; others were recorded in groupings or under circumstances which did no justice to their skill or reputation. Thus, Montreal's legacy of recordings tell us less about the jazz made in the city than about the values of the society in which it was being made, and about the tastes, ambitions, and prejudices of those who controlled the means of recording.**

That's a sobering indictment of the recording business, and the situation was even worse elsewhere in Canada, as we shall see. The result was that the average Canadian was never exposed to this hot music, either on national radio or on records.

At the height of the Swing Era, the hippest and most popular music of its time among the young, only two "jazz" recording sessions took place in Canada. Both were recorded in Montreal in April 1938, according to Jack Litchfield's *The Canadian Jazz Discography 1916-1980* (University of

Toronto, 1980); both were inconsequential. On April 7 Howard Simpson and His Orchestra recorded Irving Berlin's *Blue Skies* and Simpson's original *Stuff* (Decca 26183). On April 24 the Arthur Williams Swing Trio recorded two swing standards: Dabney-Mack-Brown's *Shine* and Hoagy Carmichael's *Star Dust* (DECCA 26184). Even more extraordinary is the fact that Litchfield only lists five sessions recorded in Canada between 1930-1939 (two of these are private location recordings of Bob Donelle and his Orchestra).

In total only six tunes were recorded at three commercial recording sessions in Montreal during the nineteen-thirties. Apparently no other jazz was recorded commercially elsewhere in Canada during the entire decade. This is evidence of criminal neglect. With today's concern for Canadian culture such neglect appears as monstrously stupid as it is unbelievable. Yet the long term consequences for jazz in Canada were disastrous and led to the retardation of what could and should have been a much more influential cultural force within the mainstream of Canadian life.

Despite the advent of Oscar Peterson (who made his first commercial recording in April 1945) it's difficult to shake the feeling that Canadian music and culture in general continue to suffer from the consequences. The question remains: how on earth could this have happened? Certainly there was no shortage of recordings made during the nineteen-twenties as Litchfield's discography shows. *Swinging In Paradise* gives one unhappy answer.

In his detailed account of the growth of the Canadian record industry, under the initiative of Emile Berliner who invented the gramophone, Gilmore tells how Berliner's oldest son Herbert established an independent record-pressing plant called Compo in the Montreal suburb of Lachine. Herbert had the initiative to expand the family business into the rapidly expanding race market. Yet these recordings were produced for export to the U.S. market (primarily Chicago) and the West Indies. They were never distributed in Canada.

As Gilmore notes, "of all the black musicians recorded in Montreal during the decade," a solo piano record by Millard Thomas "was the only one ever marketed in Canada."

This situation indicates the neglect that's

characteristic of the Canadian jazz scene. According to Litchfield's discography the figures alone are startling.

If we exclude piano rolls and the following exceptions: Dave Caplan's Toronto Band (they cut dozens of sides in Berlin in 1926); Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians (recorded in the U.S.); the New Princes Toronto Band (fourteen sessions in London, England, 1924-26); Andy Tipaldi (ten sessions in Montreal, 1922-24) and the pianists Willie Eckstein, Vera Guilaroff, Harry Thomas and Millard Thomas, Litchfield lists sixteen other sessions by Canadian artists, four recorded outside Canada.

Only five sessions took place in the next decade (two of these are private location recordings.) Thirty-six sessions are listed from the nineteen-forties (six of these are private recordings; one originates from Europe; "one" is drawn from five broadcasts by Mart Kenny's Orchestra in May-June 1946, collected on NOMADIC NR 7502); nine of the sessions (25%) are by Oscar Peterson.

If we ignore Peterson's phenomenal outpouring in the nineteen fifties, the majority recorded in the U.S., Litchfield lists only eleven other record dates for the entire decade. So much for statistics. The truth is that the hottest music never got recorded. Litchfield's discography lists only one record date under the name of the brilliant swing violinist Willy Girard. Girard recorded for the CBC in Montreal on October 5 /1970 (CBC RCI370). The only recordings to feature Girard as a sideman were two sides cut by Wilk Wilkinson and His Bopset in Toronto, circa 1949 (Monogram 156). This might make for the stuff of legend but the loss to Canadian culture is incalculable. It's left to the testimony of musicians like Myron Sutton to recall "that violin player, Willy Girard--he was the only one who was playing any jazz. God, that guy could play! He used to come and sit in with us, and play. Beautiful music!" Girard's career peaked when he joined Louis Metcalf's International Band in 1946. This septet introduced bebop to Canada. They were never recorded. As Gilmore notes, Girard "had been the toast of the inner circle of Montreal's jazz community" for more than a decade: "Now his talents were reaching a wider audience. During his first year with Metcalf, Girard was offered almost certain fame when he was invited to join the bands of both Cab



# THE RELATIVE UNKNOWNNS

This might be as close as I get to launching into some rap about the nature of obscurity. It is an easy slip, faced with reviewing ten recordings by musicians who share little beyond their relative lack of recognition, either on a national or international scale. Good thing I just said no, for the time I spend talking about how innovations move from the unknown (musicians, that is) to the known, how obscurity fuels the creative engines with urgency and fervour, how it underpins the very jazz aesthetic, that's the time I could spend talking about the people who are responsible for the music I write about below. When possible, I've tried to group them in ways that make stylistic sense. But their lack of either national or international renown is easily the aspect they all, in degrees, share. The several months these recordings have suffocated on my review pile have produced only one musician among the lot who achieved any kind of easily identifiable recognition. In the end, only my editors at Coda will be moderately

happy about this, for it is some explanation, however feeble, as to why it has taken so long for me to complete these reviews.

The case of **Christopher Hollyday** still serves as a starting point. Among those below considered here, his star has risen faster and far steeper than any. The European jazz magazines are filled with articles about this wunderkind alto player, who has been gigging professionally since he was 14. At 20, he pulls off some credible interpretations of Monk, Rollins, Parker, Bobby Timmons and Jackie McLean tunes. His

1988 release, *Reverence* (RBIR 402), is powered by a veteran rhythm section: **Cedar Walton, Ron Carter** and **Billy Hig-**



**gins.** The label, RBI, went bankrupt but the strength of *Reverence* landed Hollyday a deal with RCA's **Novus** label (3055-I-N), and the self-titled *Christopher Hollyday* is a quintet effort with **Wallace Roney, David Williams, Walton** and **Higgins.** There is no escaping the issue of race here, for Hollyday is white and handsome as well as young. A friend summed the issue far better than I can. He offered his reaction at the very time I was torturing over how to say this. He glanced at the *Reverence* album cover and said, "Is this guy a poseur or can he play?"

As I told my friend, Hollyday plays sincerely and with an emotional quality far beyond his years. It would be easier to fake it if he did not choose such challenging material. His approach, for the most part, is bop tradition, but in an interview with me before he performed at a festival in Bethlehem, Pa., this past summer, Hollyday spoke of widening his work beyond the bop mainstream of his RBI and Novus releases. There is reason to watch this young man, even if your tastes don't run to more mainstream bop.

Perhaps even more than Hollyday, drummer **Michael Carvin** seems out of place in an article about relative unknowns. He's been "known" since at least 1973, when he joined **Freddy Hubbard's** band; a year later he won the **Downbeat Jazz Critics Poll.** He has over 150 albums to his credit, including two as a leader, so *First Time*, the titles of his **Muse** recording (MR 5352) seems an odd choice. His company here is perhaps better known: **John Stubblefield, Ron** and **Cecil Bridgewater, Claudio Roditi, Frank Lacy, Onaje Allen Gumbs** and **David Williams.** The music is a stylistic mixed bag, from spirited readings of traditional material, like *Caravan* and *Night In Tunisia* to less structured, Max Roach-ish drum conversations with the soloists **Stubblefield, Lace** and **Roditi**, as on **M.R.** I decode the range of styles this way: he's not attempting to ingratiate himself to as wide an audience as possible but rather

## REVIEWS BY TIM BLANGGER

demonstrating his range and energy. Put another way, seldom do recordings that include *Caravan* and *Night In Tunisia* travel as far "out" as Carvin's

Bassist **Mario Pavone** plays a role in two releases from **Alacra Records**. He's a leader on *Sharpeville* (Alacra 1012) and a performer on *Motation: Live At The Hillside* (Alacra 1014). Together, they represent some of the most engaging music I've heard recently. As a bassist/composer/leader, Pavone favours open improvisational structures that float above dense bass figures. *Sharpeville* features **Marty Ehrlich** and **Thomas "Rage" Chapin** (saxes and flutes) and **Pheeroan Ak Laff** (drums). Alto sax player **Mark Whitegaze** and drummer **John Betsch** replace Ehrlich, Chapin and Ak Laff on the title cut. On *Live At the Hillside*, Chapin, **George Sovak** (saxes), **Peter McEachern** (trombone), **Michael Musilami** (guitar) and **Mike Duquette** (drums), join Pavone. *Sharpeville* sounds more arranged than *Live at the Hillside*, although group and individual improvisations carry both recordings.

Both **Donald Brown's Early Bird** (Sunnyside Communications SSC 1025) and **Khan Jamal's Infinity** (Stash ST-278) feature a vibe and a piano at their musical centres. I'm more familiar with Jamal's work, as he is something of a regular on Philadelphia jazz and alternative music stations and occasionally gives free concerts in West and North Philadelphia, two of the city's more neglected neighbourhoods. Even not knowing this, I would say the playing on *Infinity* is stronger, the solo lines more developed, than the playing on *Early Bird*. **Byard Lancaster** (saxes, flutes) and **Bernard Sammul** (piano) contribute some especially strong solos. Sammul and Jamal compliment each other well and avoid the pitfalls of over-performance. Fellow Philadelphian **Sunny Murray** (drums) and **Clifton Burton** (harmonica) add to the title cut. At risk of praising as well as condemning, *Angry Young Man* could be a minor jazz classic with the right distribution.

Some excellent trumpet work characterizes the **Jazz W.O.R.M.S.' Crawling Out** (Van Buren Records JW 6801) and **Bill Carrothers' The Artful Dodger** (self-published, 47020). Like the ROVA Saxophone Quartet, the W.O.R.M.S. take their name from the first initials of the players' last names: **Andy Weyl** (piano), **Keith Oxman**

(saxes), **Paul Romaine** (drums), **Ron Miles** (trumpet) and **Mark Simon** (bass). The music is bop with a modern lilt, and Miles' trumpet is especially distinctive. The group's unison lines are generally effective, although at times the sound texture is thin. I'm not certain if this is because of the playing or the recording. *Muffed*, a Miles composition, is a tongue-in-cheek tune that might be dismissed as a gimmick if not for the way he incorporates his intentionally silly scale playing into the structure of the tune.

A pianist, Carrothers' influences run from Monk to Monk, which would not normally be an indictment if the writing for this sextet resonated with the timing and space of a Monk composition. More often than not, the tunes don't breathe. There is not much to recommend here on this 1987 disc, recorded live-to-tape, beyond two solos by trumpeter **Billy Shiell** on *Waltze for Blaine* and *Dark Flower*.

With everyone from John Zorn to Branford Marsalis performing Ornette Coleman compositions, it is not too surprising that the final two recordings here are influenced in large degrees by Coleman's revolutionary approach to music. Coleman's harmonologies are evident on **The Universal Congress Of's This Is Mecolodis** (SST-204) and **Cruel Frederick's The Birth of the Cruel** (SST-127). Both are released by SST, the California label known for mostly its punk and hardcore.

Congress is slightly more linear than Cruel Fred but both explore the underappreciated and the obscure: *Happy Birthday* and *Moon River*. Albert Ayler and Otis Rush. (You get the idea.) Of the two, Congress is the guitar-driven ensemble: **Joe Baiza** (guitar) and **Steve Moss** (tenor), **Ralph Gorodetsky** (bass) and **Jason Kahn** (drums). For the reed-oriented Cruel Fred, Kahn joins **Lynn Johnston** (alto, tenor, baritone saxes, clarinet, bass clarinet), **Jacob Cohn** (alto) and **Guy Bennett** (bass, trombone). Some of Cruel Fred helps with the more obscure Congress tunes, creating the impression these players know each other well.

I would recommend either of the SST releases, the *Carvin* disc or the *Pavone* efforts without reservation. They are the least commercial and the most creative musics of the bunch. I hope the others share **Holiday's** good luck. And soon.

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# MULGREW MILLER

It was a blustery cold afternoon in November when I arranged to speak with the composer / pianist Mulgrew Miller, in Toronto for a two week run at Café des Copains, a downtown listening room that regularly features musicians from all points on the improvising map, from the strictly straight ahead to the few that defy category, reaching out of the traditional piano lineage to explore the boundaries of creative expression on the instrument. On my way to interview Miller, I thought about the different impressions of this man's work I had been able to experience. Solo the first time, at the same café, Miller shook up the room with rarely-heard standards and a depth of feeling in his playing that was undeniable. More recently, his appearance with the Tony Williams ensemble, performing in the park in front of the St. Lawrence Centre as part of the DuMaurier summer festival one rainy June afternoon, showed another side of the pianist's work. Tony and the band that day were almost overwhelming, presenting a fiercely creative current in this modern music, and the contribution and dedication of Mulgrew Miller is an integral part of that spontaneous explosion in sound.



A calm, friendly person, Miller went out of his way during the interview to acknowledge the many musicians he had worked with, taking pains to really talk about the influence composers and instrumentalists like Tony Williams and the late Woody Shaw had on his development. It would not be out of order to comment that Miller's work also has yet to receive its rightful recognition. Listen to the recent quartet recording, *The Countdown*, with saxophonist Joe Henderson. The music of the ensemble, and Miller's playing in particular, has a timeless quality that grows directly from the blues that surrounded him as a young boy, and also carries the indelible imprint of the time Miller spent as a member of the Ellington Orchestra under the direction of Mercer Ellington. For a different taste, try either his trio recording, *WORK*, with Terri-Lyn Carrington and Buster Williams, or the *Trio Transition*, a Japanese recording with Reggie Workman and the late Frederick Waits.

This interview took place over lunch in the closed upstairs section of the Church Street Café, with the blessings of the café's management who understood our need for privacy and quiet. Merci, gentlemen.

**Coda: How does your work touring as a solo performer affect you? Do you have a particular way of dealing with the need for writing and practice time?**

Miller: That's really hard to deal with. It seems hotels ten or fifteen years ago would have pianos, even if they were old, beat-up things shoved over in the corner of the ballrooms, they were there, you know. It seems now that a lot of hotels don't have pianos any more, because bands that come in will often bring electric keyboards, and again there is the upkeep on a piano to maintain it. Another problem is that a lot of clubs in the past, say ten years ago, you would be booked into for a period of two weeks at a time, so you were stationary for a length of time so you could work something out. Now there are not so many clubs like that happening anymore, it's hard to maintain that kind of consistency, so I travel with a little electric keyboard, a Casio that's much smaller, not for the sake of practising but for composing and for experimenting with different sounds and things.

**What are you writing for now in terms of instrumentation? Is it in the line of the sextet, or for larger, orchestral scores?**

# THE COUNTDOWN

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No, I'm not thinking too much in terms of orchestral composition, except in the sense that the piano is orchestral. I'm not doing any orchestral writing at this point. I'm interested in writing for a small group, the things I'm working on, I don't want to put them in a category, they could be played solo, trio, quartet, quintet. More in the song form. Gradually, I'm becoming more interested in extended pieces, extended form composition, from working with Tony Williams, he composes in that manner, and as well from Benny Golson.

It's interesting to write more than sixteen or twenty-four or thirty-two bars because it gives you a chance to really develop the composition. That's what I've gradually gotten interested in, I'm working my way up to that.

Working with Tony Williams stimulates that. He sets the parameters for what we are doing in the band. The material that we're working on are almost all his compositions, so of course that has a great influence harmonically where the sound is coming from, plus his dominant musical presence behind the drums. That's a real prevalent force, when the drummer is really strong, it makes the band, it gives the music its life.

**Can I ask you about another drummer you have worked with, Art Blakey? Has being in his band brought you up to another level in the music?**

Certainly has, in my musical development. Art is one of the swingiest drummers around, so I didn't find it that great of a transition coming from Art to Tony's band, of course conceptually and harmonically in the compositions, it's a lot different, but the key element is the spirit behind those drums. There's sort of the same spirit there. I believe that Art was one of Tony's first influences, a major influence on Tony's playing so... I sort of hear some of the same spirit there.

**In terms of the way he runs the Messengers, and the way Tony runs his band, and the way you lead your bands, is there also an influence?**

The common idea is that the music has to be well presented, that's what they are most concerned about, they are not dictators. They won't say do this, do that, or play this way or that. They both allow you to develop your own musical personality, but that is subtly guided, in an unconscious way, by the force of what they're doing. There is no

denying the effect that playing with a drummer that's strong or one who swings that powerfully, has over you.

**Can we talk about how you grew up and got involved with creative music? I understand you're from a small community, Greenwood, Mississippi.**

That's right. Basic country boy (*laughs*). I grew in an area, not exactly rural, not back in the sticks or the woods but in an environment where that blended in with the small town life, all that surrounds it is country. I don't know too much about milking cows or gathering hen eggs but it was very much a small town. The attitudes of the people were quite different from the big city. Sometimes I think it's a miracle that I ended up being a jazz musician. The influences there were minimal, there were no record stores where I could go buy jazz records, no jazz clubs and no jazz musicians. No jazz on the radio either, just this kind of easy listening, watered-down stuff, nothing you would think of as modern music. My initial inspiration, I think, came from hearing Oscar Peterson on one of the late night shows when I was about fifteen years old. That's where I heard it. Also I had a brother who had just gotten into the service at that time and he was a great jazz fan. He had a lot of records that he would bring home while he would be transferring from one place to another. He had Coltrane records, Jimmy Smith records, a couple of Oscar Peterson records, you know, a variety of things. That was basically all I had. At the time, I was mostly playing R and B, I had a little trio in high school, we tried to play jazz, we didn't know what we were doing but we loved that sound, not in a very analytical way but just going for it. That was what it was like. It was a barren land in terms of any kind of artistic awareness, cultural artistic awareness, it was not that kind of place. I heard lots of blues, all over, blues in the church music, in the dance music, the blues were everywhere, so that's the overall sound and musical colour that pervades everybody who lives there. The people that were really popular in towns like Greenwood were artists like Little Milton and Albert King, rhythm and blues artists like BB King. That's what small town life was about, of course. I studied piano as a child so I suppose in a very unconscious way there is a classical influence there.

**Was there a certain point when you began to feel that the different music**

**influences in your life could be blended together?**

Not really in a defined musical perspective. It wasn't like I was saying, I know this much about Bach or Debussy or Ravel that I'll put this together with the other music I hear over here, right? I wasn't that smart at that time (to pull it together). When I heard Oscar Peterson, it represented to me the ideal that a person, a black person, could hope for. It had the freedom of the black elements of music such as improvisation but it also had that European technical standard, that refinement and mastery of the instrument. As an ideal then, it came together but not in terms of concrete musical statements. I didn't think about taking something from Duke Ellington and mixing it with something from Beethoven, not at that point. There was just two different ideas, two different concepts, coming together as an ideal situation. The refinement and the artistic finesse and all that on the one hand, and the feeling of the improvisation on the other. At that point, I knew I didn't have to worry about being a Vladimir Horowitz because I really had never appreciated classical music to that extent anyhow, that I would want to do it like that. I do now, though at that time, I didn't. I was a victim of circumstances really, growing up where I did, I only heard R and B, you know, and the church music, it was a rare occasion when I could go and hear someone play a classical recital. So that's the kind of environment we are talking about. It's a small world, that's what I realize when I go back there, the people are only aware of what's going on right around them, in all aspects of life, whether it be religion, or food, anything other than the news, the international news has an influence but otherwise, it's a very closed kind of awareness.

**What was the transition for you to leave that world and enter the larger music world, to study music and eventually work with Mercer Ellington's band?**

Being at Memphis State University. Going to Memphis State was like opening a door to the world because it was from there that I started studying music and started finding out about the world and all the things that were out there that I had had no contact with, the limitless world of music. It was there that I started to meet musicians and make contacts. Through a guy named Bill Easley, a wonderful saxophonist and

## AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVE VICKERY

clarinetist, I met Mercer Ellington. Bill had joined Mercer somewhere around the end of 1974, and he was also living in Memphis at the time. Mercer's band came through Memphis and they needed a saxophone player, and they found Bill, an excellent reader who played tenor and alto, equally proficient on both horns. Also wonderful on the clarinet, the clarinet was his main instrument. So he left town at that point to go out on the road with Mercer. A few months later, they were in need of a piano sub for Lloyd Mayers, who had been playing with the ensemble since Duke's passing. Mercer asked the guys in the band if they knew anybody who could do the job, so Bill recommended me. I went out for one weekend with the band, and then later on, I subbed for him on another weekend. A year and a half later, I joined the band.

The Ellington book is notorious, traditionally famous for being messed up (*laughs*), you know, no piano chart here, no third trombone part for this tune here, so most of the popular tunes, *Satin Doll*, there were no charts for that, you had to know it, all those famous tunes, *In A Mellow Tone*, you just had to know them. For me the most inspiring moments, the revelation part of it, came from playing his extended works. *The Three Black Kings* or *The Liberian Suite*, those were the things that really caught my imagination, it made me realize... it gave me a scope into the mind of a creative genius, once I saw what he was doing with colours and things like that. It let me know that anything was possible. Duke was noted for taking the ridiculous and making it into the truly musical, make it really say something, it wasn't about following the Grove encyclopedia of arranging, there were no rules that were left unbroken in his arranging..

We all are influenced by what has come before, though I think Duke defied all the categories, it was hard to fully comprehend his work, it was almost like an imagination let run wild, if you hear the whole extent of his works for instance, the *Liberian Suite*, written in the late thirties I think, but at that point, he was dealing with modes and things, I can't think of any other like him, Duke was a whole world of music. As a matter of fact, when I get tired of listening to... Art Blakey's music, or Miles Davis quintet, or the recordings of Coltrane's quartet, I know I can find a refuge in the music of Duke Ellington, very refreshing.

**Was there a distinct loss of individuality in the Ellington band after Duke's passing or did it take on a new identity under Mercer's direction?**

When I was in the band, it was a band full of talented yet not very individual young people, and that's to be understood because it's simply a sign of the times, you know. Individuality is not one of the great hallmarks of our time as it was in times gone by. I think that individuality should be fostered at any point in history but we seem to be going through a phase now, the technological era, where there is not much individuality, whether it's in the arts or architecture or technology or whatever.

This is also reflected in the music now. People all produce, or try to, the same tone on their horns, the same touch on the piano, it's just a sign of the times, and so that's

Roney, I'm sort of in tune with all the young guys, what they're doing, most of them... I see that we're all kind of moving along, you know.

**Your own records seem to be moving along in a progression over time as well. They all seem very different from each other.**

There is a difference in the records from the input of the particular performers certainly, but there is also growth from year to year. Those records you mention were all done one year apart (*Key To The City, Work, Trio Transition, The Countdown*). I hope it reveals a certain amount of growth from period to period, or at least change. The chemistry of the ensembles has a lot to do with these changes and growth. Actually I'm very proud of the *Countdown* record that I was able to get all these guys in the



what was happening in that band, all of these great individual players were gone, you know either dead or retired, so it became a band full of young talented people, but it still carried that sound because there were still enough key players in the band who knew about that sound, that had played with Duke Ellington. Of course, in a relative way, there were really some great young players in that band who, as time went by, have matured and become great individual artists. The alto saxophonist, Kenny Garrett, came out of that band. Kenny and I were roommates, and so we talk a lot, and do a lot of playing. Other players of this generation, like James Williams, who is a very good friend of mine, Tony Reedus, Wallace

studio at one time, though people didn't seem to pay it much attention, I think it gets a limited amount of airplay in comparison to the other records. I think just on the strength of the tune, *What The World Needs Now*, Joe Henderson, that's a Grammy performance. It's a tune I had been thinking about for a long time. It had a nice melody and a nice feeling, in three (waltz time) so I had been thinking about it on and off, and the night before we did the record I decided at the last minute, I really wanted to put it on the record. So somebody went out and got sheet music for me, and I wrote the arrangement for it right in the studio. I think it's the best performance on the record, Joe Henderson is incredible on it, he had the right stuff, just

MULGREW MILLER & IRA COLEMAN

the way he played the melody alone was incredible.

**How much of what you record is influenced by the record industry? Are there any young unrecorded players you would be interested in working with, either recording with or producing?**

Well, I can't think of very many of the young players that are on the scene right now that I haven't recorded with. Terence Blanchard, Wallace Roney, Donald Harrison, there are many good people. Actually, there is a strange thing that is going on in the industry right now, they're really in tune with recording young players, and what I find a little disturbing is some of the richest, the treasure, they're being overlooked. People like Junior Cook can't get a record date, there are people like that that I would like to produce a record for. I have a friend, Rudolph Johnson, that I think is a great tenor player, lives in Los Angeles, who has never made a record for a major recording company. I don't know too many people who play tenor this well and he's never had a good record date. Part of it too is that he's never been in New York and never made an impact on the scene, but it would be a shame for this guy to go and leave the planet and not be heard. Another fellow that's never gotten his due, of the younger guys, is Steve Nelson, who plays vibes and he is on another record of mine that you didn't mention, *Wingspan*, that's a significant recording, that date represented another side of me, in a more compositional way, forward-thinking, it was a very interesting band with Kenny Garrett, Steve Nelson, Charnett Moffat, and Tony Reedus, it was different than the other records in that it had tunes with a free harmonic structure, or more free than before. Steve Nelson I think is a major talent that's been grossly overlooked.

**I know that the work of pianists like McCoy Tyner and Herbie Hancock has been an influence for you. Are there particular players in the free music community that influence you, or that you draw strength from?**

Not in direct musical terms, not as a source of ideas directly. For instance, I am very impressed by what Cecil Taylor does, and very affected by what he does, but it's not a thing where I would sit down with one of his records and try to copy what he does, it is the fact that he does it that affected me. I like that, I like space... freedom... as a

matter of fact, I did a record with Reggie Workman, Freddie Waits, who just recently passed, yes, only forty-six, hmmm. yes, and Oliver Lake was on this record too... so we spaced out, took it out, and I feel good with that, I don't mind that at all. It's not something I could do all the time, but I think there's a place for it as musical expression.

**Do you feel compelled by the business to make commercially acceptable "product" or can you more-or-less do as you please? Is there a sense of competitiveness from the business people at the record company?**

Well, we have to remember that the record business is a business. I have a very good relationship with my producer, Orrin Keepnews, I haven't felt the need to test him on what his limits or his scope are in terms of what I could do. Right now, he is pretty much in line with where I'm at and I don't have any problems if I want to play something that I feel strongly about. I think I would in some other situations, but we have a good working relationship.

I've never been a competitive person because in spite of what the beboppers say, I feel that competitiveness stifles creativity. I've never been into headcutting sessions, or who's got the hottest record, or who plays the most, etc., I've never been into that.

**We were talking earlier about Freddie Waits' passing and it got me thinking about the many great players that we have been losing lately. Could we talk about your association with Woody Shaw?**

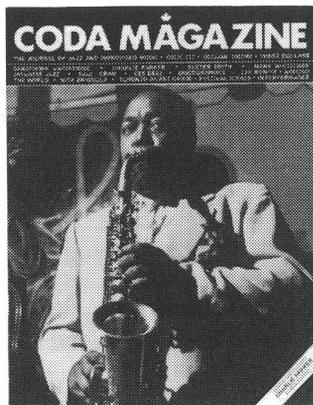
Woody has been a tremendous influence, a very, very great loss, not only a personal and artistic loss to me but also to the whole jazz community. Woody's life, as you know, had a tragic turn, very unfortunate, but more important than that, he gave something really personal and unique to the world. He's certainly left his mark. I consider it a great and rare privilege to have been around someone with that kind of artistic integrity, someone who was that deeply involved in the music. Being around Tony is the same way, people who love music passionately, Woody was that kind of a person. It's like they live for music. If you want to start a fight with one of these people, you do something wrong with the music, you insult the integrity of the music, that's when you're going to see these guys get upset. That's the kind of commitment that these guys have to

the music. The saltiest statements I ever heard from Woody Shaw or Tony Williams was in response to someone's musical reactions, or to the way someone played a particular piece. It's really something to see someone intensely involved that way. I would see Woody on long transatlantic flights to Europe, everybody else would be sleeping and I'd see Woody sitting, just fingering in the air, no trumpet, you know, kinesiology, that's what kind of involvement I'm talking about. We'd be sitting in a restaurant like this, and be hearing all kinds of classical themes coming over the P.A., he'd be able to identify each one. He'd lean over to me and say, 'Mulgrew, check out this record, listen to what happens here, ohhh... how'd you like that?' so... and Tony is the same way, very, very deeply involved with the music. I think a lot of people don't know that about Tony because he seems to be seen as a... I don't know... as a prima donna or something. Tony is not that way at all. He is that way only because he believes that a person of his stature, an artist, should be treated with respect. And sometimes it's hard to get that. The way the world sees artists is often that way, but Tony is to my way of thinking, an absolute genius. I'm more convinced of it now than ever. If the term could be applied to anyone that is alive right now, I think it's him, not that he would be the only one, but I think that Tony Williams is certainly a genius. Anyone who can put together a concept the way he has, and think and hear music the way he does, man, that's really rare... I'd like to really say that because a lot of people are asleep on it, the way this man has put drums together is so unique, yet he has borrowed from the whole tradition of set drumming, trap drumming, with it he has come up with something that is both very unique and intelligent. Sophisticated.

**Is there an incompatibility in the record industry and perhaps the casual listeners to the subtlety of that kind of genius?**

(pause) Perhaps. A person like Tony Williams, it's hard to fully capture that kind of genius, that level of involvement, on records even though it has been captured in the past. I mean, you hear it on *Spring*, you even heard on *Four and More*, as Miles said in that new book, there's nothing like Tony Williams before or after, and that might have seemed a little braggadocious of Miles,

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but it's an absolute truth. Tony's thing is so far ahead, it's so deep. He is an individual. This is not to downgrade any of the other drummers that have come after him, because I admire all those guys, all the "cats," if you will, but after playing with him, it's hard for a drummer to gain my interest, except for the other great drummers, people like Max Roach, Art Blakey, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones on record, those kind of people, players with creativity and intelligence. There is so much that I'm still trying to learn, there are things that I'm dealing with now that are related to music but that are non-musical, in terms of personal development, as to where I want to be. I have to assess a lot of things, I've been going through this sort of transition period for the last year or so, reevaluating where I'm at, where I want to be in relation to everything else that is going on, the influence of the environment as it exists now. I have to take charge and do things the way I really think they should be done, as opposed to what's hip and what's happening.

### What was your reaction to the new interest in Monk after the film that came out recently? Did it do him justice?

I don't think that any film could do an artist of that magnitude any justice. The only justice we could do Monk at this point is to hear his music. I don't think that filming him doing certain things at certain part of the day, it can be revealing but... I don't think they've even now accurately determined whether Monk was sick, or was he a little bit off, or whether was he in fact very deliberate. We do know that he was very intelligent. I don't know, I would need to see it again but I think there's a lesson in Monk for all of us; a man who did things his way. I think it defeats the purpose for any of us to think that we are being unique by imitating him, and we all do that. To play Monk's music, you're so used to a certain sound, you just go for that sound, but in order for us to be more artistically valid, we have to learn not so much from what he was doing but more from the fact that he did it. That's the same with any great artist, it's not so important that they played this on a record and we hear it and attempt to copy it, the important fact is that they did it and if we could ever tap into what it is that allowed them to do what they did, I think that there would be more individuals out here.

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| 207     | (April 1986) | Kenny Wheeler, Wild Bill Davidson, Bill Dixon, Wynton Marsalis  |
| 206     | (Feb. 1986)  | Charles Mingus, Candid, Jimmy Blanton, David Holland, Peter Kowald  |
| 205     | (Dec. 1985)  | Big Bands, Gil Evans, Dick Johnson, Artie Shaw, Thad Jones, Basie, Duke   |
| 204     | (Oct. 1985)  | Tenor saxophone, Coleman Hawkins, Sahib Shihab, Sonny Rollins   |
| 203     | (Aug. 1985)  | The Jazz Singer, BB King, Eddie Jefferson, Richie Coles, Jimmy Rushing  |
| 202     | (June 1985)  | Alto saxophone, Art Pepper, Johnny Hodges, Carlos Ward, Braxton   |
| 200     | (Feb. 1985)  | Bill Evans, Kenny Drew, Kirk Lightsey, Joanne Brackeen  |
| 199     | (Dec. 1984)  | Lester Young, Jazz Aesthetics, Andrew Cyrille, Vienna Art Orchestra   |
| 198     | (Oct. 1984)  | Bud Powell, Sidney Bechet, Barre Phillips, Bob Mover, Jazz Literature   |
| 197     | (Aug. 1984)  | Low Tabackin, Steve Lacy, Fred Anderson, Bebop on Record  |
| 196     | (June 1984)  | Jazz in Russia, Fred Hopkins, JATP, Ronald Shannon Jackson, Barry Harris  |
| 195     | (April 1984) | Buddy Tate, Jay McShann, Billy Eckstine, Nelson Symonds, Mel Lewis  |
| 192     | (Oct. 1983)  | Leo Smith, Baikida Carroll, Mal Waldron, Piano Variations, Festivals  |
| 190     | (June 1983)  | Don Thompson, Tristan Hopsinger, Mario Pavone, Al Haig  |
| 189     | (April 1983) | Lol Coxhill, George Shearing, John Surman, Jim Galloway   |
| 188     | (Feb. 1983)  | Roy Porter, Buell Neidlinger, 1982 Writers' Choice  |
| 187     | (Dec. 1982)  | Charlie Rouse, Frank Rosolino, Blues News, Fraser MacPherson  |
| 186     | (Oct. 1982)  | Cannonball Adderley, Pheeroan Ak Laff, Michael Zwerin   |
| 185     | (Aug. 1982)  | Sam Rivers, Bobby Naughton, Trevor Watts, Roscoe Mitchell   |
| 184     | (June 1982)  | Sonny Greenwich, Ray Crawford, Ganelin Trio, Ed Bickert   |
| 183     | (April 1982) | Roswell Rudd, Milford Graves, Art Davis, Sonny Rollins on RCA   |
| 180     | (Oct. 1981)  | McCoy Tyner, Joe Sealy, Loek Dikker, Fred van Hove  |
| 179     | (June 1981)  | Dannie Richmond, Jimmy Knepper, Blues News  |
| 174     | (Aug. 1980)  | Leroy Jenkins, Jemeel Moondoc, Eddie Jefferson, Charles Brackeen  |
| 170     | (Dec. 1979)  | Abbey Lincoln, Olu Dara   |
| 169     | (Oct. 1979)  | Amina Claudine Myers, Kenny Burrell, Pisa & Bracknell Festivals   |
| 168     | (Aug. 1979)  | Albert Mangelsdorff, Barry Altschul, Blues News, Moers Festival   |
| 167     | (June 1979)  | Evan Parker, Incus Records, Red Callender, Bill Russell, Rova Sax Quartet   |
| 164/165 | (Feb 1979)   | SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE COUNTS AS TWO: Jeanne Lee, Gunter Hampel, Lester Bowie, Hank Jones, Vinny Golia, Nick Brignola |
| 163     | (Oct. 1979)  | Henry Red Allen, Frank Lowe, Albert Nicholas  |
| 159     | (Feb. 1978)  | Randy Weston, Milt Hinton, Blues News   |
| 158     | (Dec. 1977)  | Joseph Jarman, Eddie Durham, Bobby Hackett  |
| 157     | (Oct. 1977)  | Bobby Bradford, John Carter, Chet Baker, Butch Morris   |
| 155     | (June 1977)  | George Lewis, Lloyd Glenn   |
| 154     | (April 1977) | Milt Buckner, Christmann, Schonenberg   |
| 151     | (Oct. 1976)  | Don Pullen, Benny Waters  |
| 150     | (Sept. 1976) | Milford Graves, Will Bradley  |
| 134     | (Dec. 1974)  | Charles Delaunay, pt. 1, Rex Stewart, Howard King   |
| 132     | (Oct. 1974)  | Karl Berger, Jazz Crossword, Johnny Shines  |

# SACKVILLE RECORDINGS

## TRADITIONAL JAZZ AND SWING

### RUBY BRAFF

*With the Ed Bickert Trio Sackville LP 3022*  
Ruby Braff (cornet), Ed Bickert (guitar), Don Thompson (bass), Terry Clarke (drums)  
*True Love, I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling, This Year's Kisses, The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise, The Very Thought Of You, After A While, What Is There To Say, My Funny Valentine, The Song Is Ended, When I Fall In Love*

### DOC CHEATHAM

*and Sammy Price Sackville LP 3013*  
Doc Cheatham (trumpet), Sammy Price (piano)  
*Honeysuckle Rose, Doc and Sam's Blues, Summertime, Tishomingo Blues, Sheik of Araby, I Can't Give You Anything But Love, You Can Depend On Me, Ain't Misbehavin', Dear Old Southland*

### Black Beauty

*Sackville LP 3029, C1-3029 cassette*

Doc Cheatham (trumpet), Sammy Price (piano)  
*Travelin' All Alone, Some Of These Days, Love Will Find A Way, After You've Gone, Someday You'll Be Sorry, Old Fashioned Love, I'm Coming Virginia, Squeeze Me, Memphis Blues, I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling, Louisiana*

### WILD BILL DAVISON

*The Jazz Giants Sackville LP 3002*  
Wild Bill Davison (cornet), Herb Hall (clarinet), Benny Morton (trombone), Claude Hopkins (piano), Arvell Shaw (bass), Buzzy Drootin (drums)  
*Struttin' With Some Barbecue, Dardanella, Black And Blue, I Would Do Anything For You, I Found A New Baby, Blue Again, I Surrender Dear, Yesterdays, Them There Eyes*

### VIC DICKENSON

*Just Friends Sackville LP 2015, C1-2015 cassette*

Vic Dickenson (trombone), Red Richards (piano), John Williams (bass)  
*On A Clear Day You Can See Forever, What A Wonderful World, How Many Times?, Once and Once Only, If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight, Running Wild, Taking A Chance On Love, Memories Of You, Sweet Sue, Bye Bye Pretty Baby, Here Lies Love, Me And My Shadow*

### DON EWELL

*see Willie The Lion Smith*

### JIM GALLOWAY

*Three Is Company Sackville LP 2007*  
Jim Galloway (soprano sax/clarinet), Dick Wellstood (piano), Pete Magadini (drums)  
*Minor Drag, Lulu's Back In Town, Broken Windmill, Sunday Morning, Blues Alley Bump, After You've Gone, Buddy Bolden's Blues, I'd Climb The Highest Mountain, Let's Get Away From It All, Everything I've Got*

### The Metro Stompers Sackville LP 4002

Ken Dean (cornet), Jim Galloway (soprano sax/tenor sax), Peter Sagermann (trombone), Ron Sorley (piano), Dan Mastri (bass), Russ Fearon (drums)  
*Going Going Gone, The Mooche, I Surrender Dear, Doodle Doo Doo, Weary Blues, Azure, Memphis Blues, Blue Turning Grey Over You, Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives To Me*

### Thou Swell Sackville LP 4011

Jim Galloway (soprano sax), Jay McShann (piano), Don Thompson (bass), Terry Clarke (drums)  
*Thou Swell, Someone To Watch Over Me, Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams, Black Butterfly, Sweet Sue, I've Got The World On A String, Just A Gigolo, Humoresque, I Only Have Eyes For You*

*see also: Humphrey Lyttelton (3033), Jay McShann (3035), The Sackville All Stars (3028, 3038, 3042)*

### ART HODES

*South Side Memories Sackville LP 3032*  
Art Hodes (piano)

*South Side Memories, Melancholy, Savoy Blues, London Blues, Cakewalkin' Babies From Home, Mamie's Blues, Willie The Weeper, The Pearls, I Know That You Know, Blues Keep Callin', It's A Happening*

*Blues In The Night Sackville LP 3039, C1-3039 cassette*

*Blues In The Night, Pennies From Heaven, Morning Comes Morning Goes, Lazybones, Snowball, Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone, A Ghost Of A Chance, Summertime*

### HUMPHREY LYTTTELTON

*In Canada Sackville LP 3033*

Humphrey Lyttelton (trumpet/clarinet), Jim Galloway (soprano/baritone sax/clarinet), Ed Bickert (guitar), Don Thompson (bass), Terry Clarke (drums)

*It's A Thing, Spraucy, Squiggles, Looking For Turner, Rain, Lady Jekyll and Mistress Hyde, Leisure Palace, Caribana Queen*

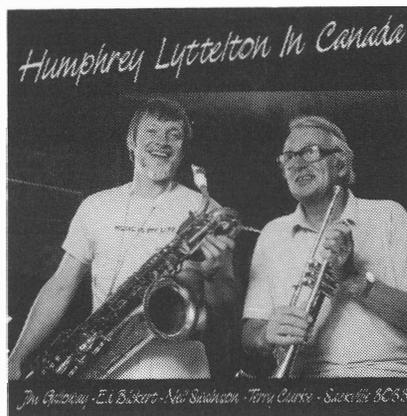
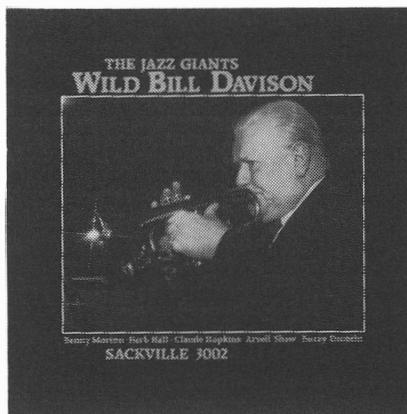
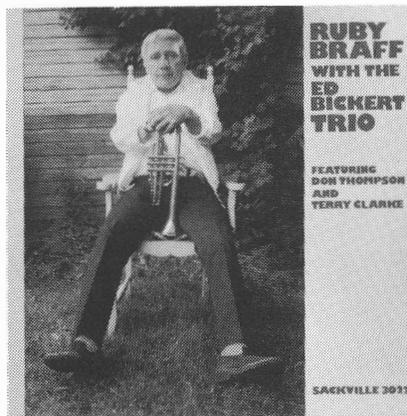
### FRASER MACPHERSON

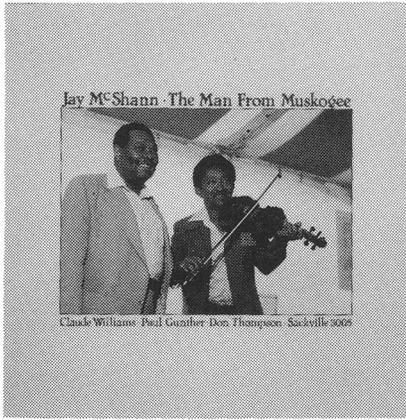
*I Didn't Know About You Sackville LP 4009*

Fraser MacPherson (tenor saxophone), Oliver Gannon (guitar)

*This Heart Of Mine, Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me, Everything Happens To Me, All By Myself, The More I See You/Mean To Me, I Didn't Know About You, Day By Day, A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square, You Go To My Head, In A Mellotone*

*see also: Charlie Mountford (Unisson 1009)*





**JAY MCSHANN**

*The Man From Muskogee* Sackville LP 3005  
Jay McShann (piano, vocals), Claude Williams (violin, guitar), Don Thompson (bass), Paul Gunther (drums)  
*After You've Gone, 'Fore Day Rider, Yardbird Suite, I'll Catch The Sun, Things Ain't What They Used To Be, Smooth Sailing, Mary Ann, These Foolish Things, Hootie Blues, Nancy Boogie, Jumpin' At The Woodside*

*Crazy Legs And Friday Strut* / Sackville LP 3011  
Jay McShann (piano), Buddy Tate (tenor sax)  
*My Melancholy Baby, Say It Isn't So, Shaky George, It Must Be True, Ellington Medley (I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good / In A Sentimental Mood / Sophisticated Lady), Crazy Legs And Friday Strut, If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight, Rock A Bye Basie*

*A Tribute To Fats Waller* Sackville LP 3019  
Jay McShann (piano)  
*Honeysuckle Rose, Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now, Then I'll Be Tired Of You, Ain't Misbehavin', All My Life, I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter, I Ain't Got Nobody, Squeeze Me, Lulu's Back In Town*

*Kansas City Hustle* Sackville LP 3021  
Jay McShann (piano)  
*Round Midnight, Since I Lost My Baby I Almost Lost My Mind, Kansas City Hustle, Willow Weep For Me, Blue Turbulence, Don't Get Around Much Anymore, Baby Won't You Please Come Home, Rockin' Chair, My Sweet Mama*

*Tuxedo Junction* Sackville LP 3025  
Jay McShann (piano), Don Thompson (bass)  
*Tuxedo Junction, One Sided Love, Robbins Nest, Froggy Bottom, Gee Baby Ain't I Good To You, Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me, Barrelhouse Boogie*

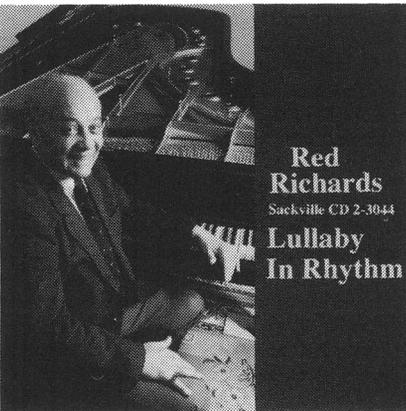
*Just A Lucky So And So* Sackville LP 3035  
Jay McShann (piano, vocals), Jim Galloway (soprano, baritone sax), Don Thompson (bass), Terry Clarke (drums)  
*When I Grow Too Old To Dream, Georgia On My Mind, Red Sails In The Sunset, On A Clear Day You Can See Forever, Lazy River, Once Upon A Time, I'm Just A Lucky So And So*

*Airmail Special* Sackville LP 3040,  
C1-3040 cassette, C2-3040 CD  
Jay McShann (piano), Neil Swainson (bass), Terry Clark (drums)  
*Airmail Special, Drop Me Off In Harlem, Blue And Sentimental, Swingin' The Blues, That Lucky Old Sun, Blue Lou, Tenderly, Jumpin' The Blues (plus on CD only: Rockin' In Rhythm, Rose Room)*

see also: *Jim Galloway (4011), The Sackville All Stars (3028)*

**SAMMY PRICE**  
*Sweet Substitute* Sackville LP 3024  
Sammy Price (piano)  
*It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing), A Hundred Years From Today, Toronto At Midnight, Am I Blue, Aunt Hagar's Blues, Don't Blame Me, Sweet Substitute, My Lonesome Heart, Snowy Morning Blues, Memories Of You / As Time Goes By / Misty, Stormy Weather, McClear Place Boogie*

see also: *Doc Cheatham (3013, 3029)*



**RED RICHARDS**

*I'm Shooting High* Sackville C1-2017  
cassette only  
Red Richards (piano/vocal), George Kelly (tenor sax/vocal), Johnny Letman (trumpet/vocal), Leonard Gaskin (bass), Ronnie Cole (drums)  
*Nassau Swings, Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans, Swing That Music, Slightly Blue, All Of Me, Mahogany Hall Stomp, Thanks A Million, Violets And Violins, When It's Sleepy Time Down South, I'm Shooting High, I'm Confessin'*

*Lullaby In Rhythm* Sackville C2-3044 CD  
C1-3044 cassette  
Red Richards (piano)  
*If Dreams Come True, Some Other Spring, Dream Of You, God Bless The Child, Lullaby In Rhythm, Hot Toddy, Little Things That Mean So Much, Blue Turning Grey Over You, Ill Wind, It Could Happen To You*

see also: *Vic Dickenson (2015)*

**THE SACKVILLE ALL STARS**  
*Saturday Night Function* Sackville LP 3028,  
C1-3028 cassette

Buddy Tate (tenor sax/clarinet), Jim Galloway (soprano/tenor/baritone sax), Jay McShann (piano), Don Thompson (bass), Terry Clarke (drums)  
*John Hardy's Wife, Trouble In Mind, Jive At Five, Russian Lullaby, Good Queen Bess, Arkansas Blues, Saturday Night Function, Rosalie*

*The Sackville All Star Christmas Record*  
Sackville C2-3038 CD  
C1-3038 cassette

Jim Galloway (soprano sax), Ralph Sutton (piano), Milt Hinton (bass), Gus Johnson (drums)  
*Santa Claus Is Coming To Town, We Three Kings, At The Christmas Ball, Winter Wonderland, Good King Wenceslas, Santa Claus Came In The Spring, Silent Night, Let It Snow, Old Time Religion, Go Tell It On The Mountain*

*A Tribute To Louis Armstrong*  
Sackville C2-3042 CD  
LP 3042, C1-3042 Cassette

Jim Galloway (soprano/baritone sax), Ralph Sutton (piano), Milt Hinton (bass), Gus Johnson (drums)  
*Song Of The Islands, You Rascal You, Save It Pretty Mama, On The Sunny Side Of The Street, Willie The Weeper, A Kiss To Build A dream On, Big Butter And Egg Man, Pennies From Heaven, Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now (plus on CD only: I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues, Sweethearts On Parade)*

**WILLIE THE LION SMITH**  
*Grand Piano* Sackville LP 2004  
Willie The Lion Smith (piano), Don Ewell (piano)

*I've Found A New Baby, A Porter's Love Song To A Chambermaid, I Would Do Anything For You, Some Of These Days, Just You Just Me, Everybody Loves My Baby, Can't We Be Friends, You Took Advantage Of Me, Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now, Sweet Georgia Brown*

**RALPH SUTTON**

*Piano Solos* Sackville LP 2012  
 Medley ('Round The Old Deserted Farm/  
 Cottage For Sale/'Tain't So Honey Tain't So),  
 Echoes Of Spring, Morning Air, Eye Opener, In  
 The Dark, Honky Tonk Train Blues, My Fate Is  
 In Your Hands, Viper's Drag, Love Lies

see also: *The Sackville All Stars* (3038, 3042)

**BUDDY TATE**

*Sherman Shuffle* Sackville LP 3017  
 Buddy Tate, (tenor/baritone sax, clarinet), Bob  
 Wilber (soprano/alto sax, clarinet), Sam Jones  
 (bass), Leroy Williams (drums)  
*Curtains Of The Night, Back In Your Own Back  
 Yard, Have You Met Miss Jones, Sherman  
 Shuffle, The Best Things In Life Are Free,  
 Ballad Medley (Lover Man, Body And Soul,  
 Warm Valley)*

*The Buddy Tate Quartet*

Sackville LP 3027

Buddy Tate (tenor sax/clarinet), Wray Downes  
 (piano), Dave Young (bass), Pete Magadini  
 (drums)  
*June Night, If You Could See Me  
 Now, Someday Sweetheart, Bye Bye Blackbird,  
 Georgia On My Mind, Alone Together, I'll  
 Remember April*

*The Ballad Artistry*

Sackville C1-3034  
 cassette only

**MODERN / BEBOP / BIG BAND****ED BICKERT**

*Duets* Sackville LP 4005  
 Ed Bickert (guitar), Don Thompson (bass)  
*Alone Together, A Face Like Yours, You Are  
 Too Beautiful, What Is This Thing Called Love,  
 Who Can I Turn To, Walkin' My Baby Back  
 Home, Please Be Kind*

*Dance To The Lady* Sackville LP 4010  
 Ed Bickert (guitar), Don Thompson (piano)  
*Bluesette, Ruby My Dear, Solar, Dance To The  
 Lady, Take Five, Blue Monk*

see also: *Ruby Braff* (3022), *Trudy Desmond*  
 (Unisson 1010), *Wray Downes* (4003), *Lorne  
 Lofsky* (Unisson 1002), *Humphrey Lyttelton*  
 (3033), *Rob McConnell* (Unisson 1001), *Frank  
 Rosolino* (2014), *Buddy Tate* (3034)

**WRAY DOWNES**

*Au Privave* Sackville LP 4003  
 Wray Downes (piano), Dave Young (bass), Ed  
 Bickert (guitar)\*  
*Anthropology, My Romance, I'm Hip, Portrait  
 Of Jennie, Sweet Georgia Brown, Au Privave,\*  
 Spanish Fandango,\* Yours Is My Heart Alone,\*  
 Falling In Love With Love\**

see also: *Pete Magadini* (4004), *Buddy Tate*  
 (3027)

**BILL HOLMAN**

*The Fabulous* Sackville LP 2013  
 Bill Holman (arranger / composer / tenor sax),  
 Al Porcino, Ray Linn, Conte Candoll, Stu Wil-  
 liamson (trumpets), Bob Fitzpatrick, Ray Sims,  
 Lew McCreary (trombones), Charlie Mariano,  
 Herb Geller (alto sax), Charlie Kennedy,  
 Richie Kamuca (tenor sax), Steve Perlow

Buddy Tate (tenor sax/clarinet), Ed Bickert (gui-  
 tar), Don Thompson (bass), Terry Clarke (drums)  
*If We Never Meet Again, Yesterdays, A Foggy  
 Day, Darn That Dream, Isfahan, Cry Me A River,  
 BT Blues*

see also: *The Sackville All Stars* (3028)

**SIR CHARLES THOMPSON**

*Portrait Of A Piano* Sackville LP 3037,  
 C1-3037 cassette

Sir Charles Thompson (piano)  
*Easy living, Robbins Nest, Memories Of You,  
 Ain't Misbehavin', 'Round Midnight, Happy  
 Boogie, Portrait Of A Piano, You Go To My  
 Head, Spring Can Really Hang You Up The  
 Most, All The Things You Are, Samo Blues*

**BOB WILBER**

see: *Buddy Tate* (3017)

**TEDDY WILSON**

*In Tokyo* Sackville LP 2005  
 Teddy Wilson (piano)  
*I Get A Kick Out Of You, Sweet Lorraine, Wrap  
 Your Troubles In Dreams, My Ideal, On The  
 Sunny Side Of The Street, Body And Soul, I  
 Cried For You, Smoke Gets In Your Eyes, I'm  
 Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A  
 Letter, Summertime, Runnin' Wild, She's  
 Funny That Way, I've Got The World On A  
 String, I Surrender Dear*

(baritone sax), Lou Levy (piano), Max Bennett  
 (bass), Mel Lewis (drums)

*Airegin, Evil Eyes, You And I, Bright Eyes,  
 Come Rain Or Come Shine, The Big Street*

**HAROLD MABERN**

*Joy Spring* Sackville LP 2016,  
 C1-2016 cassette

Harold Mabern (piano)  
*I've Got The World On A String, Blues In F/T-  
 Bone Steak, House of Jade, Joy Spring, Dat  
 Dere, Pent Up House, Thou Swell, Mabern's  
 Boogie*

**PETE MAGADINI**

*Bones Blues* Sackville C2-4004 CD  
 C1-4004 cassette

Pete Magadini (drums), Don Menza (tenor sax),  
 Wray Downes (piano), Dave Young (bass)  
*I Remember Clifford, Solar, What A Time We  
 Had, Old Devil Moon, Bones Blues, Poor But-  
 terfly, Freddie Freeloader (two versions)*

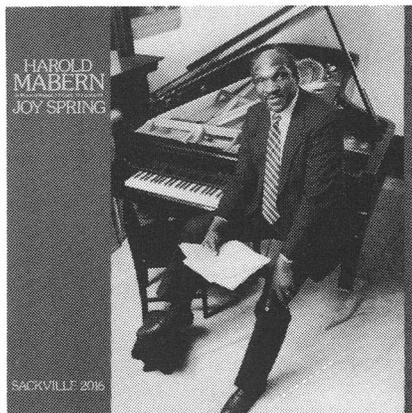
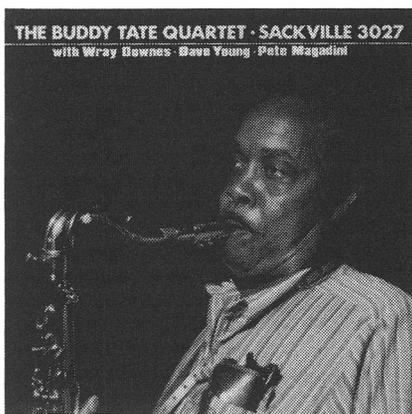
see also: *Joe Sealy* (4007), *Buddy Tate* (3027)

**JUNIOR MANCE**

*For Dancers Only* Sackville LP 3031  
 Junior Mance (piano), Martin Rivera (bass)  
*Harlem Lullaby, Girl Of My Dreams, Prelude  
 To A Kiss, Come On Home, For Dancers Only,  
 Run 'Em Round, Summertime*

*Junior Mance Special*  
 Sackville C2-3043 CD  
 C1-3043 cassette

Junior Mance (piano)  
*Yancey Special, Careless Love, If You Could  
 See Me Now, Since I Lost My Baby, I Got It*



*Bad And That Ain't Good, In A Sentimental Mood, Blue Monk, Whisper Not, Flat On Your Back*

DON MENZA

See: *Pete Magadini*

PHIL NIMMONS

*The Atlantic Suite Sackville LP 2008*  
Phil Nimmons (composer / arranger / clarinet), Darryl Eaton, Herbie Spanier, Bram Smith, Mike Malone (trumpets), Dave McMurdo, Rick Stepton, Terry Lukiwiski, John Capon (trombones), Keith Jollimore (alto sax), Art Ellefson (tenor sax), Tony Toth (baritone sax), Tom Szezeniak (piano), Andy Krehm (guitar), Dave Field (bass), Stan Perry (drums)

## CONTEMPORARY AND AVANT GARDE

DOLLAR BRAND (ABDULLAH IBRAHIM)

*Sangoma Sackville LP 3006*  
Dollar Brand (piano)  
*The Aloe And The Wild Rose (The Aloe And The Wild Rose / South Easter / Sadness), Fats Duke And The Monk (Single Petal Of A Rose, Ode To Duke, Honeysuckle Rose, Think Of One, Monk From Harlem, Mumsy Weh), Ancient Africa (Water's Edge, Bertha In Turquoise, Krotoa)*

*African Portraits Sackville LP 3009*

Dollar Brand (piano)  
*Cherry/Bra Joe From Kilimanjaro, Blues For Hughie, Kippie, Gafsa, Life Is For The Living Death Is For Us All, Gwangwa, Little Boy, Easter Joy, Jabulai, Xaba*

ANTHONY BRAXTON

*Trio and Duet Sackville LP 3007*  
Anthony Braxton (clarinet, contrabass clarinet, chimes, bass drum), Leo Smith (trumpet, flugelhorn, pocket trumpet, percussion, small instruments), Richard Teitelbaum (moog synthesizer, percussion)  
*HM - 421 - 47 (RTS)*  
Anthony Braxton (alto sax), David Holland (bass)  
*The Song Is You, Embraceable You, You Go To My Head*

ANTHONY DAVIS

*Of Blues And Dreams Sackville LP 3020*  
Anthony Davis (piano), Leroy Jenkins (violin), Abdul Wadud (cello), Pheeroan Ak Laff (drums)  
*Of Blues And Dreams, Lethe, Graef, Madame Xola, Estraven*

OLIVER LAKE / JULIUS HEMPHILL

*Buster Bee Sackville LP 3018*  
Julius Hemphill (alto/soprano sax, flute), Oliver Lake (alto/soprano sax, flute)  
*Buster Bee, Vator, Fertility, 'S', A Stand, Flesh Turns Chi*

## CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN MUSIC ON ONARI RECORDINGS

002 - STUART BROOMER / BILL SMITH  
Piano & Soprano duets

003 - MAURY COLES  
*The Solo Saxophone Record*

004 - BILL SMITH  
*Pick A Number* with David Prentice, David Lee

*The Atlantic Suite (Harbours, Islands, Tides, Horizons), The Dorian Way*

FRANK ROSOLINO

*Thinking About You Sackville LP 2014*  
Frank Rosolino (trombone), Ed Bickert (guitar), Don Thompson (bass), Terry Clarke (drums)  
*Sweet And Lovely, Who Can I Turn To, Round Midnight, I Thought About You*

JOE SEALY

*Clear Vision Sackville LP 4007*  
Joe Sealy (piano), Dave Young (bass), Pete Magadini (drums)  
*Summertime, All Blues, Clear Vision, What Is This Thing Called Love, We'll Be Together Again, Playa Caliente, Star Eyes, It's All Right With Me*

DON PULLEN

*Solo Piano Album Sackville LP 3008*  
Don Pullen (piano)  
*Richard's Tune, Suite (Sweet), Malcolm, Big Alice, Song Played Backwards*

JOE MCPHEE

*Visitation Sackville LP 3036*  
Joe McPhee (flugelhorn, pocket trumpet, tenor/soprano sax), Bill Smith (soprano/sopranino/alto sax), David Prentice (violin), David Lee (bass), Richard Bannard (drums)  
*Exuma, Eleuthera, Home At Last, Ghosts, If I Don't Fall, A-Configuration*

ARCHIE SHEPP

*I Know About The Life Sackville LP 3026*  
Archie Shepp (tenor sax), Ken Werner (piano), Santi Debriano (bass), John Betsch (drums)  
*I Know About The Life, Giant Steps, Round Midnight, Well You Needn't*

THE SIX WINDS

*Elephants Can Dance Sackville LP 3041*  
Ad Peijenburg (baritone sax), Frans Veermerssen (alto sax), Bill Smith (sopranino sax), Dies Le Duc (soprano sax), John Tchicai (tenor sax), Klaas Hekman (bass sax)  
*Monk's Mood, Elephants Can Dance, Pachanga No 7, Tickle Yer Fancy, Drum Drie, The Undressing, The Teacher And The Creature*

LEO SMITH

*Rastafari Sackville LP 3030*  
Leo Smith (trumpet, flugelhorn, percussion, harmonica), David Prentice (violin), Bill Smith (soprano/sopranino sax, alto clarinet), David Lee (bass, cello), Larry Potter (vibraphone)

*Rastafari, Rituals, Madder Lake, Little Bits*

## COMPACT DISC CATALOG

C2-3038 CD - *The Sackville All Star Christmas Record*  
C2-3040 CD - Jay McShann - *Airmail Special*  
C2-3042 CD - The Sackville All Stars - *A Tribute to Louis Armstrong*  
C2-3043 CD - *The Junior Mance Special*  
C2-3044 CD - Red Richards - *Lullaby In Rhythm*  
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# HUGH FRASER \* MADE IN CANADA

If there was an award for hardest working musician on the Canadian jazz scene, I'm pretty sure it would go to bandleader/ composer/ arranger / pianist/ trombonist Hugh Fraser. Between leading his eponymous quintet and his big band VEJI (Vancouver Ensemble for Jazz Improvisation), teaching at the Royal Academy of Music and the Banff School of Fine Arts, playing in Kenny Wheeler's English big band, composing (a book containing 64 of his compositions was recently published) and arranging, touring and recording albums, you wonder how Hugh gets to spend time relaxing with his mother in Victoria, British Columbia.

Victoria-born and bred, Fraser started playing the drums while attending St. Michael's School. Pretty soon, though, he began a long-term love affair with the trombone. Those of you who played in a school band will remember the trombone section: those crazy guys in the back who were always either playing practical jokes or blusting ridiculous sounds to make everyone laugh. There is a special camaraderie among trombone players, probably because their instrument can make such raucous, uproarious music. That good humour and wit remains an important part of Fraser's personality. The audience always knows that he and his band are enjoying themselves up there on stage.

It's also a fact that, in jazz at least, a disproportionate number of trombone players become composers and arrangers. Fraser is no exception. Even in high school, while studying trombone with Tom Eadie of the University of Victoria School of Music, he was organizing trombone groups and big bands to play the charts

he had written, bought, or transcribed. "I'd just phone up a bunch of people and say, 'Come on over, let's play it,' not knowing that what we were going to try was too ridiculously hard for us to even attempt. But then I've always had the attitude that nothing's impossible if you really want to do it."

With that attitude, Fraser even man-

someday when you do go to Vancouver, or wherever, that everyone will sound like J.J. Johnson, or John Coltrane, or whoever your hero is, and so you're determined to try to get that good before you go."

After studying at Vancouver Community College for two years, Fraser became frustrated playing in big bands "where you

never get to solo," so he came up with the concept of VEJI: four three-man sections. There's lots of room to solo, but each of those sections can play a triad, the basis of harmony. After a few years of woodshedding, VEJI won the Canadian Stage Band Festival in 1981, Vancouver drummer Rocket Norton financed their first album, and that modern-day rarity, a successful "little big band," was on its way.

Two sessions at the Banff School of Fine Arts, in 1981 and 1984, have been pivotal in VEJI's development. Run by revered bassist/composer Dave Holland, this school features an outstanding faculty of some of the world's leading jazz musicians, and concentrates on the teaching, or rather the uncovering of the talent for, improvisation. No stranger to pedagogy with his experience teaching at Malaspina and Vancouver Community Colleges, Fraser is now on the

faculty at Banff, and is also teaching in London.

"I have a part-time position on the Royal Academy of Music Jazz program. They've got a newly formed undergraduate program. It's a very prestigious old school but they've just started a jazz



aged to turn the isolation of Victoria into an asset. "When all you have to listen to is records, you think that's the level that all music is at, and that's the standard you set for yourself. It's the same with Phil Dwyer (the quintet's sax player), coming from Qualicum Beach. You expect that

**program with Graham Collier, a British composer, as the director.”**

The year after VEJI’s second national tour, Fraser couldn’t put together another, but characteristically turned this seeming setback into a new opportunity. When a limited budget for a CBC broadcast precluded using the whole band, he distilled it into a quintet consisting of the rhythm section of bassist Chris Nelson and drummer Buff Allan, plus saxophonists Phil Dwyer and Campbell Ryga, an all-British Columbia lineup. The tape of that concert was submitted to the Alcan Jazz Competition, and after a winning performance at the Pacific regionals in Vancouver, the Hugh Fraser Quintet captured the national finals during the Montreal Jazz Festival. They used their winnings to record their first album, *Looking Up*, which won a Juno award for best Canadian jazz recording, and four European and four Canadian tours later, have just released *Pas de Probleme*.

The quintet, now with drummer Blaine Wikjord, functions as a true band, thanks to an emphasis on touring rather than one-off gigs around town. Fraser derived great joy from putting together this band. “I like to have a goal in mind and pick out the personnel whose chemistry will work for it. Just phoning up the ‘best’ players in town doesn’t often work out. With the quintet, one of the most exciting things is putting Phil Dwyer and Campbell Ryga on the front line, ‘cause Campbell is the ultimate cool, thinking, musician, and Phil is like fire. The two of them together create an exciting contrast.”

Though the quintet certainly remains within the well-travelled bounds of post-Messenger hard bop, the distinctive compositions, individual virtuosity, and versatility (Dwyer and Fraser are both more-than-adequate pianists) allow the group to transcend most of their competitors in this sometimes overcrowded field, and their fame grows commensurately. A recent performance was the first time in living memory a Vancouver-based jazz group has sold out the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, and for a while it seemed that you saw Fraser’s face every time you opened a paper and heard his voice every time you turned on the radio.

The quintet demands more of Fraser’s time these days, but VEJI remains important in his oeuvre. The last nine years have

included two albums and two cross-Canada tours, unheard of for a Canadian jazz group of this size, but even so, things are tough.

“In those days we were all college students, and now the people in the band have families and kids so I’ve just got to keep at it, seek out where it’s financially feasible to play. I’ve been happy in that although most of my energies being into the quintet with touring and recording we’ve managed to keep happening every year and do a couple of focal points, usually at a regular gig playing our original music. Then about two years ago I arranged Coltrane’s *Love Supreme*. Performing a suite of music like that which had a theme running through a whole movement is basically the jazz equivalent of the classical symphony. It was very well-received and great to perform so I started pursuing it more, trying to unearth some classic jazz works that hadn’t really been performed since their original performances or recordings. The next year I transcribed Mingus’s *Black Saint and Sinner Lady*.

“So that’s been a really interesting branch the band’s taken. It’s got its individual thing, my original tunes for the band and this other aspect being like a jazz version of a symphony orchestra, playing classic jazz orchestra pieces that aren’t the standard published ones. Most of the published ones are just tunes, one arrangement of some tune that some big band’s made famous or a lot of them no one’s made famous. They’re really just stock arrangements. Then there’s these great monumental works, compositions that no one really performs. I find that a real challenge and it’s very challenging to the musicians because they obviously require more than just sight reading because, especially in the Mingus things and the Duke Ellington that we’ve done, each part is like an individual concerto for each player: they’re so individual it’s amazing.

“It was a bit of a problem at first to think of how to perform these pieces: maintaining the compositional integrity of the piece, yet putting our own energy into it and our own solos and feel, not just playing transcribed solos although we’re playing the transcribed composed part of it. The solo sections and the interpretation of the written stuff we try to play

with our own energy so that they are different performances but still faithful to all the written material.”

Around the turn of the decade, VEJI recorded Fraser’s *Sanctum*, a religious piece written during a stay in London. It is scheduled for release on the Unity label.

One of the strengths of both VEJI and the Hugh Fraser Quintet is the quality of their compositions and arrangements. As you would expect, Fraser received the necessary early training to develop his natural gifts.

“I was fortunate that I had a fairly good background. I sang in a choir and studied with a church organist who was very strict about counterpoint. So I got a lot of that basic theory at a very early stage in my life and then forgot about all of it and just got into emulating, copying jazz tunes, taking blues and standard jazz tunes and experimenting with writing different melodies over them. Transcribing a lot, I think, has been one of the major things that’s helped me along with composing and arranging, just sitting down with the record and listening to it a thousand times until I finally get it right. And that narrows the gap between what you hear and what you write. If you put something on paper it always sounds different from how it looks and vice versa: if you hear something, the way you imagine it on paper is always a little bit different. By being exposed in an in-depth fashion through transcribing very radically different composers and arrangers I’ve taken the things that I really enjoy about them and tried to synthesize them into some sort of personal statement.

“Obviously some of the things I’ve written are in a fairly standard vein or could be identifiable with a certain period of jazz. But more recently I’m satisfied with that area of my writing to the point now that I’m starting to expand and move on and write some more adventurous and different things. It’s funny because I started out writing some very... I was right into Anthony Braxton. My first compositions for VEJI were very out. It was trying to communicate some form of energy through sound which is great and I still agree with that. But through that there were certain things that interested me to such a point that I looked into them deeper and started getting more formalized in my composition until I went back-

wards into the be-bop sort of classic chordal function writing. Now that I've satisfied that and understand how it works, coming out of the sound energy and going back, I'm moving forward again and I see myself getting back to that original point except with a far deeper understanding of it."

Being such a musical jack-of-all-trades certainly presents some difficulties in apportioning time and effort, even down to balancing performance and practice on the piano vs. the trombone.

"In performing I've been introducing my trombone more and more, especially with the quintet. I play it about 40% of the time now while it used to be 20%. I'm just trying to play it a lot more because I'm enjoying playing it more, and I'm having more of a chance to play the trombone when I'm involved in teaching situations, either at Banff or in England. Usually I'm running a jazz orchestra or combo so it's a lot easier to direct in front of the band with a trombone. And I end up playing

solo pieces and that. So I'm just playing my horn a lot more and there's a tremendous brass awareness in London, especially at the academy where I'm teaching in the classical program. It's incredible, all these guys are the people that record Star Wars and all that, London Philharmonic stuff. They're just beautiful brass players, so just hearing that all the time I find is inspiring and gets me off my proverbial derriere to get into it, 'cause brass playing, any horn playing but especially brass playing, is very physical, it's like being a weightlifter.

"I bought a piano about a year ago for the first time in my life. It's in Victoria where it doesn't do me much good now but when I'm there I try to spend as much time as I can at it. I practice it a lot and then in the meantime I've got a rental piano in London so for the first time I'm really centred and have a piano where I'm spending a lot more time practising. But it's always the old thing: dividing my time between piano and trombone and trying

to write. I still consider writing my main thing because it's the one thing that I sit down with and spend the time that is required to do it properly and then there's a totally finished product. But then it doesn't have the spontaneity of improvising so it's always a bit frustrating but I feel like I'm moving all areas of my involvement with playing music ahead a little bit each year and I'd rather do it that way than shoot off on one thing and then end up somewhere I don't want to be, like being an amazing studio trombone player but not having a band or not playing any original music. I see them all totally interconnected and inseparable."

At the age of 30, Hugh Fraser is poised on the edge of a success that is probably greater than even he had dreamed of back in those early days in Victoria. Along with a growing cohort of maturing Canadian jazz musicians, he is ready to take his place on the world stage. And I'm sure no one would deny this personable, hard-working young man the fruits of his labour.

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# BUCK CLAYTON IS BACK



I don't know of any career in jazz that quite parallels Buck Clayton's. He brought a big band to China in the early 1930s, starred in Count Basie's original big band (1936-43), went on to distinguished work as a small-group soloist. By 1980, though, it seemed his career in music was over. Health problems had forced him to set aside his horn and he had taken a day job outside of music. No one could have guessed then that by the decade's end, not only would he have formed a new big band but that it would be one of the most talked about big bands to have emerged in New York in many years. And what's even more unusual is that the band Clayton leads today, at age 78, does not re-create hits of the past (and we expect elder players to stick with the repertoire of their youths) but concentrates almost exclusively on new music being written daily by Clayton and executed by the 13 mostly young musicians who work for him.

The band has drawn widespread critical acclaim. *New York Newsday's* critic, Stuart Troup, likened Clayton to Verdi, who did his greatest composing when in his 70s. John S. Wilson noted in *The New York Times*: "Most of his compositions are de-

veloped as catchy riffs in the Basie tradition with brief solos tossed from instrument to instrument. Mr. Clayton has soloists who can make the fast impression that is essential to this kind of kaleidoscopic juggling." My colleague on *The New York Post*, Lee Jeske, observed that "Clayton's songs are so well crafted... that even the new ones sound like standards; the band glided on them." Nat Hentoff reflected in *The Wall Street Journal*: "One test of whether a band is cooking, as musicians used to say, is whether the players smile a lot during a set. Some of Mr. Clayton's musicians seem to find it hard to stop grinning... I find Buck Clayton's jazz as fresh as an April day after a cold and crabbed winter."

Talking with musicians in the band confirms that the enthusiasm Hentoff witnessed is genuine. "One of the funnest things about playing in the band is that Buck's numbers are challenging to play, but they just naturally swing so easily," commented tenor saxist Doug Lawrence, 31, who added: "One of the best thrills of my life is to play with Buck. I was a Prez freak from way back. Listening to *The Lester Young Story* got me through the Army." And that album

introduced him, at age 18, to Buck Clayton, who frequently recorded with Young.

One reason that baritone saxist Joe Temperley (one of the senior members of the band; he's known Clayton for more than 30 years) loves the music is that "Buck writes a lot of things for baritone sax. The only other band for a baritone sax, really is the Ellington Band," for which Temperley has also often played.

Guitarist Howard Alden sees Clayton's music as "deceptively simple. It's unpretentious, melodic, fresh, and everybody's got a feel for the music." Indeed, Clayton will tell you that's the thing he likes best about the band: the musicians share his own feeling for what music should be. He wants soloists who can tell their stories quickly, he wants ensembles that move deftly, lightly, cohesively. And he deliberately chose to limit the band to just 13 pieces (four of whom play rhythm; he knows the rhythm of a complete rhythm section); he's seen too many bands with too many musicians to swing. And swing Clayton's band does. I've sat through sets by the band at the Village Vanguard with the feeling that the band plays with such a rare sense of lift and

## AN ARTICLE BY CHIP DEFF AA

elation that it's on the verge of taking off from the ground.

Buck will introduce a tune with a few words, perhaps telling what the music means to him. "The next number," he'll say, "is about a fellow who always wanted a Cadillac. He saved up enough money to buy it, but to keep up the payments he wound up using it as a taxi." And with no further ado, he'll give a downbeat, and the band will swing into *Cadillac Taxi*. As soon as he sees the band's got it safely in hand, he sits down. He'll rise again only if necessary, maybe to give a cut-off. He wants a band that, like Basie's first band, seems to play by, and for, itself.

Clayton credits guitarist Howard Alden and trombonist Dan Barrett with spurring his return to bandleading. In 1985, they got him to write charts for their new quintet (he still writes for it, as time permits, today). That in turn led to him getting requests from a variety of bandleaders for charts. Finally he decided he might as well do it for himself. "I had no intention of having a band when I first met Howard and Dan," he noted. "But it just sounded better and better every time I did something, so I went into it myself."

He organized his band and quality New York bookings (Fat Tuesday's the Cat Club, the Village Gate, Town Hall, the Village Vanguard) soon materialized. In 1988, George Wein brought the band to Nice, and additional overseas touring is being planned. And Clayton, who seems to have been generally rediscovered, is now finding himself the subject of assorted salutes and tributes, the latest at Harvard University, where an 18 piece undergraduate band is scheduled to perform an all-Clayton concert in his honour in April of 1990.

Thus far, Clayton's band has released just one album, *A Swinging Dream* (for which I had the pleasure of writing liner notes). That album was not planned. The band simply gave a concert to celebrate the 16th anniversary of the *New Jersey Jazz Society*; a Society member happened to record the proceedings with two microphones, and the tape turned out to be good enough to enable *Stash Records* to produce an album. Clayton would now very much like to make a studio recording of the band, with the instruments all miked and the repertoire chosen with care, but finding a company willing to bear the expense of

recording a band, no matter how enthusiastic critics and fans may be about it, is not easy in these times.

But then, there were economic difficulties in the heyday of the big band era, too. Clayton's pay, when he first joined the Basie Band, was just \$14 a week (and that was good, compared to what many musicians were making in those depressed times). And no one in the band, then or now, received any royalties for any of the now classic records that the band made for Decca in the late 1930s.

Clayton's career as an arranger dates back to the 1930s. He wrote charts for his own band in China, and says he was the first person to actually write a chart for the Basie Band (a number they never recorded, called *Baby Girl*, which he composed in Kansas City in 1936); the Basie Band originally played all "head" arrangements. He wrote occasional charts for Basie during his tenure in the band, including *Down For Double*, *Blues (I Still Think Of Her)*, *Love Jumped Out*, *H and J*, *If I Could Be With You*, *It's Sand Man*, *Avenue C*, *Seventh Avenue Express* and *Red Band Boogie*, but trumpeting, both in the band and on small-group records with Lester Young, Billie Holiday, Teddy Wilson, etc., took up too much of his time for him to arrange steadily. After leaving Basie, he occasionally contributed charts to other name bandleaders, but he only turned to arranging as his primary creative outlet in recent years.

Writing for other bandleaders tends to make an arranger think in commercial terms, Clayton believes. The arranger has to be thinking, at some level, if someone else is going to want to pay for what he's writing. But in writing for his own band, Clayton says, there's no commercial orientation at all. He's creating the music he'd like to hear, with specific players that he's hand-chosen for his band in mind, knowing he's got musicians who'll carry out his ideas with gusto. The money the band makes isn't so important to him, he says. Hearing his music is what's giving him his rewards. So long as he has a chance to hear his music played back, he says, composing and arranging can be just about as satisfying to him as playing his horn was. In a sense, so long as his band is out there performing his music, Buck Clayton hasn't entirely stopped playing. He's just found himself a different type of instrument.



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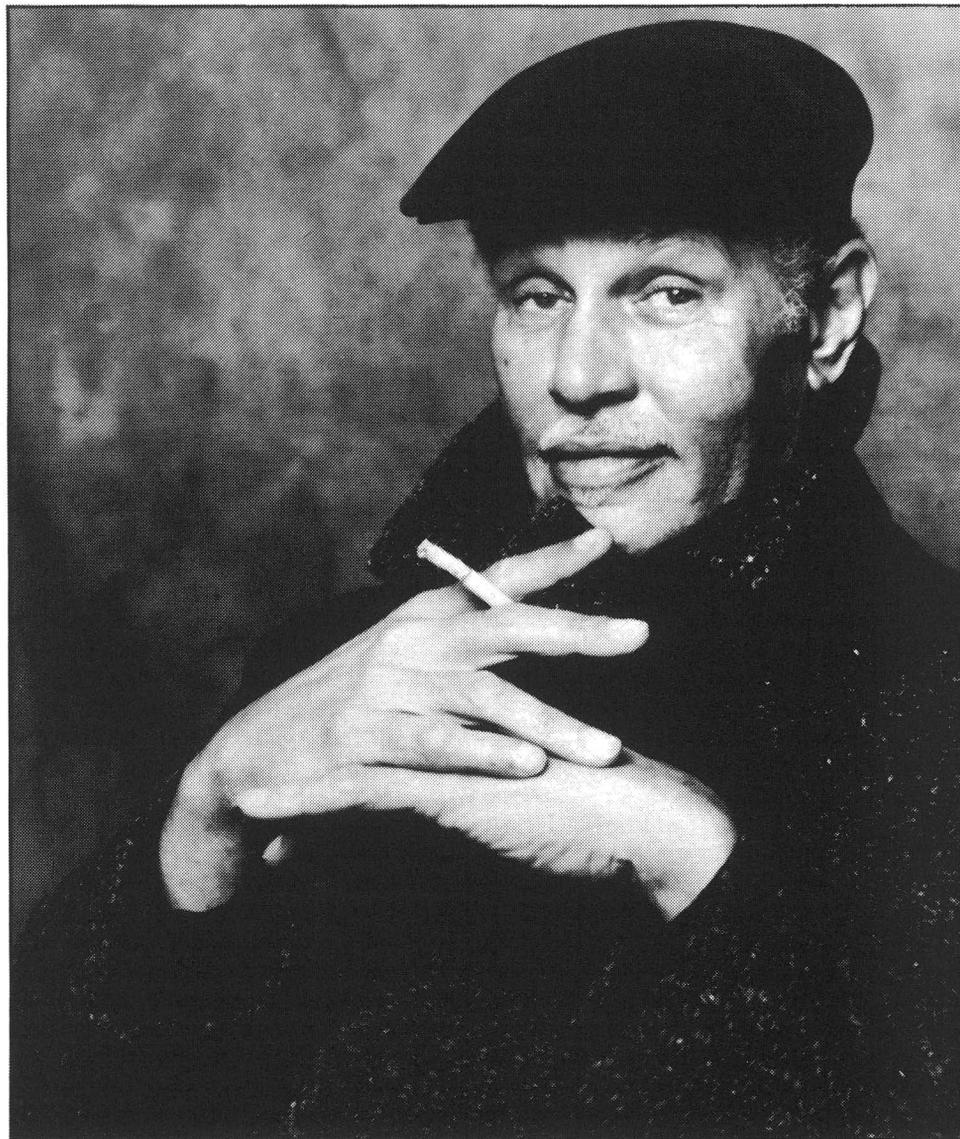
# JAZZ ON THE WEST COAST

In the mid-1930s, a man named **Martin Block** traveled East from California, bringing with him an idea conceived by **Al Jarvis** in Los Angeles. It was a revolutionary concept: he played records on the radio. Martin Block's **Make Believe Ballroom** was a sensation which started on WNEW in Newark, New Jersey and quickly spread to other radio stations. Block simply made believe the artists were in the studio (ballroom) with him, and spun the records. This format, in conjunction with the rise of the big bands (and the stock market), led to a return in the popularity of records by the late 1930s. Also coming into play were Decca's budget line of records and an upgrading in the fidelity of phonographs.

If the big bands were jazz, then Al Jarvis and Martin Block were the first jazz disc jockeys. **Symphony Sid Torrin**, who had his beginnings as a record salesman in Milt Gabler's Commodore Music Shop, was the Papa Bear of bebop DJs. When Sid wasn't on the air, he was often found emceeing at the Royal Roost and other jazz haunts where the top beboppers were performing. His typical rap was filled with the hip jargon of the day: "... down to the **Royal Roost, the Metropolitan Bopera House...** where the lights are low and the music is a real knocked out groove..." If you were **Jumpin' With Symphony Sid** on WJZ (which later became WABC), you were listening to a 50,000 watt clear-channel station out of New York which would easily kick out to all states East of the Mississippi on any given night. While he *leaned on* this music he loved, his formidable West Coast counterpart, **Gene Norman**, was doing likewise. The jazz history books tell of the swing to bop as being difficult for most to bear, but they do not emphasize the powerful role the disc jockeys have played. Gene Norman, speaking of his listening audience's response to bop, is succinct: "*I was their guru; they listened to it.*"

Gene Norman's GNP Crescendo record label, based in Hollywood, California, is simply the most recent endeavour of a man who has involved himself in every business aspect of jazz. From radio and television announcer to concert promoter, owner of several famous nightclubs and his own record label, at age 67 Gene Norman is as sharp as ever and shows no signs of slowing down.

You may be familiar with the famous Coleman Hawkins composition entitled



*Stuff*, but you may not realize it's named after Gene Norman. When Gene Norman acquired that nickname, it was because he happened to be one of few college graduates (an alumnus of the University of Wisconsin at age 18) to hang out with a group of musicians who learned their trade on the streets. He was born on January 22, 1922, in Brooklyn, New York, to an upper middle class family. His father had a high style manufacturing business. Gene Norman has always been an articulate speaker, a successful man with fine tastes, but he is far from stuffy.

"*I grew up in New York, and my father had a few black guys working for him,*" *reminisces Norman.* "*I was lucky. When I was in high school, I'd go up to Harlem with them to the Savoy Ballroom and the Apollo*

*regularly. I remember those days very well. When I graduated from college, I had no real field. I had been a musician, playing sax, clarinet, and violin in a dance band. We had a family orchestra. I looked around and Martin Block had just started up his Make Believe Ballroom radio show and was hot. I said, 'Gee I can do that.' So, I got a chance to go on the radio, for free, on a station in the Bronx (WBNX) Sunday afternoon for an hour. It was 1941, and I called the show 'Beatin' on the Bandstand.' After that, I was hired as the first staff announcer for WPAT in Paterson, New Jersey; twenty-five dollars a week."*

Later that year, in 1941, Norman moved to California where he "*went through the bushes*" on stations KMJ (Fresno), KLX (Oakland), and KGO (San Francisco) where

## GENE NORMAN AND GNP CRESCENDO

he was the all-night man. "I played a lot of jazz," Norman recalls. "It was a great time during the mid-forties. All the big bands and jazz bands played at Sweet's Ballroom in Oakland. I saw Lunceford and Basie, Lionel Hampton's fantastic band, Dexter Gordon... In those days, I did hundreds of Armed Forces radio shows, many on V-Discs. And after the war, I used to take live shows to the veteran hospitals."

Norman left KGO in San Francisco (replaced by Jack Webb) for KFVB in Los Angeles. Despite the fact that Martin Block claims to have originated the concept of playing records on the radio, Gene Norman claims that KFVB's Al Jarvis was the first disc jockey. Block took the idea and ran, as it were, to the metropolitan New York area. Lionel Hampton's record of the early 1930s, *Jumpin' with Jarvis*, was dedicated to Al.

It was 1947 when Norman started putting on his **Just Jazz** concerts. "I called Benny Goodman. He was one of many musicians I interviewed on my show. I called him and said, 'Benny, why don't we put on a jazz concert?' He said, 'Great. How much are you going to pay me?' That's all Benny cared about was the music and the money. I didn't know what to tell him; I had never hired a musician. So, I said, 'Two hundred dollars.' I didn't know whether that was high or low or in-between. He laughed and said, 'Okay.' I didn't know whether he thought I was taking advantage of my position or if he thought I was a naive young kid. Of course, I was naive! I was only twenty-five. So, I called Peggy Lee and offered her two hundred dollars, and Errol Garner, and Wardell Gray, and Howard McGhee, Charlie Barnett, and Vic Dickenson. All of these people were on the first concert! It was tremendous. Now, mind you, it was not a mercenary commercial pursuit because the top ticket was two bucks. The tickets were two bucks, a buck and a half, and a dollar. I was putting it on for the love of the music and my fans. We turned away thousands of people. Then we were in the concert business. We usually had one a month, and this lasted for sixteen years. Everyone you ever heard of played these concerts, between 1947 and 1963. There's not a jazz artist you can name who didn't participate. Of course, after the first concert, we began paying the musicians regular wages.

"The earlier concerts were held at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium for the purity of

the acoustics, but it only held three thousand seats. We ended up going to the Shrine because it held six thousand seats. The second show was Nat Cole and Anita O'Day. The third show featured Lionel Hampton and produced one of the most successful jazz records of all time: the **Lionel Hampton Stardust** (available on MCA Records). Lionel was under contract to Decca, so I had to give that to them. The irony of it was, he didn't want to go back and play the last set that gave *Stardust* because he was working on the Goldwin picture *A Song Is Born* and had an early call the next morning. I had to fight with his wife to get him to stay to the end. I recorded all the concerts on a line-to-disc purely for my own amusement, then a small R&B label in Los Angeles, called *Modern*, came to me and asked if I had any jazz records because Norman Granz was getting hot. So, I gave them my first records: Vido Musso, Errol Garner, and Art Tatum. Eventually, after a lot of jazz records on *Modern*, I got enough courage to go into the studio myself. For example, I signed and managed Gerry Mulligan and put some out on our label (**Gerry Mulligan / Chet Baker GNPS-56**) and we gave some to Capitol: the *Tentette* (included on **Gerry Mulligan Mosaic MRS-102**). The Mulligan *Tentette* was a magnificent, ground-breaking group similar to the Miles Davis nonet. It was cool jazz."

Speaking of cool jazz, Gene Norman also played a big part in its offspring's inception. In 1951, he approached trumpeter / arranger Shorty Rogers of the Kenton Band about doing a record date with a little big band of Shorty's choosing, and **Shorty Rogers and the Giants** was born. This master was leased to Capitol, and is currently available through Mosaic records (**Shorty Rogers/MR6-125**). Mosaic records are available strictly by mail order from Mosaic Records, 35 Melrose Place, Stamford CT 06913-0170. Other solid Norman-inspired records of the West Coast 1950s variety are *Tenors West / Jimmy Giuffre with the Marty Paich Octet* (GNPS 9040), highly individualistic trumpeter **Jack Sheldon and his All Star Band** (GNPS 9036), and saxophonist **Dave Pell's Prez Conference** (GNPS 2122). Even more important, there is the initial recording session of premiere altoist Frank Morgan as a leader (**Frank Morgan / GNPS 9041**), and a superb live recording of the famed Clifford Brown/

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BY JAMES ROZZI

Max Roach Quintet (*The Best of Max Roach and Clifford Brown, In Concert!/GNPW 18*). Both the Frank Morgan and Brown / Roach recordings are important historical documents of the black West Coast scene which originated on Central Avenue in Los Angeles.

A very unique recording from this same era teams Charlie Ventura and his band (featuring Conte Candoli and Benny Green) with the vocalese of Jackie Cain and Roy Kral (*Charlie Ventura in Concert/GNPS 1*). "This was the second piece of the concert," explains Norman. "The first part was ground-breaking and was released by Decca. I don't know if MCA ever released it again. It's a sensational album. At the time, they were under contract to RCA, and I conned RCA into taping it. Then, of course, they didn't understand it nor did they want it. So, I bought it from them for a hundred dollars and cleared it through the Union. It's marvellous."

"Gene Norman is a number one guy, really — very formidable. He had a big box, a great voice, immaculate taste... He was very good for the musicians." Mort Fega WXEL-FM

The critics never fazed Norman when they took pot shots at the West Coast jazz scene of the mid-50s. In regard to this music's acquired *sterile* label, Norman's reaction couldn't be cooler: "Well, that was fine. I loved the West Coast jazz; it was very good. I remember I wrote an article for the *Los Angeles Times* about it. West Coast jazz was white and it came out of the Kenton Band. It was Shorty Rogers, Bud Shank, and Shelly Manne, and those guys. Just about everybody came through the Kenton Band, although I wouldn't say that what Kenton played was West Coast. It was a little more cerebral, but they were jazz musicians in the truest sense. We were very happy with it. Yes, absolutely; they were jazz musicians.

"Stan Kenton got tired of the road and disbanded a few times. He made up his mind occasionally he was going to be a psychiatrist... A lot of his guys went to Latin bands, so I ended up getting into a very heavy Latin period (i.e., *The Exciting Tito Puente Band, Puente Now!/GNPS 2048*). Then, of course, I bought the *Creative World* catalog in 1983 (all Stan Kenton records) including a lot of published works Stan recorded. There are sixty-two Kenton records in the *Creative World* catalog." When questioned concern-

ing his favourite LP, Norman replies, "My favourite band was the Bill Holman band, when Bill wrote the charts. That was the great Kenton Band, as far as I'm concerned. There is an album called *Contemporary Concepts* (#1003, from the year 1956). I used to play the hell out of that on the radio.

"People send me tapes and say, 'Here's a great Kenton tape. Why don't you put it out?' You know, it would cost me eighteen thousand dollars to clear that. I just can't do that; there are probably fifty Kenton bootlegs. I suppose they would claim it was done before 1972, and therefore not copyrightable, but they could be sued for unfair competition if they used his face. Also, it doesn't relieve them from paying the music publishers. We're very religious about paying the musicians.

By 1954, Gene Norman was on the radio six hours a day, on a television show two hours a day, had the **Just Jazz**, **Dixieland Jubilee**, and **Blues Jubilee** concert series, had just started his record company, and had recently opened two nightclubs. The clubs were **The Crescendo** (400 seats) which was downstairs, and **The Interlude** (150 seats) upstairs. **The Crescendo** would feature a heavy band (i.e. Kenton), a singer (June Christy), and a comic (Mort Sahl). **The Interlude** would feature a combo (the M.J.Q.) and a beginning comic (Lenny Bruce). There was no extra cover to enter either club. This was Norman's second nightclub ownership, which lasted ten years. His first was **The Empire**, which Norman opened because "the Woody Herman Band had no place to work." This particular Herman band was the famous **Four Brothers** band, and with this band in mind, Norman recalls one very fine night. "One of the greatest thrills of my life was going on the air, coast to coast, New Year's Eve 1948, from my own nightclub, and announcing 'The Woody Herman Band!' I was twenty-six years old. That's pretty remarkable, isn't it?"

The above mentioned television show hosted by Norman was an early precursor to MTV. Originally airing as **Let's Face The Music**, it consisted of Snader Telescriptions: three-minute film clips of approximately sixty artists (Kenton, Basie, Ellington, Peggy Lee, George Shearing, etc.) made by Lou Snader. At one point, Norman was on television against his own taped radio show. "After about a year of that," says

Norman, "the owner of the TV station ran into the studio when I was on TV and said, 'Gene, are you on the radio now? Well, either you get off the radio or get off the television!'" Norman was also involved in the first-ever televised jazz concert, which took place in 1948 when he presented Stan Kenton at the Hollywood Bowl. This was prior to commercial television and was aired on an experimental station that is now Channel 2 in Hollywood.

**"Gene Norman produced one of the greatest swing records of all time —Lionel Hampton's Stardust. There were other great records that he did too. The man has very good taste."** Bob Weinstock Founder & Producer, Prestige Records

The fact that the black bands were forced to play the so-called "chitlin circuit" when they were back East, displayed the pervading prejudice of the time. On the contrary, there was a marked display of affection for these men initiated by Gene Norman on the West Coast. When Dizzy, Duke, Basie, Hampton, or any other black musician played a **Just Jazz** concert, they were treated with the respect which was their due. Norman took advantage of his hours on the radio to promote whoever was next coming to town. Norman remembers, "I fell in love with Dizzy's band early, the RCA things with Oo Pop A Da, that stuff. The band was scuffling. In fact, they almost swam home from Europe. But I leaned on it and leaned on it every night, and when I presented them at the Pasadena Civic Center, we turned away thousands of people. It was wonderful. I'd let any kid in for free if he wore a beret and goatee. I showed up that night in a beret and goatee. That was a sensational band, and that record, **Dizzy Gillespie and His Big Band (GNPS 23)** is from that night. It was such a success that for Dizzy, it was the turning point of his career."

Norman has always held special reverence for many musicians, and Louis Armstrong is definitely one of them. "Louis was masterful, lovable, laughable, a great musician with a marvellous personality. Louis was legendary. I used to love to sit and talk with him in his dressing room at my night club, he with his nylon stocking over his head. I produced five Louis Armstrong albums. The two on my own label are **An Evening with Louis Armstrong and his All Stars, Volume I and II (GNPS 11001, GNPS 9050)**. Duke Ellington would wear a stock-

ing too, that magnificently splendid man. I got to know Duke very well. I loved the man." (Note: Two truly great Ellington albums recorded live at the Just Jazz concerts are **Duke Ellington, The 1953 Pasadena Concert (GNP 9050)** and **The 1954 Los Angeles Concert (GNP 9049)**. **Lionel Hampton with the Just Jazz All-Stars / GNPS 15** is another very hot live album from the mid-50s which showcases some precision upper-octave blowing by trumpeter Charlie Shavers.

A recently recorded GNP Crescendo artist with whom Norman takes delight is an amazingly technical pianist named Bobby Enriquez (**Bobby Enriquez, Live in Tokyo! GNPS 2161**). "There's a recent review in a French magazine saying he's the greatest jazz pianist since Oscar Peterson," says Norman. "He's what I love, but because he's a bebop pianist, it's a little passe for the young people. I listen to the records and get very excited. I wish I could get that excited about all of the jazz today. Most of it is too laid back for my tastes."

"I always had a marvellous following amongst the musicians," Norman recalls of a career that most jazz lovers only dream of. "I was with them a long time. Billie Holiday used to come on my program; she worked for me a number of times in both the clubs and the concerts. She would say, 'Gene, I don't go on anyone else's show but yours.' They knew that I was with them. I recently saw Lionel Hampton in Japan; it was the first time we had seen each other in fifteen years. He threw his arms around me and our picture ended up on the front page of a Japanese newspaper.

"Back when I had a concert at night, I'd tape my radio show, go to the concert with Mulligan, Ellington, and a few other big names: I always loaded it up. Then I'd go to my nightclub and listen to the MJQ. So, I knew this was it, boy. I never dreamed I'd go that far. For a little kid from Brooklyn to get to that point was remarkable. I have a lot to look back on." Thankfully, Gene Norman had the foresight to preserve many of those sounds so that we might look back as well.

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**THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
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# AROUND THE WORLD

**USA - Marian McPartland's** Piano Jazz is one of the best series carried on NPR Radio. The show, now in its thirteenth season, showcases informally the talents of some of the world's best jazz pianists. Marian has succeeded in providing her guests with a comfortable setting for their performances and it has the kind of warmth you associate with an evening at home with mutually compatible friends rather than staged performances. It's a winner. The new series focuses its attention on a number of British performers (Stan Tracey, Dave Lee, Alan Clare, Brian Lemon), some up and coming talent (Renée Rosnes, Lee Ann Ledgerwood, Geoff Keezer, Ellen Rowe) alongside some more familiar faces (Buddy Montgomery, Richard Wyands, Onaje Allan Gumbs) and the two ringers: Stephane Grappelli (who recorded on piano as far back as the 1930s) and a reunion with cornetist Jimmy McPartland for a look backwards into the early days of Chicago jazz.

**Kevin Whitehead reports on recent activity in New York:**

Tenors everywhere. Ellery Eskelin (Visiones, February 12), showed off an increasingly gruff, individual and outward bound approach, as if the easy-going tenorist were letting off some of the aggression that builds up in New Yorkers just by walking around town or riding subways. Which is not to revive the dumb "hate music" nonsense aimed at out players 25 years ago; on the contrary, New Yorkers find constructive ways to vent tension so they can lead civilized lives.

**Dewey Redman** (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, March 2) played leisurely duets with bassist **Cameron Brown**, music that breathed in the gothic monster's cavernous echoes. At the Knitting Factory one night last summer, Redman stormed through half-hour solos, to keep cutthroat rhythm players **Mark Helias** and **Ralph Peterson** from steamrolling him into the ground, and blew the lid off the joint. With Brown, Dewey took his time, displaying his Ornetty

way of leaving a line jutting into the air, unresolved. For variety, he played some alto and woody clarinet.

In the employ of his friend Art Farmer, Clifford Jordan (Sweet Basil, March 25) displayed the improvisatory poise and touching, luminous sound which may give him the most attractive ballad tenor in jazz. His intelligently developed, exquisitely sculpted, always blue solos are lyrical enough to stand up to Farmer's own.

**Charles Gayle** (Chase Manhattan Bar and Grill, April 7) has won a fanatically loyal following for his revival of high energy free tenor. Partisans compare him to Albert Ayler, and there are similarities, in his falsetto keening, calvary fanfares, scrawls and animated flurries. But where Albert used simple ditties as springboards, Gayle's at his best on themeless improvisations: a motif will arise in the heat of the moment, and he'll explore it from several angles before moving on to discover another. Bassist **William Parker** played his sprung rhythms in encouragement; drummer (and rhythm-effects

vocalist) David Pleasant's style, centered on his chattering snare drum, intensified the band's machine-gun effect.

Tenorist Michael Marcus coled a quintet with multibrass expert Ted Daniel (Brecht Forum, March 10); it boasted trombonist Joseph Bowie, deftly balancing open space and blow-you-back tailgate blasts, drummer Reggie Nicholson (who shone, with ferocious polyrhythmic brushing, sensitive mallet work and striking dynamic contrasts) and William Parker, who doesn't really work every other gig in town, though it seems that way. Marcus's writing recalls Ayler sometimes: his catchy melodies inspire hard blowing. Michael doubled on snakecharmer saxello and stritch. On stritch and cornet for one tune sans Bowie, Marcus and Daniel played unisons so precise, their two horns sounded like some bright, unknown third instrument.

Mike Elliott (evenings, up-town IRT platform, Times Square subway station) plays classic mainstream tenor, comfortably ensconced between swing and bop. On chestnuts like *I Remember April* or *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*, he proceeds with unhurried grace and a deeply furry tone, harking back to the old masters. In that hectic venue, his restful sound is a tonic.

On March 27 at Condon's (a cozy new place off Union Square, no relation to Eddie), altoist **Bobby Watson** headed an aggressive unit with trumpeter Melton Mustafa, drummer Victor Lewis, Carroll Dashiell (on a modified electric stick bass that sounds like a real bass) and pianist Benny Green, who played dazzling, Phineas Newborn-y locked-hands parallel stuff. Watson rarely lacks energy or spirit, but even by his

standards, this band burned.

Drummer **Bobby Previte's** quintet Empty Suits (Knitting Factory, February 13), with Allan Jaffe and Jerome Harris on guitars, Robin Eubanks on trombone and Steve Gaboury on keyboards, combines the killer grooves heard on his album *Claude's Late Morning* with the meaty soloing that album conspicuously lacked. It's another nice showcase for a leader who seems to come up with a new band every other week. At the Alternative Museum on March 14, Previte played very musical drum-kit duets with **Andrew Cyrille**, holding his own next to that master. Previte finished the concert in a trio, with bassist **Fred Hopkins** and multi-reedist **Marty Ehrlich**, in which Marty played some lovely clarinet.

Clarinets were also showcased in **Gunter Hampel's Galactic Dream Band** (Knitting Factory, March 8): Perry Robinson was on clarinet, Mark Whitecage on alto clarinet (and alto sax), Hampel on bass clarinet (and vibes). Alto saxist Thomas Keyserling and the great free vocalist Jeanne Lee were also on line, Lee wafting over the top or drifting through the thick middle. Hampel's always had a nice sense of shifting texture, as all those swarming reeds showed, but I'd forgotten what an excellent vibist he is.

**Cassandra Willson** says she didn't listen to Lee coming up, but there are some striking similarities in the quality of their voices. On two nights during Wilson's week at Fat Tuesdays (March 27 and 29), she refreshingly declined to plug her new album incessantly, instead featuring even newer songs, and a few standards. She frankly admires Betty Carter (one of her new tunes even sounds like one of Betty's) but her scat syllabics and rhythms seem to owe more

## COMPILED BY JOHN NORRIS



to African musics, a fresh and sensible approach.

And speaking of singers, Ray Anderson (with a popping band: pianist Amina Myers, bassist Mike Formanek and drummer Pheeroan AkLaff, Village Vanguard, March 28) has become a vocal extravert; the centrepiece of his act was Ellington's/ Mack David's *I'm Just A Lucky So-and-So*, where he howled like some subway maniac. But of course he was just translating the outlandishness, luster and split-tones he displays on trombone to his vocal cords. It grows on you.

**Muhai Richard Abrams** and **Roscoe Mitchell's** solos-and-duets concert (Merkin Hall, March 15) was a letdown. These days, Muhai's instrument is the orchestra, where his investigations of flow, colour and texture have maximum sweep. With all due respect to Mitchell, his

boldly conceived solo sax pieces left me cold. His tortured long notes, puny split-tones and microtonal warblews made him sound distressingly like a novice player whose reed is dry, and who doesn't place his fingers in quite the right places. Many listeners disagreed; he got a standing ovation.

Though little noted in the local press, the Tim Berne/ Herb Robertson P-1 Orchestra put on one of the winter's best shows (The Kitchen, February 15). Besides the co-leaders' frequent collaborators like Previte and dual bassists Mark Helias and Mark Dresser, the 14-piece band included surprise choices like Eskelin, Lionel Hampton's altoist Cleve Guyton, trombonist Art Baron, and Don Byron playing ear-popping baritone instead of his usual clarinet. Some listeners objected to the music's extreme density (each piece

seemed to have about 30 mini-movements) but that was what made it so good. It was like an obscenely rich cake: you wouldn't want to eat one every day, but once in a while it's incredibly fortifying. Berne says promoters he's contacted aren't interested in the Orchestra; they should reconsider. It's a band of gold. ■

...

Our own recent visit to New York took us to a variety of clubs in the company of Ray Bryant. We checked out the New York piano scene and found it to be as vibrant as ever. There's a special intensity to **McCoy Tyner's** playing and he was in excellent form during a set at the new Condon's club. Tyner has been a major stylistic influence on other pianists but his roots reach back into areas his follower scarcely comprehend. He best displayed this during a

couple of solo pieces which were stunning examples of the craft of jazz piano. The only discomfort at Condon's was the megawatt level of the sound system. The club's piano is new but its acoustic qualities were distorted beyond recognition.

Audience inattention is often a distraction but we hit a lucky streak in our stops at Bradleys (Kenny Barron, Paul West and Ven Riley), Knickerbocker (Bill Mays and Steve LaSpina), Zinno's (Adam Makowicz and Steve LaSpina) and the Village Gate Terrace (Junior Mance and Martin Rivera). Unfortunately the Gate's piano is reaching the point where it should be recycled for firewood but all the artists performed with their customary excellence.

The Fortune Garden Pavilion is an upscale mid-town eatery which offers a variety of jazz piano stylists as a backdrop to

conversation and culinary distractions. Dorothy Donegan, although somewhat subdued by the surroundings, displayed several glimpses of her remarkable virtuosity in the company of Major Holley and Ray Mosca.

Further north we stopped by the newly renovated West End Café (now known as the West End Gate) to hear **Dick Katz'** newly formed quintet. Long recognized as a musician's musician Katz is an enigmatic, understated performer who reminds me of a slightly absent-minded professor. You have to pay attention to catch the pearls of wisdom which drop from his fingers. By the third set of the evening there was an unreal feel to the music. All the structured charts had been dealt with and the musicians were jamming on a bunch of standards without a single voice to direct the proceedings. **Jerry Dodgion** and **Jimmy Knepper** are as experienced as Katz but they seem to have a shared aversion to leadership. The music was pleasantly muddled but helped considerably by the rhythm company of Washington and Washington (Peter and Kenny).

The Harlem Cultural Collective presented two evenings of Music & Poetry at the Shadowed Image Studio on February 25 with **Craig Harris**, **Reggie Workman** and **Sekou Sundiata** and on March 4 with **Ken McIntyre**, **Bob Cunningham** and Camille Yarborough... Cuniculo (414 W. 51st St.) presented two nights of music March 12 and 13 with the **William Hooker** Trio and the Ellen Christi/ Tom Bruno Duet... Hooker's trio was then heard April 1 at the Bloomingdale House of Music... Saxophonist Bob Kindred was recorded in performance April 8 at Alfredo's with pianist Bill Mays and bassist Dave Finck. The Cecil Payne/ Joe Carter Quintet

with Don Friedman, Jeff Fuller and Al Harewood were at Birdland May 9... **Gerry Hemingway** presented an evening of new electronic and acoustic solo works at Roulette on May 11... **Jack Reilly** will give a South Street Seaport concert July 28 and a Bill Evans Memorial Concert at St. Peter's Church on September 9... John Sanders, one-time Duke Ellington trombonist, is now the minister of St. Paul's Catholic Church in Norwalk, Conn.

Pianist/ vocalist Bob Lenox was recipient of the 1989 Jazz Fellowship Award for composition from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. His recent gigs have included the Deerhead Inn (March 9) and Visiones (May 9)... Ann Arbor's Birdof Paradise Club is celebrating its fifth anniversary... Art Hodes was a headliner at the University of Michigan's *Jazz Revisited Colloquium* May 18/19 with two concert performances and a lecture/ demonstration on his unique style of jazz piano. Hodes, by the way, is now back in action following close to six months of recuperation from illness. He will be back in Toronto at Café des Copains for two weeks (July 24 to August 5).

The Berklee School of Music in Boston held a birthday bash for Charles Mingus on April 22. Highlighting the event was a concert featuring **Jemeel Moondoc's** ensemble... Coda editor **Bill Smith** made an excursion to the US midwest in April to show his film **Imagine The Sound** at the University of Wisconsin and the Southend Music Festival in Chicago. In Madison he also performed with a group assembled by drummer **Paul Baker** and in Chicago performed with a quartet led by clarinetist composer **Gene Coleman**... Chicago's Jazz Showcase held a special Weekend May 4-6 with Anita O'Day,

Johnny Frigo, Art Hodes, Larry Novak, Art Hoyle, Gordon Brisker and Louis Bellson's 15 piece big band. The second such event runs the first weekend of June with Jimmy Smith, Von Freeman and Rod Rodney. Phil Woods, McCoy Tyner, James Moody, Stanley Turrentine, Art Farmer and Johnny Griffin have all been recent headliners at the Showcase.

**Julius Hemphill** is the guest with Minneapolis' IMP ORK on June 2... Lanny Morgan, Clifford Jordan and Dick Hyman have all made visits to the University of North Texas recently... The Santa Fe Jazz Weekend took place May 25 to 28. It's reputedly one of the better events in the calendar and features a good cross section of artists and styles. To get on the mailing list for next year's event drop a line to 535 Cordova Rd., Suite 132, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

Mundell Lowe and Betty Bennett were at the Vine Street Bar & Grill April 15 in preparation for a recording date for Fresh Sound Records. Bob Cooper, George Cables, Monty Budwig and Roy McCurdy completed the all star lineup... The **Bobby Hutcherson** Quartet were heard in concert May 26 at Fort Bragg. The event was sponsored by the Mendocino Coast Jazz Society... The **Eddie Gale** Unit was at Yoshi's May 29 and has a new recording available on Roof Top Records.

### CAMPS & COMPETITIONS

July 15-20 are the dates for the Janice Borla Vocal Jazz Camp at Illinois Benedictine College in Lisle, IL... Marty Grosz and Frank Vignola will be participants in the seventh *International Guitar Week* to be held July 7-13 at the Lamont School of Music, University of Denver... This year's Bud Shank Jazz Workshop will be held July

22-29 at Port Townsend, WA. The week long event concludes with a weekend festival. Buddy DeFranco, George Cables, Joshua Breakstone, John Clayton and the Phil Woods Quintet are among the resident faculty. Write Centrum, P.O. Box 1158, Port Townsend, WA 98368 for more details.

The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz is hosting the *Louis Armstrong International Jazz Trumpet Competition* November 17 and 18 at the Smithsonian Institution. More information is available from 5000 Klinger St. N.W., Washington, DC 20016... The 8th annual Great American Jazz Piano Competition takes place as part of the Jacksonville Jazz Festival on October 11. Application forms are available from 100 Festival Park Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32202.

### FESTIVALS

Charleston's Spoleto Festival showcased the talents of Chick Corea, Stanley Jordan, Mose Allison and Gary Burton in early June... Further north a week long extravaganza of jazz unfolded June 4-10 in Burlington, VT. Headliners included **Betty Carter**, **Randy Weston**, **Andrew Cyrille** and C.J. Chenier... Tucson's *Summerfest Suite* runs from May 27 to July 29 at the Museum of Art's Plaza of the Pioneers... Oscar Peterson (July 7), Billy Taylor (July 27,28), Preservation Hall Band (Aug. 3), Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra (Aug. 4) and Ray Charles (Aug. 31) are among the artists appearing this summer at the Waterville Valley New Hampshire Bridge Music Festival... Joe Wilder, Jim Goodwin, Dan Barrett, Bobby Gordon, Dick Meldonian, Keith Ingham, Marty Grosz and Hal Smith are among those scheduled for this year's Conneaut Lake Jazz Party August 24-26 (call 814-724-

## ELSEWHERE

2163 for information)... *Modern Drummer Magazine* hosts a weekend festival September 8-9 at Montclair State College in Upper Montclair, NJ... the eighth annual floating Jazz Festival aboard the s/s Norway takes place with more than fifty musicians each week. October 20-27 will be a special tribute to Lionel Hampton and his sixty years in jazz while week two (October 27 to November 3) will be a tribute to the Village Vanguard. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope (or two international reply coupons) to HOSS, 830 Broadway, New York, NY 10003 for artist updates.

### BLUES

The seventh annual Chicago Blues Festival takes places June 8-10 at Grant Park... "Accenting The Blues" is the title of the 3rd annual East Coast Blues Music Conference, which was held May 18-20 in Greensboro, NC... Summer blues activities in Memphis include the W.C. Handy Beale Street Blues Fest June 15-17 and the Beale Street Blues Explosion July 6-8... *I Was There When The Blues Was Red Hot* is a new book by Fernando Jones which is intended "to inform the world about the real deal surrounding the history and origins of the blues in America." Available from The Fernando Jones Publishing Group, 5 Wabash Ave., Suite 1409, Chicago, IL 60202-9915.

### ELSEWHERE

The **Paris Reunion Band** was in Tokyo at the Blue Note in January with a modified lineup of Nat Adderley, Klaus Reichstaller, Nathan Davis, John Handy, Robin Eubanks, Kirk Lightsey, Jimmy Woods and Idris Muhammad. The band's fourth recording for Sonet was done in May 1989 in Aarburg,

Switzerland and is called *Live at the Moonwalker Club*.

The **George Gruntz Band** was on tour in Europe during the latter part of May with concerts in France, Germany, Israel, Italy and Switzerland. Future plans call for November concerts in China... It's time for a change in the Musical Director of the French National Jazz Orchestra. The position becomes vacant in September 1991 and the appointment is for two years. Resumes can be sent to Sylvain Torikian, A.J.O.N., Theatre Jean Vilar, Place Stalingrad, F 92150 Suresnes, France... Nominees for the 1991 JAZZPAR Prize are **Don Cherry, Jackie McLean, David Murray, Martial Solal** and **Randy Weston**... 1989 JAZZPAR winner **Muhai Richard Abrams** was in Europe for concerts in Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense and Paris (March 31, April 1-4) with the

Danish Radio Big Band... The European Jazz Competition is open to young musicians and this year's event will be held in Leverkusen, West Germany October 11-12. **Scapes**, a quintet from Holland, were the 1989 winners.

The Jazz Passengers, Curlew, Myra Medford Trio, Sonny Sharrock Band, Bosho and Miracle Room toured Europe between March 25 and April 24 under the aegis of The Knitting Factory.

Ella Fitzgerald headlines this year's **North Sea Jazz Festival** in The Hague. Immediately preceding this event is a new festival in Amsterdam (July 8-11). The **Grand Parade du Jazz** in Nice runs between July 8 and 15... The **Glasgow International Jazz Festival** takes place between June 29 and July 8 with Miles Davis, George Russell, Branford Marsalis, Maynard Ferguson and Steve Lacy among

those participating... The **Cascais Jazz Festival** takes place near Lisbon, Portugal between July 20-28. During this same period Rufus Reid will direct a series of lecture/workshops with Billy Pierce, Kenny Burrell, Kenny Washington, Sir Roland Hanna and Clark Terry... **Company Week 1990** runs from August 28 to September 1 at The Place Theatre in London, England. This year's event will be built around Korean master musician Sang-Won-Park and American composer/trombonist George Lewis... Already past is this year's **Moers Festival**. Hal Russell, Marcus Belgrave, Ken Cox, James Carter and Kip Hanrahan were among the performers... **Trevor Watts and Moire Music** will be touring the US and Canada in September/ October 1990... **Paul Bley's** busy 1990 schedule sees him in Europe for much of the year. He will tour with **Charlie**

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**Haden and Paul Motian** before going to Marrakech in September. On October 4 he will be back in Canada for an appearance at the **Victoriaville festival**.

## Roger Parry sends us this report from Hong Kong:

March 12 saw the first anniversary celebrations of **The Jazz Club** in Hong Kong. A good proportion of the club's 600 members packed into the small but cosy premises on D'Aguiar Street in Central on Hong Kong Island for an evening of free food and drinks, and entertainment provided by local amateur bands, the Victoria and the City Jazz bands, as well as by the club's own professional resident musicians, Ric Halstead, Dave Packer, Eugene Pao, Dodong Lim and Johnny Abrahams. A lucky draw for those present had as its major prize a CD-player kindly provided by the Sharp company in Hong Kong; leading proponent and owner of the club, **Hans Lidders**, whose philosophy is to create a club with a friendly, family atmosphere, was on hand to do the honours. A great time was had by all: for the optimists, their faith in a courageous adventure had been confirmed and the future, if not absolutely secure, is at least looking bright; for the pessimists there was the pleasant surprise of having survived the first twelve months. And a very rich twelve months they have been from the point of view of bringing to Hong Kong a wide variety of international musicians. Immediately preceding these anniversary celebrations, little giant **Johnny Girffin** had brought his distinctive saxophone to the Club, backed by piano, bass and drums of house musicians Dave, Dodong and Johnny; and to follow on and maintain the celebratory

atmosphere the inimitable entertainer, outrageous **George Melly**, accompanied as ever with great style by **John Chilton and his Footwarmers**, kept us all amused, not least with his press and TV appearances, through the succeeding ten days. Looking back over the first year of the Club's operation, the following artists have been seen on its diminutive stage: Anita O'Day, who did the opening honours from March 20-25, 1989; **Ernie Watts**; **Ronnie Scott Quintet**; **Ray Anderson** (two visits, both with bassist **Mark Dresser**, the second with the exquisite drumming of **Pheeroan ak Laff**; in my book, the highlights of a very good year); **Chris Hunter Quartet**; **Monteiro, Young and Holt** with **O'Donel Levy**; **Art Baron**; **James Moody**; **James Morrison**; **Norma Winstone** with **John Taylor**; **Ernie Watts**, for a second visit; **John Hendricks & Co.**; the **Stan Tracey/ Alan Skidmore Quartet** (another personal favourite); **Kenny Ball** and his **Jazzmen** for a single Sunday night stand; **Nat Adderley**; **Joe Henderson**; **Clark Tracey** quintet; **Dolly Baker** to lead into **Christmas**; **Jim Snidero**; **David "Fathead" Newman**; a **Dave Packer "Images"** special; **Dick Pearce**, trumpet/ flugelhorn player who had previously visited us in the **Ronnie Scott Quintet**. And besides this plethora of scheduled visits, there were those unanticipated delights such as **Wynton Marsalis** and **Joe Pass** coming in to play after performances elsewhere in Hong Kong. The Club also boasts a fine collection of records and CDs as well as videos which are shown on a 100-inch screen using the innovative **Sharp XV-100 LCD** projection system: the **Marc Huraux** film, **Bird Now**, was particularly satisfying when shown in the Club setting by this means. In town

right now is **Jimmy Witherspoon** setting us on our way to another year of great variety from the world of jazz! ■

*The Gerry Mulligan Discography* is a brand new work by Danish discographer **Arne Astrup**. The 116 page book lists all known Mulligan recordings. It sells for US\$26.00 postpaid from **Bidstrup Discographical Publishing Co.**, 15 Runebergs Alle, DK 2860 Soeberg, Denmark... The University of Illinois Press is publishing **Chip Deffaa's Voices of the Jazz Age**, profiles of eight vintage jazzmen... A newly revised paperback edition of **Andrew Bisset's Black Roots, White Flowers - A history of jazz in Australia** has been published by **ABC Enterprises**... **Pathfinder Publishing** (458 Dorothy Avenue, Ventura, CA 93003) is producing **Bruce Klauber's** book, *World of Gene Krupa: Legendary Drummin' Man*... **Sher Music Co** has published *The Jazz Piano Book* by **Mark Levine**. The 300 page book is for those wanting to learn how to play modern jazz piano... **Gary Carner** has compiled *Jazz Performers: An Annotated Bibliography of Biographical Materials* and it will be published this summer by **Greenwood Press**. **Garner** is also editor of a proposed **Jazz Discographies Series** to be published by **G.K. Hall & Co**. The discographies will identify solos and include all types of sound media. Additional information is available from **Carner** at 18 Becket Road, Belmont, MA 02178-3905.

## RECORDINGS

An unusual recording has come our way. It's a privately issued 2 LP set by **Bill Evans' older brother Harry**. *Someday We'll Be Together Again* comes from **Trio recordings** made by

**Harry Evans** at the **Camelot Club, Baton Rouge**, in 1969, and this limited edition is available from **Matt Evans**, 102 Baker Avenue, **Clarksburg, WV 26301**.

**A & M Records** has issued new recordings by **Cecil Taylor** (*In Florescence*) and **Dizzy Gillespie/ Max Roach** (a double CD of trumpet/ drum duets)... **Bainbridge** has acquired **Ted Gioia's Quartet Records** and will distribute the existing catalog as well as making available previously unissued recordings. **Bainbridge** has also issued on a budget priced CD the 1964 **Studio 4** recording by **J.R. Monterose** which was most recently available on a **VSOP lp**. Contrary to the company's claim, though, this is not "the only available recording by underground saxophonist **J.R. Monterose**."

New **Blue Note** recordings include sessions by **Terumasa Hino**, **Mose Allison**, **George Adams**, **McCoy Tyner**, **Eliane Elias** and **Benny Green** (piano). New reissues are *Cool Blues* (**Jimmy Smith**), *The Matador* (**Grant Green**), *The Soothsayer* (**Wayne Shorter**), *Oblique* (**Bobby Hutcherson**), *Clubhouse* (**Dexter Gordon**) and *Tom Cat* (**Lee Morgan**).

Still closeted in a warehouse awaiting completion of distribution plans are at least twelve **Chiaroscuro** CDs. Newly recorded sessions by **Mel Powell**, **Lillette Jenkins**, **Howard Alden/ Jack Lesberg**, **Al Grey**, **Jay McShann/ Ralph Sutton** and **Clark Terry** are complemented with reissue CDs featuring **Bobby Hackett**, **Joe Venuti/ Zoot Sims**, **Earl Hines**, **Buck Clayton Jam Sessions** and two **Eddie Condon** dates (*Jazz at the New School* and *Live in Japan*). These reissues do not duplicate exactly the original lps... **Bill Mays** and **Ray Drummond** join forces in *One To One*, a new

studio recording on DMP... **Jazzline Records** has issued James Newton's *If Love* and a session under Alphonse Mouzon's leadership.

The **GHB/ Jazzology** family of labels has released a staggering 40 issues to celebrate George Buck's 40 years in the recording business. Highlights include the first of many reissues on CD from the recently acquired American Music label. *Bunk Johnson, King Of The Blues* is the first US reissue of this material. Included are two previously unissued performances. Also reissued on CD is Buck's very first session by Tony Parenti and his New Orleansians and sessions featuring Art Hodes, Benny Waters, Don Ewell, Wild Bill Davison, Jim Robinson, Johnny Hartman, Lee Wiley, Milt Hinton, Roland

Hanna, Ma Rainey and Jimmy Yancey. All the relevant information can be found in Buck's new magazine/ catalog, **Jazz Beat**. Send \$1.00 for a copy to GHB Jazz Foundation, 1206 Decatur Street, New Orleans, LA 70116.

*Getting Down To Business* is Donald Byrd's new **Landmark** release. Joe Henderson, Donald Brown, Peter Washington and Al Foster completed the lineup... *Falling In Love With Jazz* is Sonny Rollins' new **Milestone** recording... *The Standard Bearer* is Wallace Roney's third release on **Muse**. The company has also issued *Something In Common*, duets by Houston Person and Ron Carter. Harold Land, Fathead Newman, Mitch Farber and Jaki Byard are **Muse** artists whose earlier material is now out on

CD.

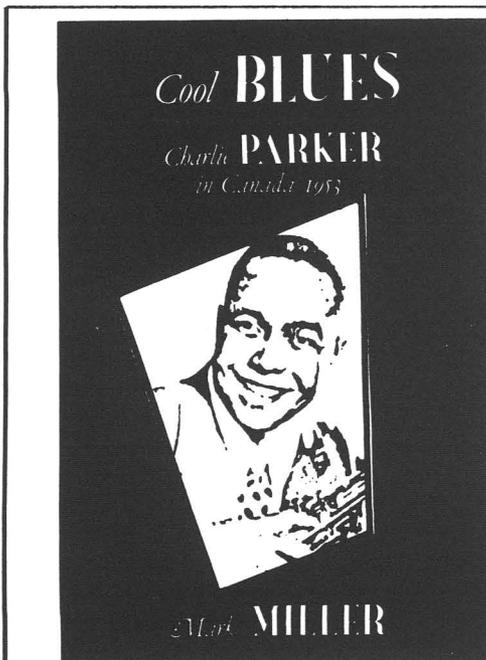
England's **Sequel Records** has made available CD versions of classic blues sessions from the vaults of Pye Records. These are London Sessions by Big Bill Broonzy and Sonny Terry/ Brownie McGhee as well as newly edited and restructured versions of *Murderers Home* and *Blues In The Mississippi Night*.

Duke Ellington's 1940-41 Standard Transcriptions are now out on a new **Stash** distributed label VJC. More than 77 minutes of music is included in this CD of material which last surfaced in one of the Smithsonian collections... **Telarc** has recorded André Previn performing Harold Arlen songs along with Mundell Lowe and Ray Brown. The same company was busy recording Oscar Peterson

at New York's Blue Note in March with Herb Ellis, Ray Brown and Bobby Durham also part of the proceedings... New from **Theresa Records** is a delightful duet performance by John Hicks and Ray Drummond called *Two of a Kind...* Terry Gibbs; *Bopstacle Course* with Barry Harris, Sam Jones and Alan Dawson is now available on LP from **Xanadu**.

**OBITUARIES**

Saxophonist **Clarence "C" Sharpe** died January 28 in New York... Trombonist **Clement Tervalon** died December 2 in New Orleans... Bassist **Hans Rettenbacher** died December 19 in Munich... **Dieter Zimmerle**, editor of **Jazz Podium Magazine** in Germany, died December 31... **Sarah Vaughan** died April 2 in Los Angeles.



# COOL BLUES

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In 1953 the cities of TORONTO and MONTREAL both had thriving jazz communities where a nucleus of devotees pursued the new and mysterious artform known as BEBOP. In two instances in that year, a celestial object came into their midst with the impact of a musical meteor: CHARLIE PARKER came to play at the Jazz Workshop in Montreal, and at the legendary Massey Hall concert with Max Roach, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell and Charles Mingus. In COOL BLUES, Mark Miller tells the story of Charlie Parker in Canada—his music, and his effect on those who came to hear him, play with him, or just see this legend in person. In addition to Miller's text, this new Nightwood book presents over 12 pages of photographs. HAROLD ROBINSON's famous Massey Hall photos have been seen often, but appear here for the first time from prints made *directly* from Robinson's original negatives. There are also photos, by ALAN SCHARF and others, which have *never before appeared in print*.

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# IN WHOSE TRADITION

The efforts of F.M.P. to document and preserve performances of improvised and composed modern music has given the North American audience a rare opportunity to participate in this most vital link in the sound explorations of European-based artists. While the live concert performance remains the ideal introduction to this form, the recordings that have emerged over the past twenty years from the Berlin offices of **Free Music Productions** have opened the door for a wider audience to fully appreciate this often bewildering and uncompromising craft. F.M.P. saw the total neglect of this music by commercial recording companies as a mandate for their involvement and now years later their extensive catalogue may be seen as the beginning of a long story, one that saw the establishment of a new tradition of evolution in composition and performance. This new world of sound is anticipated in the folk music of Bulgaria, Japan, and England, as much as by the innovations of music pioneers in America, India, and Africa. The music becomes more than a cultural response in the direction of social entertainment, it becomes a search for means of expressing a logic that is still in flux. The modern compositional techniques of **Bela Bartok**, **Toru Takamitsu**, and even older composers (**Khachaturian's Toccata** roars with the same sonic intensity as the modern day piano masters' most gripping works) shaped a generation that, since the last days of the nineteen fifties, have witnessed an unprecedented synthesis of forms. While the divergent creations of **Harry Partch** and **John Coltrane** have led some to argue that the new music has its roots in North America (underscored by the rapidly developed push toward complete "free" improvisation within the American movements such as the A.A.C.M. and their counterparts) the current developments suggest otherwise. We can now begin to clarify, with the revelation of *musique actuelle* becoming an international forum for exploration (as is suggested by the epochal month-long festival of creative music surrounding the Berlin residency of **Cecil Taylor**) that this music has developed from a source point that is not rooted in national boundaries but rather finds its genesis in the musician's exploration of the human experience, and is therefore a distinctly personal expression in sound. Working outward from this assumption, the question of the music's

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*Funfunddreissigvierzig*  
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Wuppertal 1985

**Hans Reichel**  
*the dawn of Dachsmann*  
FMP 1140  
Berlin 1987

**Wolfgang Fuchs**  
*so-und? So!*  
Uhlklang UK-7  
Berlin 1985

**Fuchs/van Hove/Lytton**  
*Wo der kopf sitzt*  
FMP SAJ-56  
Berlin 1986

**Christmann/Muller**  
*Carte Blanche*  
FMP 1100  
Berlin 1985

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origins becomes a sticky proposition for the new listener to unravel. The improvised and composed forms that a wider audience are now beginning to regard seriously (thanks to the efforts of F.M.P. alongside labels such as **Incus**, **Leo**, and others like **Red**, **Recommended**, and **Emanem**) have long delighted the ears of the curious and imaginative. Indeed it is the wonder and fascination of the music that gives it its most compelling quality: surprise. The dazzling fireworks of the new improvised music often contains a delayed joke, a shaggy-dog story in sound, where the unexpected left turn is perhaps all that can be counted upon. This is not to say that it is a music of formlessness, but rather that its understanding becomes secondary to the experience. The conditioned primary impulse to under-

stand and identify will no longer fulfil the listener and in effect makes for a rather academic, listless time, waiting endlessly for a recognizable form to emerge so that it can be wrestled to the ground with preconceptions. It is then easier and more satisfying for the music to be regarded at first encounter as a kind of sightseeing. With scenery ever changing, the road likely will follow a more circuitous path than one would expect, but the delight of the travel is enhanced by what is to be seen along the way. Thanks to **Jost Gebers** and **Dieter Hahne** for their persistence in documenting this music.

The appearance of multi-reed instrumentalist **Wolfgang Fuchs** this past autumn as a member of **Saxophone Colossus** introduced to the North American audience a fine new European voice, one with a refined textural sense that explores some unexpected but illuminating corners. *so-und? So!*, his solo 1985 release, is a statement of then-current affairs for the reedist, in which he employs a wide range of horns (from soprano saxophone to bass clarinet) in what is essentially a live studio performance. Staccato bursts of arhythmic playing meet with slow timbral effects for a mixed program of engagingly short (averaging three minutes) selections. The solitary horn fills up the soundscape admirably, avoiding the standard pitfall of extensive overdubbing for the sake of harmonic density by use of dynamics, rhythmic playfulness, and the risk-taking leaps of melody across the horn's octaves.

Fuchs' commitment to the complexities and distinct tonal personality of each horn makes for a refreshing listening experience. Rather than reshuffling his vocabulary of devices, Fuchs prefers to dig for a certain nuance, colour, or timbral nature implicit in each instrument. *so-und? So!* is the West German reedist's calling card in this way, turning the listener's ear as though to say, "here are some of the things the horns are capable of, though you might not know it." His work on bass clarinet alternates between a sub-sonic fluttering and a piping upper register shout that is forceful and startling, while his soprano and soprano voices each have an arresting presence afforded him by the open spaces of this solo outing.

*Wo der Kopf Sitzt*, the 1986 trio of **Fuchs**, pianist **Fred Van Hove**, and percussionist **Paul Lytton** is a decidedly more searching

## SOURCE MATERIALS \* PART ONE

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endeavour than Fuchs' solo session. This can be attributed to the influence of Van Hove and Lytton whose outward-bound natures signal a more intensely "free" approach to sound investigation. The ground that has been covered in past years by improvisers like Lytton in his work with soprano saxophonist **Evan Parker** and by Van Hove in his work with **Phil Wachsman** suggest that the development of intuition and "forward-hearing", a kind of aural E.S.P., so essential to the post-1964 American new music, continues to underline and reinforce the foundations of this period's music. There is a particular attention paid to sound detail and tonal "event" that tends to supersede the conventions of sound language and ensemble role-playing that became common currency in the earlier eras of free music's antecedents, swing and post-1945 bebop; this is a music that carries on from a tumultuous history yet still advances a new view of its component parts. Van Hove and Fuchs chase each other through this program of improvisations and compositions, conjuring at times the swirling maelstrom of **Cecil Taylor's** music in recent years though this music remains an individual statement of note. Broad

colourful sweeps and delicacy are brought together here, making the trio's performance a creative new avenue that retains the energy of "jazz" music and the expansiveness of spirit that characterizes the orchestral tradition. If a listener wanted an immediate introduction to intense, modern European sound, this would be the recording to obtain, for in this release, Fuchs, Van Hove and Lytton produce a high point in **F.M.P.'s** new discography. The high-speed passage of events that greet the listener the first time through crystallize upon repetition as a densely woven sound composition. Highly recommended.

Certainly one musician who has developed an idiomatic personal creative music in this decade is the West German guitarist **Hans Reichel**. Reichel's use of radically altered and deconstructed guitars (perhaps guitar itself is too narrow a definition for the instruments that Reichel uses) is in the tradition that has previously been associated with innovators like Frith and Bailey but his music is singularly his own. It is a music that contains elements of gamelan, koto, appalachian hammer dulcimer, Jimi Hendrix, and the unexplainable sound of machinery talking to itself after the workers

have gone home. Reichel's music could become hugely influential if the trend that has begun in the United States (he has been showcased in two mainstream musicians' magazines, **Guitar World** and **Guitar Player**, high circulation pop music glossies) continues past the inevitable first blush of success that heralds each new guitar "star." Reichel is unlikely as a choice for freak success but he is certain to gain many long-term listeners with the release of his 1987 solo guitar album, *the dawn of dachman*, on **F.M.P.** It is a recording that could be played on a continuous loop at low levels without disrupting conversation but played at regular levels it is mesmerizing, a warm metallic sound that resists definition.

Other examples of Reichel's output over the seventies and eighties are also documented through **F.M.P.**, who pride themselves (justly) upon making an effort to keep their catalogue in print. With luck, Reichel's intrusion into the North American new music fringe will raise the profile of **F.M.P.** artists and open the door for further touring. (Reichel toured in the U.S. and Canada in the fall of 1988.)

*Carte Blanche* finds **Gunter Christmann** and **Torstenn Muller** making an

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## RECORDS REVIEWED BY STEVE VICKERY

elated and beguiling music that quite surpasses the limitations usually found in the duo format. Christmann's long association with F.M.P. both as a soloist and in outstanding collaboration with percussionist **Detlef Schonenberg** has given him an expansive vocabulary of sound language to draw upon, resulting in a music that brings to mind the dexterity and recklessness of a circus juggler.

Torsten Muller's rich double-bass tone and fluid upper register leaps both provoke and lull Christmann's antic colourist approach represented here, making for an unexpectedly soaring sound from two bass-clef instrumentalists.

As is the case with **Wolfgang Fuchs'** solo recording on **Uhlkang**, the division of densely textured improvisations and compositions into a number of short tracks makes this recording particularly desirable to those unfamiliar with this very "free" style of music making. Although there seems to be no electronic processing of the instruments, Christmann's trombone at times emits a high, piercing wail not unlike an electrified trumpet. The selections featuring two basses are high-velocity skirmishes, exploring some overlooked nuances available to the string player that rarely are utilized. **Carte Blanche** fits squarely into what seems the central philosophy of the F.M.P. artists and staff; adventurous yet accessible, "outer edge" playing.

Christmann and Muller disregard the standard North American style that has evolved since the middle sixties (i.e. Ron Carter) and pursue instead their own European roots music, building on the bass technique of players like **Peter Kowald** and **Maarten Altena**, cultivating folk musics and the modern orchestral approach. They are distinctly "free," a delineation that F.M.P. and its companion performance events such as **Total Music Meeting** have built up alongside similarly-focused North American events such as the Victoriaville Festival, and **Musique Actuelle**.

The duo of **Rudiger Carl** and **Sven-Ake Johansson** are another example of this phenomenon of a decidedly mature free improvising unit. In their 1985 F.M.P. release of a live performance, **Funfundressigvierzig**, Carl and Johansson confound the senses playing a combination of tenor saxophone, clarinet, percussions, and accordions. Exhilarating is a word seldom used to

describe the accordion, but in this case it may be applied. The duo performance captured here is one of the more refreshing free outings that has been released recently with a distinctly European quality lent to the proceedings by the accordion's subliminal connection to the romantic aura of French and Italian film of the late fifties. The duo also share in the fun, lampooning the audience's expectations with a gleeful abandon.

Solid music that is again resolutely personal and idiomatic, the duo canter and ramble along as though passing through some Chaucerian tale. Both Carl (on tenor) and Johansson (on drum kit) play with a spirit and wilfulness that suggest their common background in conventional "jazz" music yet without resisting the impulse to turn phrases upside down, making the unexpected allusions to "jazz" funnier than ever. Make no mistake, these are adept musicians on a collision course with inventiveness. The fact that they choose, as does Dutch percussionist **Han Bennink**, to present their music with a leaven of good humour is simply an extra incentive for the listener.

**Transition**, a 1987 recording by the trio of **Heinz Becker** (brass), **Louis Sclavis** (reeds and woodwinds), and **John Lindberg** (bass), is an interesting exploration of slightly more conventional trio playing that is none the less inviting. The music is presented in a series of short precise vignettes showcasing the considerable talents of the three musicians with an accent on space, tone colour, and rhythmic suppleness. Particularly noteworthy are the contributions on bass clarinet by the relatively under-recorded French reedman, Louis Sclavis. Sclavis' sound and conception of the music dovetail with his companions here creating an uncluttered trio setting. The combination of wood flute and bass clarinet against the stop-time pizzicato bass of John Lindberg creates a high contrast effect with the inclusion of Becker's open horn. Lindberg's own work on **Transition**, both on arco (bowed) and pizzicato (plucked) upright bass, favour an overtone rich blend as he glides chords under the two wind players. Segues are numerous but remain clear as rhythms and melodic figures are expressly stated.

With such an impressive first release, it should be hoped that this trio will join the round of acts featured at this fall's upcoming festivals of modern music. ■

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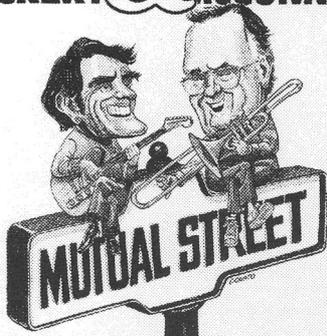
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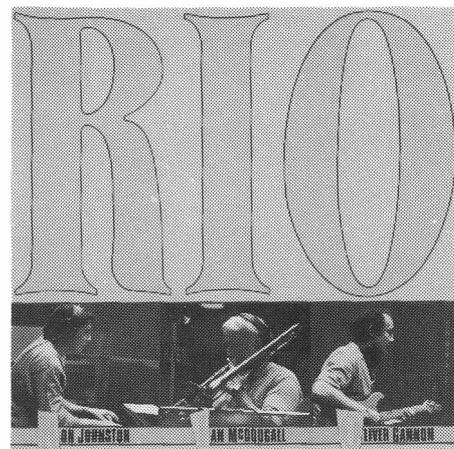
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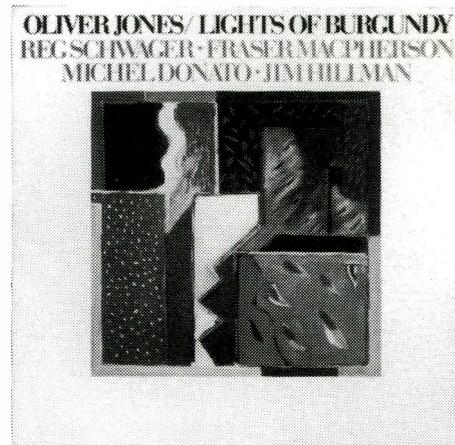
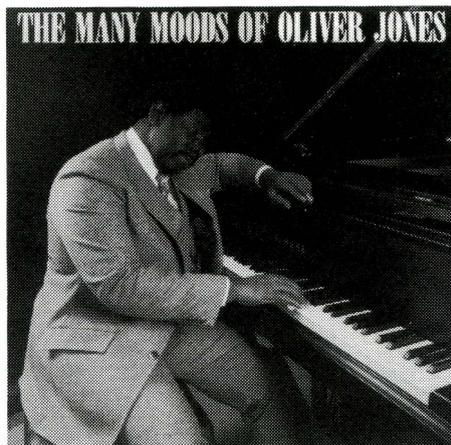
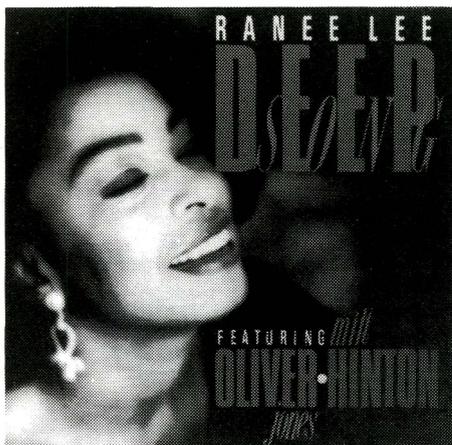
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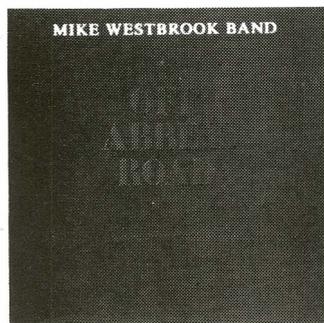
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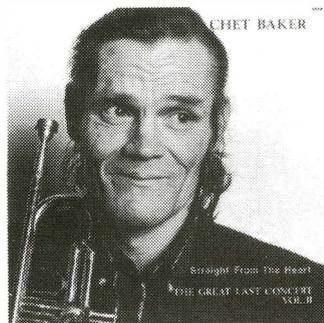
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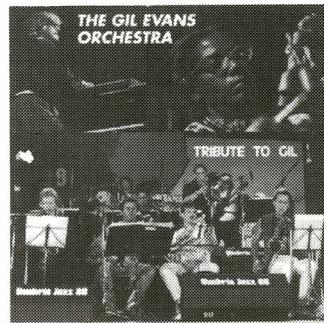
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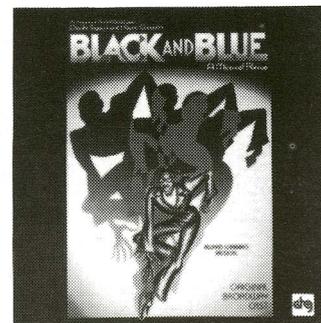
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