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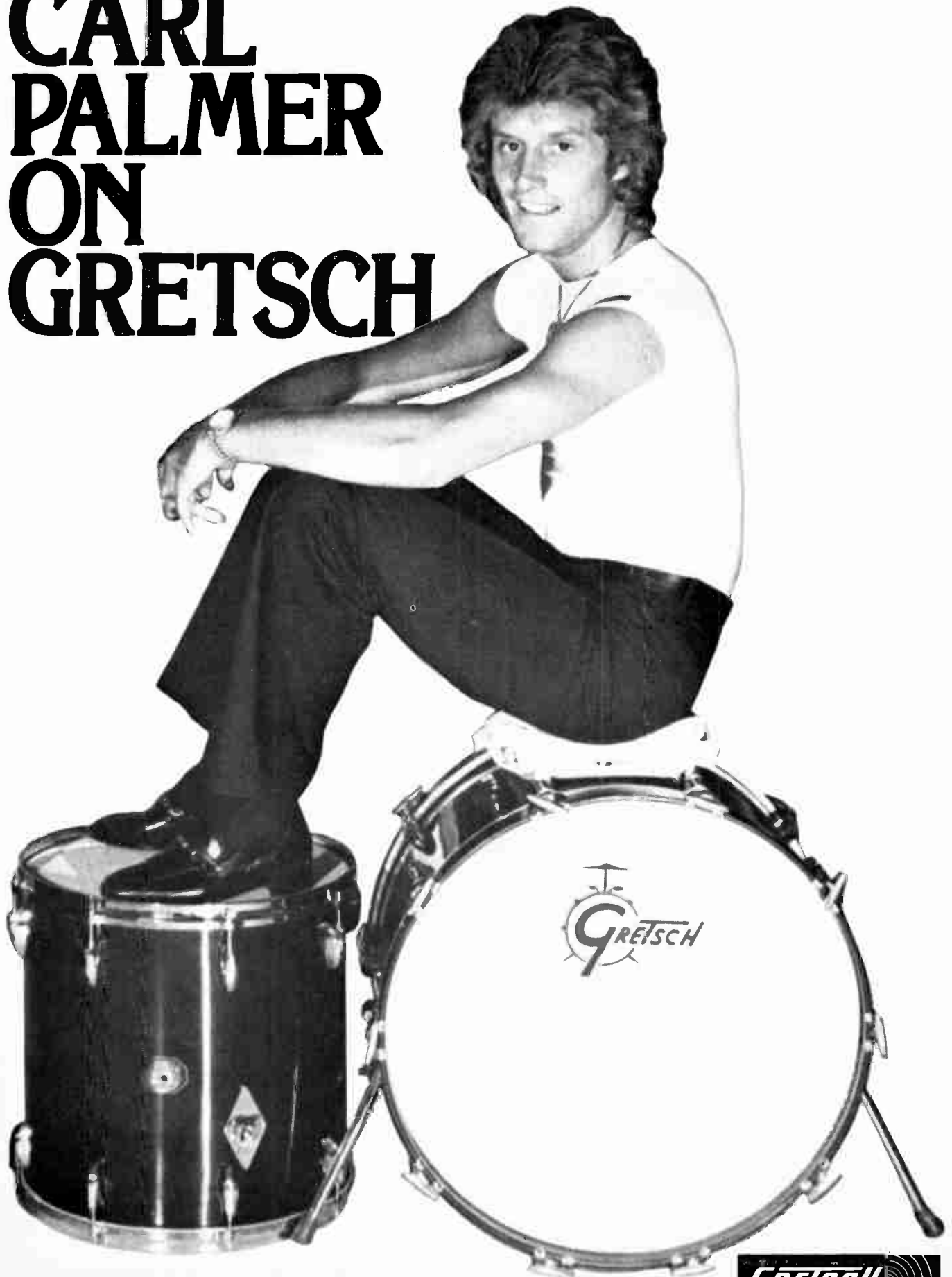
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CARL PALMER ON GRETSCH



EMERSON, LAKE AND PALMER'S LATEST RELEASE, "LOVE BEACH", ON ATLANTIC RECORDS



education in jazz

by Marian McPartland

Today, in our fast-moving competitive world, more and more young people, women as well as men, are seeking a career in music. In order to reach their individual goals, whether as performers, teachers, or composers, they must be educated, for



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Naturally, I, as a woman musician, am eager to see other women fulfill their creative needs. All of us—men and women, if we are to grow as musicians and human beings, must nurture our talent, pool our resources, share our knowledge in the best possible way.

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the first chorus

BY CHARLES SUBER

From what they tell us, the hundreds of thousands of musicians who read each issue of *down beat* also use the magazine as a learning instrument. This pleases us mightily; it's good to know that our ongoing dialogue with musicians adds to the working knowledge of so many other musicians.

"Use value" is not limited to our readers. I confess to be turned on to much of what is said in these pages. Knowing full well that we may disagree about what is important, here are a few recommendations for this issue.

Composer Steve Reich turns in an impressive performance in his first *Blindfold Test*. His comments on an unusual variety of musicians and music—Ornette Coleman to Balinese gamelan—are perceptive, and illustrate how well constructive criticism can be combined with musical analysis. Reich has remarkable ears and an encyclopedic knowledge which he uses in a non-pedantic manner.

Many young musicians, and some older ones, should note well what pianist Jaki Byard has to say about music and musical careers. Considered by his peers to be one of the most talented pianists around, Byard enjoys the satisfactions that come to the teacher-performer. He has played with the best—Dolphy, Ellington, Mingus, Benson and Ron Carter—but when it comes down to walking that extra mile to commercial success, Byard opts for teaching (in Boston at the New England Conservatory; in Hartford at Hartt College).

Byard prefers the security of a steady income and the freedom to choose with whom he plays and where he plays and above all the satisfaction of passing on what he loves most.

Classically-trained Warren Bernhardt admits to learning how to play contemporary piano on the job, with such diverse musicians as Paul Winter, Jeremy Steig and Steve Gadd—"The greatest musician I know [who] taught me about the time and rhythm of the '70s, and of America."

Speaking of teacher-performers, read Doc Fowler's column on the new Los Angeles Bass Institute of Technology with faculty headed by studio bassist Chuck Rainey.

While the members of Oregon—Paul McCandless, Glenn Moore, Ralph Towner and Collin Walcott—do not teach in the classroom, their individual and collective performances are opening areas of musical exploration to young musicians everywhere. Their comments on the interplay of improvisatory ideas are especially interesting.

Also in this issue is an interview with saxophonist Fred Anderson, a founder of AACM, and still another talented, creative musician whose bent is to teach and perform.

Next issue features a long look at Pat Metheny: an interview by Bret Primack with two Heath Brothers, Jimmy, the reed player, and Percy, the bassist; *Profiles* on John Stowell, who is best known for his associations with David Friesen, and Terri Lyne Carrington, young drummer from Boston.

Last call for information on your school jazz festival and your school's current jazz and commercial music courses.

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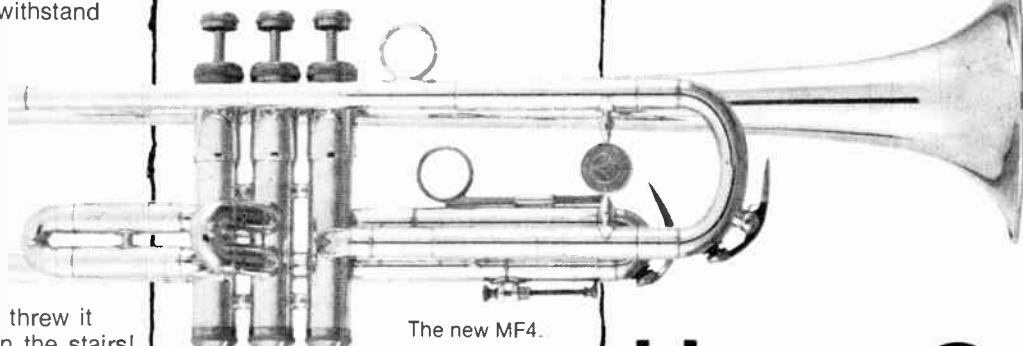
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CHORDS AND DISCORDS

Pickish, Pickish

Many of *down beat's* record reviewers have a penchant for comparing various musicians to popular or traditional musicians who play the same instrument. Mike Nock (*Caught!* 1/11/79) is described as working in a "Tynerish modal framework," and playing a line that "smacked of Horace Silver."

To your critics trumpeters now sound "Shawish" as they once sounded "Milesish." Saxophonists blow now "Gordonish" or "Shorterish," although they once blew "Tranish." Your critics should simply give reviews and critiques of individual music identity instead of popular comparison which only tells the reader who the musician can sound like instead of *what* he sounds of!

Philip Green

Detroit

You've got a point, but a little hyperbolish. Ed.

Jazz Is . . .

Re: Neil Lusby's letter (*Chords*, 12/21/78).

Jazz is music which is alive and growing, changing shape and form in response to the moods and ability of the performer. It is music which reflects the inner soul and times in which we live, always expanding its horizons, injecting new sounds and vitality. The music of Buddy Bolden and Bix Beiderbecke is not the music of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie.

In a rare moment of criticism, Louis Arm-

strong totally rejected the validity of bop and all its players. Thelonious Monk severely disapproved of Ornette Coleman when Ornette was first gaining notoriety.

Does this mean that Bird and Dizzy are not jazz musicians? Should we disallow Ornette for not knowing what jazz is about? This would be absurd. As long as the intent is to produce serious music—music of lasting value—then I hope jazz and its listeners will always be open to new influences and change, whether it be swing, bop, cool, hot, avant garde, free, fusion or whatever.

David Scott Goen

Boulder, Colo.

Mr. Lusby says it all. *down beat* should confine its coverage to jazz. I couldn't agree more.

William Jackson

Los Angeles

Capital Comment

The 10/19/78 issue was very enlightening with your articles on brothers Stanley Turrentine and Jimmy Owens and Dr. Fowler's column. They all brought out some profound ideas which I think every musician should take to heart. For too long, many musicians have been getting screwed because they didn't know how to take care of their business properly. I know, because I'm one of those who didn't and now I'm trying to get my act together.

Musicians would do well to realize that as long as they are living in this capitalistic country they should learn how they can reap its benefits. As brother Turrentine said, it's about "What can you get for me and what can I get for you."

Art Holloway

Chicago

Memorable Nights

Two concerts here epitomized the greatness of the art of jazz. Although the two groups represent different idioms of jazz, they were equally superb. It was a joy to watch true professionals interact and create music that I will long remember. Their musicianship created love affairs with the audiences that commanded several standing ovations. I would like to thank the Milestone Jazzstars and Weather Report for two of the most wonderful and memorable nights of jazz I've ever heard. And thanks to *down beat* for covering the Jazzstars' tour.

Pete Kaluszyk

Cleveland

Opinions Are Like That

I am not exactly a Weather Report aficionado, but I do own a few of their albums and I felt that *Mr. Gone* [1/11/79] compared favorably with their earlier work. In the dim past, a good review in *db* meant that an album was really worth owning; a pan meant that you could save some money. But since I renewed my subscription about a year and a half ago, I have found that this is no longer the case.

A reviewer of Brian Eno's *Before And After Science* used terms like "genius" and "masterpiece." I bought the record, which is tedious, synthesized pap with dubious vocal stylings which, to quote Rahsaan Roland Kirk, "make folks who can sing want to get out and fight." I spent hard earned money after reading a glowing review of Little Feat's *Waiting For Columbus*; I got an hour and a half of some drunken West Coast mutant growling about how many reds he can ingest. Clark Terry's *Live At Buddy's Place*, on the other hand, was a cooking mutha, but it was panned.

continued on page 45

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NEWS

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RON PELLETIER

Bobby Bradford at Century City

LOS ANGELES—The Century City Playhouse Concerts, which take place each Sunday evening and are now entering their third year, are gradually dispelling the notion that L.A. is simply a mecca for bebop nightclubs where studio musicians blow after the daily sessions end.

With sponsorship by the Century City Educational Arts Project and support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the series began early in 1977 with performances by Oliver Lake and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Since then local as well as visiting musicians, many of whom haven't had a southern California concert forum for their work, have staged Playhouse concerts. Local artists who have appeared include Horace Tapscott, John Carter, Bobby Bradford, Vinny Golia, Joan LaBarbara, Nels and Alex Cline, Joe Diorio, and Buell Neidlinger. Imported musicians have included Leo Smith, Andrea Centazzo, Burton Greene, David Murray, Eugene Chadbourne, David Friesen, and John Stowell.

Lee Kaplan, a synthesizer stu-

dent and musician who coordinates the series, states "The whole purpose of the series is to provide an outlet for musicians who aren't into bebop, fusion, and other well-travelled paths that characterize L.A.'s music scene. For years L.A. was considered a wasteland for creative music, so visiting musicians would go to San Francisco instead, while many local musicians didn't have anywhere at all to perform. The Project hopes to change this situation. The Playhouse offers a nice room with a very live sound, semicircular seating which provides a sense of intimacy between audience and performer, and nice lighting. The musicians as well as audiences seem happy with the setup."

Upcoming programs include George Lewis, Sam Phipps, Baikida Carroll, Bruce Fowler, George Sams, Lewis Jordan and a Bay Area group, Alpha and Omega. For further information contact Century City Educational Arts Project, 10508 W. Pico Blvd., L.A., Ca. 90064, or call (213) 475-8388.

Saxist Stitt Plays Penn Slammer

PITTSBURGH—Saxophonist Sonny Stitt received a standing ovation from about 500 inmates for his performance at the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institute (Western Pen) here late in '78.

Then Stitt was presented a plaque in recognition of his musical contributions and marking his appearance at the facility.

Stitt, not well-known for his humility, was visibly moved. "This is too much . . . you're beautiful. I want you to know I love you all." Prison activities director Leo Nobile remarked that "We've had Johnny Cash and Tony Orlando, but we've never had any jazz musician of his [Stitt's] stature here. This is quite a treat."

Backed up by a local trio consisting of Dave Brahm on Hammond organ, Stu Smith on drums and one of Sonny's many musical heirs, saxophonist Lance Parker, Stitt led the group admirably, considering that they had never played with each other before. Between their two sets, singer and guitarist West Virginia Slim took over with his rowdy blues which found a ready audience.

During Stitt's second set his friend, tap dancer Saxie Williams, was spotlighted in a jazz-tap routine that brought the entire audience quickly on its feet. In response to requests, Stitt launched into a most remarkable solo alto rendition of *Stardust*.

Out of the pen, Stitt had been playing a week-long engagement at the Encore II in downtown Pittsburgh with local jazz veterans Mike Taylor on bass, pianist Vince Genova and drummer Roger Humphries. Encore manager Bobby Davis, who has been helping to provide many musical events for the inmates at Western Pen, organized the special event along with Nobile, and is anxious to stage future shows at the prison.

and the **Barone-Burghardt Orchestra**, 26 strong, through *Maiden Switzerland*. **Tommy Tedesco's** second LP, *Autumn*, comes direct-to-disc via sister label Trend.

Mal Waldron's Moods, on Inner City, encompass a sextet LP fronted by **Steve Lacy** and **Terumasa Hino**, and a solo piano disc; guitarist **John Stowell** and **David Friesen**, bassman, go together *Through The Looking Glass*; reed player **Sam Morrison** debuts as leader on *Dune*, before a quintet; altoist and composer **Oliver Nelson's Stolen Moments**, vocalist **Peter "Snake Hips" Dean's Only Time Will Tell**, stride pianist **Joe Turner's Effervescent**, and Kansas City's contemporary combo **Dry Jack** in their debut release *Magical Elements* are all fresh sounds from IC.

NEW RELEASES

ECM's latest issue concentrates on European combos: the **Enrico Rava Quartet** with trombonist **Roswell Rudd**, **J. F. Jenny-Clark** on bass and drummer **Aldo Romano**; bassist **Barre Phillips** in a foursome with **Terje Rypdal** on guitar and organ, **Dieter Feichtner**, synthesizer, and **Trilok Gurtu**, tabla and percussion (*Three Day Moon*); and keyboardist **John Taylor**, vocalist **Norma Winstone**, brassman **Kenny Wheeler**, who are Azimuth (*The Touchstone*). Next out will be a second **Collin Walcott/Don Cherry** collaboration, the **Art Ensemble of Chicago's** awaited appearance, new wax from **Miroslav Vitous**, **Rypdal** and **Jack DeJohnette**, **Double Image**, and **John Abercrombie** with **Richard Beirach**.

Columbia released in January **Cedar Walton's Animation**, **Lonnie Liston Smith's Exotic Mysteries**, and a single **Return To**

Forever disc from the four LP tour set. In February came **Arthur Blythe's** debut, a **Herbie Hancock/Chick Corea** album recorded during their duo tour, Hancock's own *Funk Up*, LPs from **Eric Gale**, **Hubert Laws**, **Tony Williams** (accompanying **Cecil Taylor** on one track, **Ronnie Montrose** on another, with much support from **Jan Hammer**), an effort from Cuban jazz band **Irakere**, and **Hilary**, a young flutist and soprano sax player. **Mongo Santamaria**, **Mark Colby**, **Richard Tee**, and **Wilbert Longmire** (on Tappan Zee); **Carlos Santana**, **Janne Schaffer**, **Marlena Shaw** and **Elvis Costello** offer more new Columbia distributed ear items.

Contemporary Records offers new sets by the **Ray Brown Trio** (pianist **Cedar Walton** and drummer **Elvin Jones** assisting) and tenor saxophonist **Chico Freeman** (accompanied by **Hilton**

Ruiz, **Joony Booth**, **Jones** and **Jumma Santos**), as well as the U.S. release of LPs previously issued only in Japan by pianist **Hampton Hawes** (his last trio date, with **Brown** and drummer **Shelly Manne**), **Phineas Newborn** (another trio session, from '70, with **Brown** and **Jones** on board) and alto saxophonist **Art Pepper** (with pianist **George Cables**, bassist **Tony Dumas** and drummer **Carl Burnett**).

The **Art Ensemble Of Chicago** is merchandising albums (solo LPs by **Famoudou Don Moye**, **Joseph Jarman**, and **Malachi Favors Magoustous**, plus the quintet live at Montreux), also Jarman's prose and poetry, T-shirts, buttons, window decals, bumper stickers, and photos from P.O. Box 49014, Chicago, Ill. 60649.

Living up to its name, **Discovery Records** hopes pianist **Dwight Dickerson** will become known by *Sooner Or Later*, tenor and alto saxophonist **Tom Creekmore** through *She Is It*,

The dynamic drumming of Ed Shaughnessy is one of the biggest sounds in jazz. Now Ed has drum heads to match the music he plays. Groovers™. The first and only drum heads designed specifically for jazz. These heads have lots of response and lots of resonance. They give you a sensitive, tonal sound at all dynamic levels, even when you're playing softly with brushes.

Groovers won't pull out. A patented mechanical interlock system called Headlock™ permanently

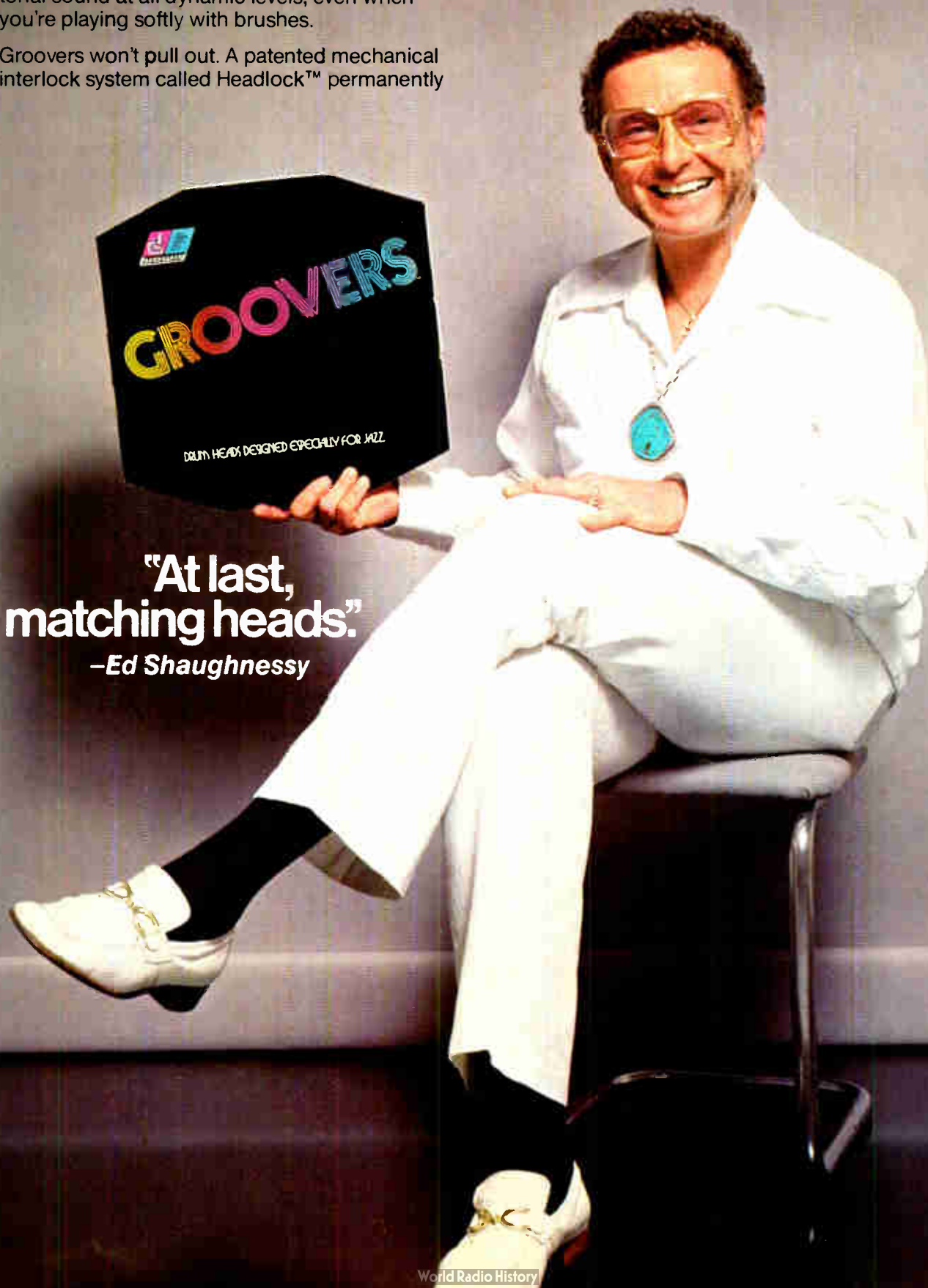
locks each head in place. Plus, temperature changes and other weather conditions won't weaken or change the pitch of the head. For jazz, play Groovers. Ed Shaughnessy does. Find your head at your Ludwig Dealer.

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**"At last,
matching heads."**

—Ed Shaughnessy



POTPOURRI

A Town Hall Memorial Concert benefitting the children of late pianist **Lennie Tristano** at January's end featured **Roy Eldridge**, **Sal Mosca**, **Warne Marsh**, **Sheila Jordan**, **Max Roach**, **Eddie Gomez**, **Liz Gorrill**, and many others. In Los Angeles in mid-January, **Buddy Collette** played a solo flute rendition of *My Buddy*, tenorists **Harold Land** and **Teddy Edwards** jammed on standards, **Charles McPherson** altoed up *A Train*, **Don Cherry** improvised on an African instrument, and everyone finaled on *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat*, at an impromptu gathering honoring the late **Charles Mingus**, organized by the bassist's son Eugene.

Weather Report (winners of a French Grand Prix du Disc for *Mr. Gone*), the **CBS Jazz All-Stars**, the **Fania All-Stars**, **Billy Joel**, **Irakere**, **Los Papines**, **Orquestra Aragon** and guitarist **Leo Brower** play a three day Cuban-American festival March 2-4 in 4,800 seat Karl Marx Theatre in Havana, as part of a burgeoning cultural exchange encouraged by Columbia Records.

Club Med's Caravelle resort, on Guadeloupe in the West Indies, has been featuring jazzmen in residence since late November. Ex-reedplayer and former jazz impresario in Paris and Jaffa, Israel, **Bernie Pollack**, Chef de Village at Caravelle, worked with trumpeter **Joe Newman** to organize mellow weeklong stays for U.S. jazz groups, starting with **Attila Zoller's** quintet, and bands led by **Clifford Jordan**, **Gerry Mulligan**, **Sonny Fortune**, **Ronnie Cuber**, **Red Rodney**, **Dizzy Reece** and **Stan Getz**. The jazz fest continues through April, with **Zoot Sims**, **Ronnie Mathews'** quintet, **Don Elliott**, **Ted Dunbar**, **Eddie Daniels**, Newman, and **Roy Haynes'** *Hip Ensemble* among the performing guests. And Columbia intends to record **Dexter Gordon** and **Woody Shaw** at Club Med—live on the beach?

For her recent engagement at L.A.'s Studio One's Backlot cabaret, **Carmen McRae** was accompanied by **Bill Lohr**, piano, **Ed Bennett**, bass, and **Frank Severino**, drums. And at the Playboy Club's *Lainie's Room*, **Chris Connor** was backed by **Bill Mayes**, piano, **James DeJulio**, bass, and **Roy McCurdy**, drums.

Happenings in Southern California have teamed jazz performers with orchestras. Saxophonist **John Klemmer's** post-Christmas appearance at the Music Center with a medium-sized concert orchestra was followed by a program of orchestral works (largely) written and conducted by **David Axelrod**, featuring **Fredie Hubbard**, **Joe Farrell** and **Joe Sample**. Then **Dizzy Gillespie** was soloist with the **San Diego Symphony** in an early January concert program held at Golden Hall there.

Chicago's **Jazz Record Mart**, informal clearing house of jazz and blues information, record collectors' hangout and invaluable friend to more than one **db** editor, has moved from its home of 16 years to a larger location at 11 W. Grand Ave., two doors west of its former address. **Bob Koester**, owner of the JRM and Delmark Records, pledged to scrub away the loveable old grimy image, and his big plans include possible warehouse space for Windy City music publications and organizations.

The very popular pianist/produser **Bob James** and the very austere saxophonist **Roscoe Mitchell** each performed lately and led workshops for the very eclectic **Eclipse Jazz** organization at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor campus.

Splitsville: **Steve Swallow** has left **Gary Burton's** group, and been replaced by electric bassist **Chip Jackson**; we also hear **Thad Jones**, happily active with the **Danish Radio Orchestra**, may leave **Mel Lewis**, who coled their big band with **Buddy DeFranco** during a winter tour.

"Time in Music, Rhythm and Percussion" is University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's March 8-10 international symposium; **David Baker**, Ghanaian ethnomusicologist **W. K. Amoaku**, and British composer **Reginald Smith Brindle** will show and tell.

The Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival has received confirmations from **Marian McPartland**, **Carmen McRae**, **Joanne Brackeen**, **Urszula Dudziak**, trombonist **Melba Liston**, Dr. **Karen Fanta Zumbrunn** (piano), **Jane Bloom** (soprano sax), **Monnette Sudler** (guitar), and **Sue Evans** (percussion).



down beat readers poll winners **Dexter Gordon** (jazz musician and tenor player of the year) and **Woody Shaw** (trumpeter of the year, with *Rosewood* album of the year) received their plaques from veteran promoter **Jim Harrison** at the Village Vanguard on New Year's Eve; WRVR-FM carried the evening's sets live.

Talent's All In The Family Moffett

NEW YORK—Add a new surname to the list of great musical families in jazz: **Moffett**. A recent appearance at the Ladies Fort has created considerable interest in the family, who play in the free vein. Fathered by drummer **Charles Moffett**, whose reputation was made alongside **Ornette Coleman**, **Archie Shepp** and **Sonny Rollins**, the band includes tenor and alto man **Charles, Jr.**, age 19; drummer **Codaryl**, 17 years old, and the star of the band, 11 year old bassist **Charneff**. Sister **Charisee**, who is 15, adds vocals. Drummer **Olatunji** sponsored the engagement, which drew **Arthur Blythe**, **Prince Lasha**, and **Ornette Coleman**, among overflow crowds.

Though his children were all born in New York, **Charles Sr.** moved the family to Oakland in 1970, where he ran a school for musicians and led the **Moffettes**, a big band with the family at its core. Until a year and a half ago, **Moffett** and his son **Mondre**, a 21 year old trumpeter, played with the family band but when **Mondre** left to write, **Moffett** also got off stage. "I felt something was missing so I said let me move off the bandstand. I could only carry them so far. Let me move so they can really be free."

Inspired by **John Coltrane** and **Coleman, Charles, Jr.**, who also listens to **Grover Washington, Jr.** plays spirited tenor and alto; he has mastered circular breathing. **Robert Palmer** in the New York Times called **Codaryl** a "ferocious drummer."

Although with eyes closed one could never guess the bassist is an 11 year old, **Charneff** is a visual treat. When he's playing funky, far-out riffs on electric, he walks amidst the audience and mugs for the crowd."

"I got that from **Stanley Clarke**," he explained. "I play acoustic and electric bass because with electric I'll be able to communicate with the audience better, but I'll probably play much more on the acoustic. I like 'em both."

In addition to a State Department tour of the Far East in '75, the group has worked the **Key-stone Korner**, and **Mr. Caesar's** in Albany since the family's recent relocation in upstate New York. **Moffett** brought the family back to the New York area because he felt the trio needed "To be around more musicians and also because of the energy level in New York. I know that will make them grow much, much more."

FINAL BAR

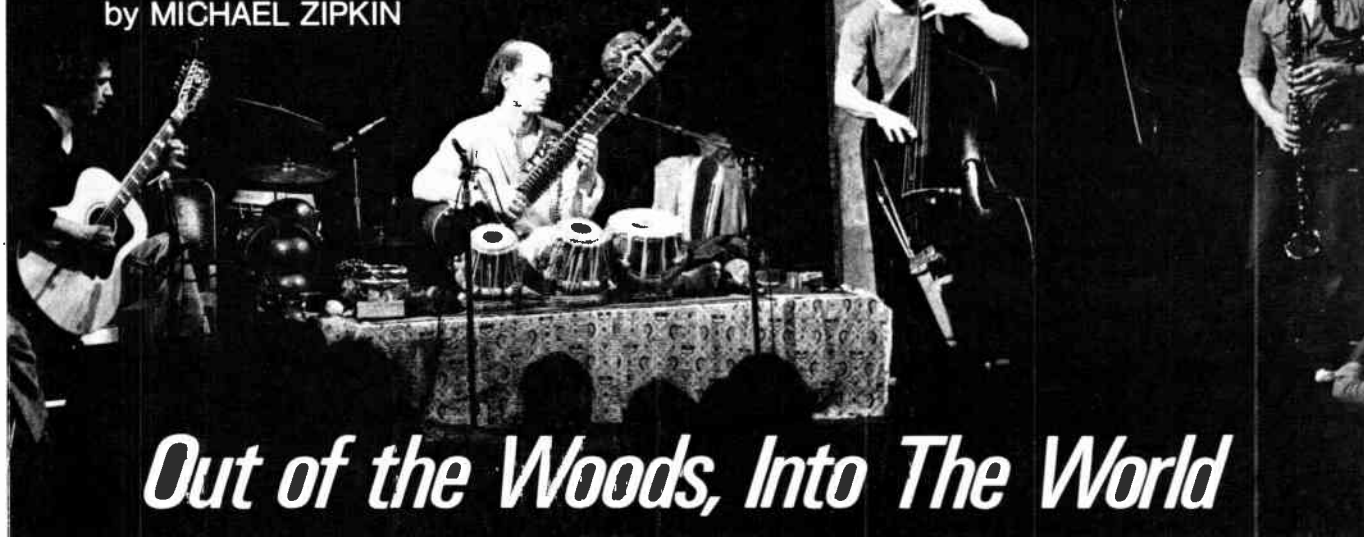
Donny Hathaway, pianist, vocalist, and songwriter whose talents blossomed in collaboration with **Roberta Flack**, died January 13 in a late night fall from his hotel room. Hathaway was 34 years old.

Tommy (Thomas J.) Wolf, Jr., pianist, songwriter, composer and singer, dance arranger and music coordinator for television variety shows and specials, died in his sleep January 8. Wolf, 53, born in St. Louis, had lived in Los Angeles since 1958; his songs include *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most*, *All The Sad Young Men*, and the libretto for the oratorio *When Jeremiah Sang The Blues*. Survivors include his wife, a daughter, his father and a brother.

Don Jones, bassist with the Chicago Jazz Group, died January 15 at age 40 of a stroke. Originally a guitarist, Jones, a onetime Berklee student, had toured South America with **Gary Burton**, concertized with **Jim Hall** and **Jimmy Raney**, recorded with **Arnett Cobb**, worked in **Herb Pomeroy's** big band and with the Latin band **Batucada**. Surviving Jones were his wife and 11 year old daughter.

OREGON

by MICHAEL ZIPKIN



Out of the Woods, Into The World

OREGON: TOWNER, WALCOTT, MOORE, McCANDLESS

TOM COPI

"I was with a bass player's son recently, and he said he wanted some balloons, so we stopped at a truck stop and got him a bag, and I have never seen anyone who could play with a balloon like this kid could. He was doing stuff I didn't think anyone could do. Everything! He'd blow one up, make a nipple on the end and pull on it for awhile, or let it go; or blow one up and break it—all these things are obvious. But then he would hold it in his mouth, and turn the whole balloon inside out, so that the outside of the balloon would slide down the inside, and he'd push that in and out for awhile. Then he'd put it in his eye... I mean, he was getting it on for two hours! It was really inspiring, and he wasn't particularly concerned with what anyone thought about what he was doing. He wasn't demonstrating his facility with balloonsmanship, but exploring the reality of a balloon. He's as good a player as any of us, because it's *exploration*—finding out what's *in there*, what's possible. And in a way, a lot of the unusual sounds that come out of Oregon are just that. The most exciting stuff, with the richest energy or awareness, comes when there's an exploration, or a discovery of something possible that we didn't know existed before, a new corner, or some unturned stone."

It's Sunday afternoon in San Francisco's Alta Vista park, a crisp, frightfully clear fall day that washes the senses and makes the mind rove to seldom-visited places. Paul McCandless—chief wind player (oboe, english horn, bass clarinet, wood flute) of the quartet Oregon—and I sit on a park bench, watching sailboats tip and sway in their wind dance on the bay. The November sunlight rims the grass with an almost blue-green luminescence, as shadows play on the sidewalk in consort with dogs, children and other Sunday strollers.

The night before at the Great American Music Hall, McCandless, along with Ralph

Towner, Glen Moore and Collin Walcott, set the spirits flying in a dervish delirium of serendipity. Drawing on material ranging from *The Silence Of A Candle* (from their 1973 debut album, *Music Of Another Present Era*), to untitled tunes from their just-recorded second album for their new label, Elektra, the men of Oregon worked their mysterious magic with the sell-out crowd.

Their music is at once soothing, startling, pastoral, abrupt and entirely unpredictable—rather like the swirling dance of the wind which played counterpoint to that afternoon conversation in the park. Even in the most carefully notated compositions, the element of surprise is always bubbling just beneath the surface; a pristine, lyrically lush chamber piece can, with so little as an odd dissonance from Towner's 12-string or a strangely bowed harmonic from Moore's 18th century bass, take wing and soar towards stupendously free horizons, only to return to earth with the sublimity of an autumn leaf. Is there a method to this magic?

"We take some care to improvise in a style that really sounds as if it's a composition, with an improvised melody that comes maybe from the chords that are being played," says McCandless. "A composition will set up what Ralph speaks of as a life history—a set of expectations, a program, a microcosm—that might be established from the very first sound, and that is developed throughout the whole piece. So the composition and the improvisa-

tion are as close as we can make it. I'm really interested in music in which what you do makes a difference in what somebody else does. And vice versa."

"My godmother was asking me," reports Collin Walcott from New York, "'How do you signal when you're through, or when you want someone else to be through? Do you all throw flaming darts across the stage with your eyes?' It was hard to explain exactly what happens. It just seems to be like so many life situations—how to be open, how to have taste, and what is your pride? What *are* all of those things?"

From Longview Farms in Worcester, Mass., where Oregon is finishing up the basics for their next album, Ralph Towner tries to outline the kinds of balance that Oregon strives for when the group improvises: the yin and the yang, as it were, of collective music-making.

"All your emotional sides should be present, ready to come to the fore," he explains. "You need to have both the dominant and recessive traits going on at the same time—be able to respond to what's happening musically, but also be effective aggressively if you want to change the flow. It's a strange balance to keep both sides going."

"Any improviser has got to be able to listen, and *hear*—hear himself and everyone else at the same time," Towner continues. "Because if you get too focused on what you're doing, you'll find yourself on a back road, with everybody thinking that the band has made a left turn. At the same time, you can't have that *faceless* democracy—the kind of uniform blur when nobody makes waves."

Indeed. The waves give the ocean its character, and provide the most interesting ride.

"We're professionals," says McCandless, "and we're very good at certain things we do. But we also allow ourselves to become amateurs in the sense of exploring and not knowing exactly how it's going to come out. And what comes out," he says with a quiet mystery,

OREGON DISCOGRAPHY

OUT OF THE WOODS—(Elektra 6E-154)
 VIOLIN—(Vanguard VSD 79397)
 FRIENDS—(Vanguard VSD 79370)
 TOGETHER with Elvin Jones—(Vanguard VSD 79377)
 IN CONCERT—(Vanguard VSD 79358)
 WINTER LIGHT—(Vanguard VSD 79350)
 DISTANT HILLS—(Vanguard VSD 79341)
 MUSIC OF ANOTHER PRESENT ERA—
 (Vanguard VSD 79326)

"is so much more than you could ever think of, because it just didn't exist until it came together."

Rather like a dream, in fact. Past musical lives mingle in infinite combinations in the creations of Oregon, drawn freely from the vast, lush pool of world musics. One point of departure is the fact that all four members have had extensive "classical" training—Towner on trumpet, then guitar; Moore on piano, then bass; McCandless on oboe, flute and english horn; Walcott on percussion, sitar and tabla—and that discipline and technical prowess provide the group with some of the tools with which they construct their compositions and improvisations.

Says McCandless, "The thing about having a classical technique, or having played that

est, a debut on Elektra—reflects so much more than a lukewarm, Third Stream-type melding, that the comparison itself is ludicrous. In truth, the influences are hard to pinpoint. Collin Walcott's studies with Ravi Shankar and Alla Rakha; Glen Moore's love of bluegrass, East European and South Indian fiddle music; Ralph Towner's work with European and American jazz players; Paul McCandless' performances with a woodwind octet: all these experiences merge, and the results know no boundaries.

"We try not to avoid learning certain things for fear of losing something else," states McCandless. "You've got to keep taking more and more in, as long as it interests you."

This stylistically-open approach comes into the fore as well when one considers Oregon's

sides his sitar, tabla and an ever-growing set of hand percussion instruments from all over the world, Walcott has been known to grab his clarinet or guitar if the moment is right, adding a feather here or a thunderclap there. Moore estimates that, among them, the band plays up to 80 instruments.

"We can change the entire character on stage by someone picking up a different instrument," Moore says. "If I bow a melody with Paul on oboe, there's another whole character in that unison that's not the oboe and not the bass. The same with the bass and clarinet: they combine and suddenly sound like a pipe organ!"

"We'll discover textures in which all the individual instruments disappear," McCandless explains, "because of the particular sound quality each is making. And they blend with other sounds so that a sound is created that is just *this sound*. We'll try to maintain that same mysterious quality, and try to get it to go places, and bring out different variations. It's like creating a new instrument, or a 1920s car, or some kind of creature. It's not set out ahead of time, but certain kinds of fantasy characters will recur, and we'll maintain and develop that identity. It's almost like writing a science fiction story."

Another source of new musical input for the band has been the various members' outside projects over the years. Particularly influential has been Walcott's association with Don Cherry, which began several years ago in Boulder, Colo., when the two were teaching at the Naropa Institute. "We had neither met nor heard each other play before," Collin remembers, "so we had no great preconceptions or trepidations about meeting someone who was supposed to be well-known in some particular area. We liked each other a real lot from the very first. I had a date coming up for ECM, so I asked Don if he'd like to help me do it." Entitled *Grazing Dreams*, the record features John Abercrombie, Palle Danielsson and Dom Um Romao, and is a marvelously gentle though challenging set of composed and improvised duets and group pieces. Says Towner of the pairing, "Collin comes back from a record with Don and he's playing several new instruments in several different ways. It's been an inspiration to all of us."

For Walcott, though, the relationship with Cherry has proven an even more profound effect on his relationship with Oregon, giving rise to what he calls "a very fruitful cross-fertilization."

"Paul's and Glen's and Ralph's roots were in jazz; that is, in what they heard or thought was an alternative to the music school. It wasn't for me: I was much more interested in the whole Third World thing—African music, Indian music of course, even American folk music. There was a slight feeling in the old days that we were three jazz musicians with sort of an ethnic sideshow, with me trying to incorporate those things into the whole working basis of Oregon."

"But now it feels great. I guess it's the same old story as with so many relationships: it's hard to see something if you're coming from the inside of it. Hearing somebody they admired as much as Don Cherry using the folk melodies let them be more open-minded to the whole folk approach. And it goes both ways. I'm trying to understand jazz more, and play changes on the sitar, and swing time on the tabla! I've been learning some of Ornette's tunes through Don; Ornette's harmolodic concept is the only non-chordally-oriented



VERYL OAKLAND

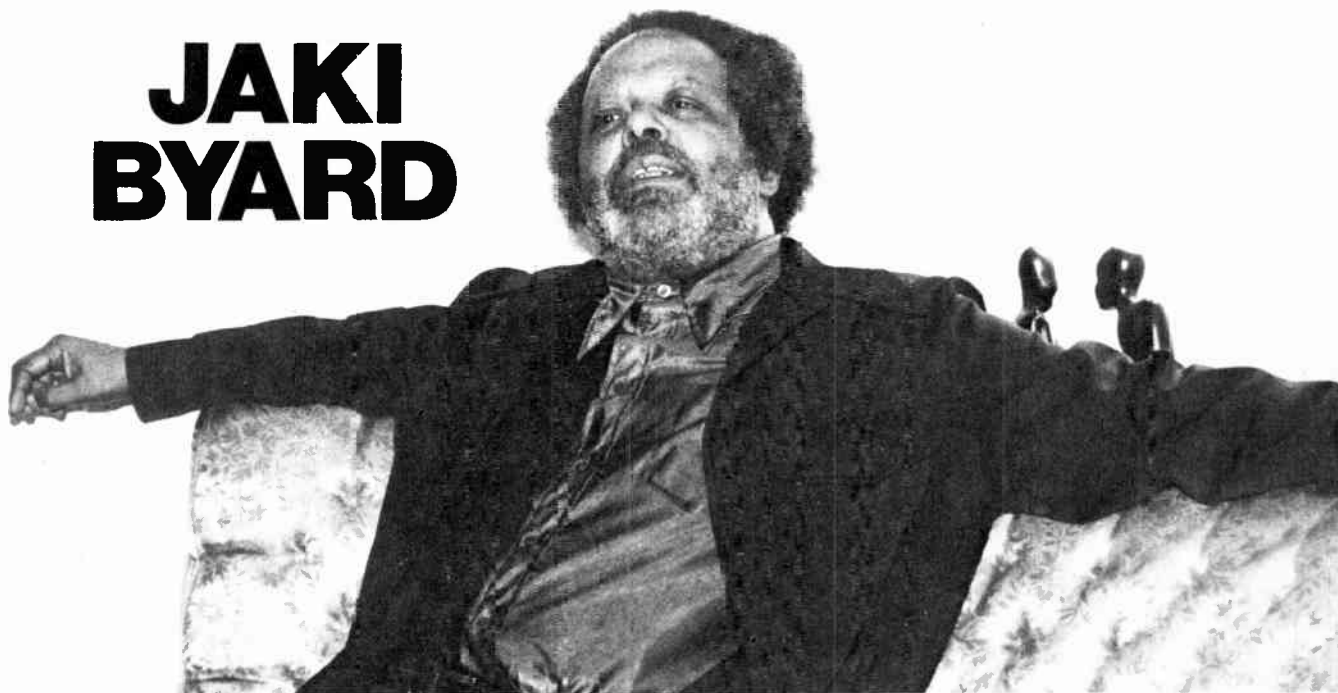
music, is that you can bring a different conception of what's possible on the instrument—from the classical tradition—to the style you're addressing. So, in some cases there's a wider range of knowledge from this other area that you can bring to improvising, and it enriches the whole thing."

The jazz influences these individuals brought to Oregon are strong, too. Towner was a working pianist in New York in the late '60s; Moore gigged with Chico Hamilton, and has recorded with Paul Bley, Nick Brignola and pianist Larry Karush; Walcott has been in the studio with Miles Davis, Kenny Burrell and Tony Scott.

But the eight years of Oregon—begun when all four were members of the Paul Winter Consort, and documented on seven albums for Vanguard, plus *Out Of The Woods*, their new-

instrumentation. Along with his classical oboe and english horn, McCandless plays wood flute and bass clarinet ("I started out just freaking out on the instrument," he says of the long clarinet, "and I really accept most everything that comes out of it. It's a real warm male voice."). Bassist Glen Moore will switch to piano at least once during a set—playing both the keys and the strings inside—as well as possibly flute and violin, played on his lap like a miniature bass. "I tend to play the violin rather roughly," he explains, "and tend to get about ten times the sound a violinist tries to get. But it's real fun for me to play because it's so easy to get the sound out of it." Pianist/guitarist Towner is likely to pick up a flugelhorn, trumpet or french horn in the heat of combat, and can probably get more sounds out of a tambourine than any man alive. Be-

JAKI BYARD



RICHARD BROWN

Romping, Stomping, and Waiting For THE Break

by RICHARD BROWN

Commercial success is going to have to come to Jaki Byard because the multi-talented musician will not meet it halfway. "A lot of cats get out there and hustle seriously but Jaki will say 'It will happen and I'll wait for it to come to me,'" says J. R. Mitchell, an ex-student of Jaki's and drummer in his New York big band. "It's his pride, because he's been with the monsters."

Byard has performed and/or recorded with Rahsaan Roland Kirk (who called Jaki the "emperor of the piano"), Eric Dolphy, Don Ellis (once Jaki's student), Duke Ellington, Charles Mingus, Paul Chambers, Earl "Fatha" Hines, and George Benson; his credits go on and on.

Ron Carter and Jaki "did a lot of miles together" in the early '60s, performing and recording often. "He's a phenomenal player," Carter tells me. "He's one of the few players I know who can literally play jazz history on the keyboard."

Herb Pomeroy, veteran trumpeter and big band leader, says, "Jaki was recognized by musicians even in the '40s. When I came to Boston as a student I heard people talking about him as a legend. He was in the army in the '40s with Kenny Clarke and some of the other founding fathers of bebop. When he came out of the service he was one of the first Boston musicians to play and write bebop."

Pomeroy later asked Jaki to join his band. "He played tenor sax and wrote for my big band from '55 to '57, and wrote some of the greatest big band music I've ever heard. I think he's one of the great big band arrangers."

Phil Wilson and Jaki "go a long, long way back. I played second trombone in Jaki's band in 1955 when I first came to Boston." He was

on the staff of the New England Conservatory along with Jaki until recently. "If there ever was the essence of a teacher for jazz education—Jaki Byard," Wilson emphasizes.

George Russell, who did a tap dance tribute to Jaki at his 54th birthday party, says matter-of-factly, "Jaki Byard is a genius on piano."

One must see many of his concerts and listen to many of his albums before one has any idea of Byard's musical scope. He incorporates diverse keyboard styles in his piano playing, from Scott Joplin through Fats Waller, Art Tatum and Erroll Garner to McCoy Tyner and the progressives. The result sounds totally natural. The tunes he plays cover just as broad a range, from *St. Louis Blues* and his tune *Top Of The Gate Rag* (tinged with modern ideas) through *Let The Good Times Roll* to his composition *Night Leaves*, which is sometimes reminiscent of Bartok nightmusic.

Expect the unexpected. "You could be doing *The Shadow Of Your Smile*," says J. R. Mitchell, "and before you get into it he's into a Scott Joplin-type rag, and then he'll say 'free' and it goes into a completely free thing. But he never stays 'out there' so long that he would lose his audience. He'll come right back into the principal theme with which he started." And then there are "head tunes." "There are quite a few tunes which are 'head tunes' and he has the cats play, for example, blues in F, and he'll have one section play *Now's The Time* and another play *Buzzy*—he has three different tunes going at once."

Or more. On his *With Strings* album there's a section in *Cat's Cradle Conference Rag* where Byard has Ray Nance play *Jersey Bounce*, George Benson *Darktown Strutters' Ball*, Richard Davis *Intermission Riff*, Alan Dawson *Riag Dem Bells*, and Ron Carter

Desafinado while Jaki plays *A Train*.

Jaki doubles on saxophone, and can also be found playing trumpet, bass, trombone, guitar, drums, organ, flute and vibes, which he learned in order to write better arrangements: he plays all of them with finesse. A funny thing happens to Jaki's sidemen. With his encouragement other musicians' latent versatility blossoms: here's Joe Farrell on drums, drummer Alan Dawson on vibes, bassist Major Holley on tuba, Ray Nance singing! Byard himself also plays electric piano, but hasn't explored the world of electronics because, "It's too expensive. If I could afford it I'd probably become involved in that too."

Jaki gives incredible room to his sidemen—so much so that he might not solo on a couple of cuts on his own album. I feel he gave so much time to his sidemen on *Jaki Byard With Strings* that he didn't play enough, but he disagrees. "That's the way I record. I make sure everybody gets equal time."

Above all, he's a master showman. He talks to his audience, shouts to excite them, tells jokes (like talking about his white musicians' ghetto upbringing), does a tap dance or a soft shoe occasionally, does pratfalls and makes faces while he plays. And if that doesn't work, the humor in his playing (inserting bars of *God Bless America*) captures his audience's attention.

Perhaps his humor is best represented by his *Solo Piano* album cover, which has a blowup of the back of his head.

Such antics are no surprise from someone who patterns himself after Fats Waller. "I was once thinking of taking up acting just so I could play Fats Waller's role in a movie. I wanted to do it all—the singing, the mugging. And it's a coincidence, because I just got a

call to play in *Ain't Misbehavin'*. An actor mugs Waller, though, and Jaki hasn't decided if he'll accept the offer.

"He's not self-conscious at all," says Herb Pomeroy. "We used to do a history of jazz program for which he wrote a lot of original music. He was able to play all these piano styles, and was a very dominant force in the program. He would get out in front of the band, take off his shoes and socks, roll up his pantlegs, and sort of moan and groan like a blues singer out in the field, unabashedly accompanying himself with his two-string guitar."

Because of his humor, versatility and fascination with old styles, Byard has been faulted for not being serious. Some feel he should stick to his best instrument, piano, and others trivialize his use of older styles by saying he plays them tongue-in-cheek. When I query him about this, his face appears serene, but it bothers him. "People have said, 'Why doesn't Jaki Byard get serious?' My music is serious. I might do it with humor, but it's still serious because I mean what I'm doing," he protests.

Byard has taught at the New England Conservatory (NEC) since Gunther Schuller brought him there in 1969, and so he has also had to deal with classical musicians who disdain jazz—one of the few things that rouses his ire. "I have a problem in school when people say, 'I'd like to do something legitimate.' I say, 'What do you mean? Because a child is born out of wedlock it's illegitimate—your music is bastard music? When you play *Now's The Time* it's not legitimate?'"

Jeremy Kahn, a student of Byard's remembers a class when Jaki "went into a monologue about how jazz players are just as heavy as classical players and can do things no classical player could ever hope to do—he must have gotten annoyed by one of the classical pianists. Then he got into a parody thing when we were playing a tune; when it came time for his solo, he played these Wagnerian chords up and down the keyboard, of course totally within the context of the tune; he never loses sight of that. I can never take him altogether seriously, though, because he's so unpretentious."

I mention to Jaki that the liner notes on *Freedom Together* say that *Young At Heart*, played in an old style without improvisation, was recorded as a joke. "No. I felt young at heart and I only had a few minutes to finish out the album; it's one of the tunes I played when I was a cocktail pianist... but that tune got me one of the best gigs I've ever had. Kym Bonython, the Australian impresario who

SELECTED BYARD DISCOGRAPHY

solo piano period

SOLO PIANO—Prestige 7686

THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE—Muse 5007

with sidemen

FAMILY MAN—Muse 5173

JAKI BYARD EXPERIENCE (with Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Richard Davis, Alan Dawson)—Prestige 7615

JAKI BYARD WITH STRINGS (with George Benson, Ray Nance, Ron Carter, Richard Davis, Alan Dawson)—Prestige 7573

JAKI BYARD LIVE, VOLS. 1 AND 2 (with Joe Farrell, Alan Dawson, George Tucker)—Prestige 7419 and 7477

as a sideman

with Charles Mingus

BLACK SAINT AND SINNER LADY—Impulse 35

with Eric Dolphy

OUTWARD BOUND—Prestige 7311

with Don Ellis

NEW IDEAS—Prestige 7607

with Rahsaan Roland Kirk

KIRK'S WORKS—Mercury-Emarcy 2-411

brings most of the jazz there, heard the tune and hired me to play in Australia because he never had liked the tune until he heard my version of it."

Jaki has been through a few phases in his long career. He spent the mid '50s to late '60s in the hands of Herb Pomeroy, Maynard Ferguson and Charles Mingus.

He worked in Ferguson's big band from 1959 to about 1962, but he felt stifled as a writer because the staff arrangers did the bulk of the band's writing. "He had his own writers and he would tell them what to write; I didn't do that. I wrote a couple of arrangements that he finally did record, but he didn't give me credit for them on the record." The tunes were *X Streak* and *This Is My Lucky Day* on *Maynard '62*!

Herb Pomeroy saw what went on behind the scenes. "Maynard would say to me, 'Gee, everyone in the band wants Jaki to write something and when he does it doesn't work out.' Maynard's band was on the road all the time and they didn't have time to rehearse Jaki's music. Jaki's music is mechanically difficult and he was such a genius that he was impatient. Everybody's part had to be meticulous and accurate, and there'd be a lot of mistakes that took time to work out, but when you finally did, it was great big band jazz music. The Ferguson band was just a living for him; I'm sure he was frustrated musically."

The last straw was when Ferguson wouldn't

let Jaki out of a gig so he could play with Eric Dolphy for two weeks at the Five Spot. Jaki would have been the pianist on *The Great Concert Of Eric Dolphy* album. He played the gig with Ferguson, but "after what happened I gave him notice. He had a lot of respect for me and hated to see me go. He called me and talked with me for four hours. He finally said, 'Technically you can't quit; I'm gonna fire you.' He did that so I could collect unemployment. Anyway, I had moved to New York and I wanted to further my experiences there."

Byard joined Charles Mingus' band in New York. "Mingus' band was better for me because I had more of a chance to solo. It was a real challenge." In a 1964 interview, Byard said Mingus chose him because he was one of the few pianists who still could play stride, but he told me, "I think he chose me because I was one of the few cats that would play for the money he was offering. So I took advantage of it; it was a lot of fun." He even played bass behind Mingus while the bassist sat down at the piano. "Yeah. That's when I started getting my blisters together. I remember one night really getting off, I started getting my chops together [laughs], and so he stopped it; he stopped playing piano, too."

He played with Mingus for five years until "I just didn't feel like playing with him anymore. That surly attitude of his; some guys didn't like it, man. He'd threaten the group and stuff like that. It just became a pain in the neck. Also, he was more interested in his music than mine; I just decided to go on my own."

In the late '60s Byard was in a solo piano phase. He put out many solo albums and often played solo piano at the Top of the Gate. He feels now that "I've done enough solo albums. There's just so much you can do before you can overdo it." Lately his two big bands, Apollo Stompers in both Boston and New York, have monopolized his attention.

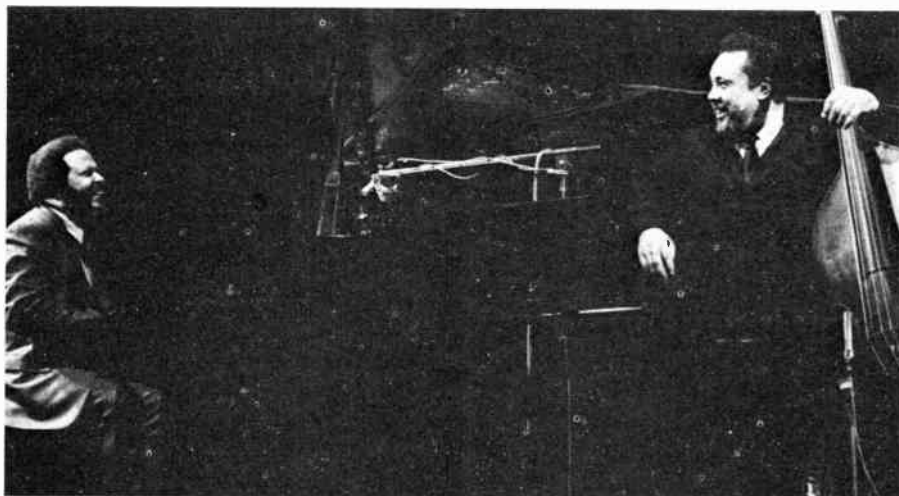
The Stompers in Boston, who work with a female singer and a tap dancer, consist mainly of NEC students and play every Wednesday night at Michael's; the Stompers in New York, also predominantly young, play every Monday night at Ali's Alley and include three female singers, two of whom are Jaki's daughters, and a tap dancer.

(For more Stompers details, see *News*, 1/25/79.)

The bands allow Jaki to showcase his talent as a big band writer, but he says, "I have mixed emotions about them." J. R. Mitchell has some perspective on this: "One thing I've found with Jaki is that if he feels the music isn't ready to take to the public he won't." The New York band rehearsed at Jaki's home for nine months (for free!—"The musicians in the band respect this cat an awful lot.") before he brought them to Ali's Alley. "Although the band sounds good now, Jaki still feels they're not ready to meet the level of expertise he feels they should. Will we ever reach that point? Because he expects a lot from the cats."

None of Jaki's 20-odd albums were recorded with a big band. "I haven't been approached." Has he suggested the idea to Muse, his present record company? "I've already spoken to them [laughs]. That's one of the reasons I recorded my last album, *Family Man*. It was agreed that if I do a couple of trio things maybe I could do a big band record with them."

"I didn't anticipate making any albums until 1980; according to what I did on that album, I wish I would have waited until 1980. It



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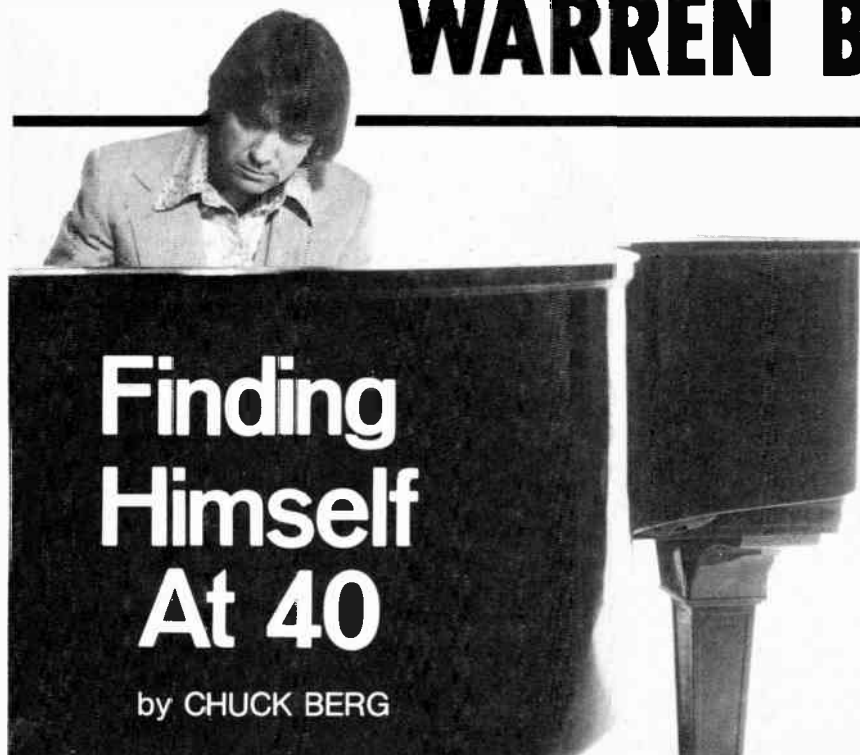
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WARREN BERNHARDT



Finding Himself At 40

by CHUCK BERG

Keyboardist Warren Bernhardt exemplifies the adage that life begins at 40, at least in part.

Bernhardt—for years one of New York's busiest freelancers, working with Paul Winter, Jeremy Steig, Tim Hardin, Gerry Mulligan, Don McLean, Carly Simon and James Brown—is in the process of launching a career as soloist, composer and leader.

Thus far his calling cards include *Solo Piano* (Arista-Novus AN 3001) and *Free Smiles* (Arista-Novus AN 3009). On the same label another solo record, *Floating*, is due for March 28 release. In addition there have been appearances at such prestigious venues as the Bottom Line in New York and the '78 Montreux Jazz Festival.

His path has been circuitous. As a child, Bernhardt was a prodigy whose repertoire included Chopin, Debussy and Rachmaninoff. However, the discipline required for a classical career was incompatible with other needs like playing baseball. His heart just wasn't in it.

As a science major at the University of Chicago, Bernhardt discovered jazz in the person and music of Oscar Peterson. He soon traded his lab manual for a fake book; Bernhardt had found his calling.

We met for our interview in the comfortable confines of the Arista Building on 57th St. in New York. A large, athletic man with wholesome All American good looks, Bernhardt could easily pass for an NFL quarterback in his prime.

As our conversation unfolded, however, Bernhardt framed careful responses that re-

vealed the same warmth, sensitivity and introspection found in his music.

Bernhardt: I was born in Wisconsin, where my father was located for many years, November, 1938. He was a church organist. He had played piano for the silent movies and then had an orchestra that did shows in the local theater. He had quite a reputation up there. He was a very good pianist.

After I was born, he started a conservatory of music in Milwaukee. So during my first two years musicians came by, fine musicians like Joseph Levine, the great Russian pianist. I also had a record player when I was one and lots of records. So I grew up with lots of classical music. There wasn't any jazz at that point.

My father got disillusioned with teaching in Wisconsin although he had a good reputation. So he came to New York and got into Columbia Artists Management. For years the whole East Coast was his territory. He brought classical music to all the little towns that otherwise never would have had any.

Sometimes he'd bring me along. After age seven or so, when we lived in New York, we'd go out to a town and play Mozart concerts together—little pieces that I could play. And then I started giving little concerts. I'd be featured in these small towns by service groups like the Lions Club.

I had some good teachers here in New York. One is now the head of the piano department at Juilliard. Another is head of the piano department at the New England Conservatory. So I was well schooled in classical music from the very beginning.

My father's office was right down the street in the Steinway building. I'd hang out there and he'd get tickets for all the concerts, so I was at Carnegie Hall three or four nights a week. It was really a remarkable childhood now that I look back at it. I loved music. But I didn't really want to practice. I didn't want to work at it. I liked to play baseball.

I had my first professional concert when I was about nine. I remember that after I got paid, I went out and bought a catcher's mitt. I've still got that mitt. So there was this thing between baseball and music. Sometimes, I'd go out and jam a finger before a concert. The question was whether to be an athlete or a musician.

We moved to Chicago when I was in junior high. When my father passed away, I stopped playing. But there was a point there where I could have gone on.

I remember Rudolf Serkin told my father, "Have Warren come up and spend the summer with Peter and me. Let's really do it. He's ready." So my father put it to me. I was eight at the time. He asked, "Do you want to be a concert pianist? Now is the time." I said, "No. I want to play ball. I want to go to school. I don't want to have tutors."

There have been times I've regretted it, but I'm glad that he left it up to me. I think he wanted me to succeed where he hadn't. So there was some pressure there, but when we got out to Illinois, at Evanston, I stopped playing. I played a few concerts with the high school orchestra, but I wasn't really that interested. There was something lacking.

I'd gone into science. I loved mathematics, chemistry and physics so I decided to become a scientist. Then in my senior year at the University of Chicago, I heard Oscar Peterson for the first time. That's when he had Herb Ellis and Ray Brown. He affected me deeply. I sat right next to the piano. I was transfixed.

There were a lot of clubs on the South Side that I didn't know about. I started going to jam sessions at school. Then I picked up some George Shearing records. I remember a copy of *down beat* that had Brubeck's *The Duke* written out. I loved the harmony. All of these things happened after I had heard Oscar.

I was always in the lounge at school playing. Then drummers started calling. But I couldn't even play blues in F then. I only knew how to play written music, you know, the standard classical stuff. I'd think, "How am I going to play this tune?" But people were patient. Bill Mathieu, Ira Sullivan and a lot of good players helped out. They'd come to the lounge and help beginners, a strictly informal thing.

I began going to clubs more and more often.

At the same time, I heard the album *Everybody Digs Bill Evans*. That really did it. The same week I went to hear Miles with that great sextet he had. I got a gig up on the North Side in a little club with a trio and began working two, three nights a week. Finally, music took over. I dropped out of school for all practical purposes. My grades started to go down, I lost my scholarship. So the music was it.

There were a lot of jam sessions in Chicago; good people would come through town. But I was always shy, even though I had played solo concerts. I was an only child, and really shy. If someone put me down I was very sensitive about it.

But I met a lot of great players at those sessions. Herbie Hancock was in college. When he'd come back for vacation, he'd be at the sessions. Jack DeJohnette was a piano player then, and he'd come and sit in.

After about two years playing in clubs, my jazz playing improved. I had listened to a lot of records and played along with them. I imitated Oscar, Bill and Wynton Kelly. I got a tape recorder and pieced all of Wynton's solos together on one reel. I studied that tape and played along with it. But I was afraid to approach him because I was very shy. I was afraid to say "I love the way you play." I've always been that way.

Paul Winter then called and asked me to join a group he was forming to play collegiate jazz festivals. Paul's group did very well. It was a good band at the time; it wasn't at all what he's playing now. It had some nice charts by Jimmy Heath and J. J. Johnson. We won the intercollegiate jazz festival at Georgetown, whatever that means. Anyway, that's how we got a Columbia record deal.

I got a trophy and 50 bucks. It was fun. I remember hearing the North Texas band, Duke's band, and Cannonball's group. Bob James won the trio thing. And Bill Evans was a judge. That's when I first got to meet him. It was great, though the idea of competing never really sunk in. It was just a chance to play.

Somehow Paul got a State Department tour of South America. This was in 1962 with the same sextet. We toured 26 countries in 180 days, played a lot of concerts—the reception was tremendous. People would walk 20 and 30 miles barefoot to come hear us. We played in some real small towns. When we got back, we moved to New York.

Berg: Had Paul's music started to change?

Bernhardt: Well, it started to change when we got to Brazil. Everywhere we went, I hung out with musicians. I met Sergio Mendes, Gato Barbieri and people like that who also were just starting out. Brazil was the place for infectious music, for street music. Just walking down the street you'd see people dancing, playing guitars, playing rhythm instruments. So when we came back we did a bossa nova album [*Jazz Meets Bossa Nova*, Columbia] which did pretty well. That was my first taste of arranging and being in the studio.

The tour was so well received that we got back thinking we were big honchos. But in New York, it was another thing. Then it was four or five years of scuffling. That's when I met Jeremy Steig. He came into Paul's band when the horn section left. So it was Jeremy, Sam Brown on guitar, Cecil McBee playing bass and Fred Waits on drums. Then we did another series of tours. We played all the colleges you can think of for a couple of years.

I started to lean in a different direction then. I'd been with Paul long enough. I went

into the shed and practiced a lot. Played all day. I had a little brownstone up on 101st St. For a while Bill Evans and I got very close. He stayed with me for a while and we played a lot together.

He never actually taught me, but we played all his tunes. He wrote them all out for me and said, "Discover it yourself. I'm not going to say anymore." He'd sit on the couch and say, "Play something in descending diatonic thirds against that chord." We discussed textures. The way he worked on a tune which is extremely intricate, beautifully designed—he's a giant. So that was a great period in my life.

But it was also a period of playing a lot of club dates in Queens, and traveling out with dance bands—anything to pay the rent. At that point there wasn't much demand for someone at my stage of development. Then I played with Gerry Mulligan for a while when he added piano to his group.

Berg: How did that come about?

Bernhardt: I don't know. He just gave me a call. Then I started to do a little studio work, a couple albums here and there, some jingles. This was about the time Jeremy suggested we form a group to back up Tim Hardin. He's an extraordinary singer who can do more with one syllable than some people can do all night. He's really good. But Tim disappeared in the middle of our first engagement, and that's how Jeremy and the Satyrs was formed. We had to go on. Tim was in L.A. and we were ready to play, so that band happened as a result of Tim's disappearance. That was my first involvement with electric keyboards and with folk music.

Berg: How did that feel?

Bernhardt: I felt very naked and exposed. I'd been studying intricate classical music and now I was back down to the triad again. But it helped my time which hadn't been that good.

We played a lot of gigs with Jeremy. It was a good experience. Eddie Gomez, Adrian Guillery and Donald MacDonald were really fine. I think it was the first fusion music in the sense that we played blues, rock 'n' roll, and jazz and then started evolving to tunes that incorporated all those elements.

It was the acid period of rock 'n' roll and we had a chance to play the Fillmore with Jimi Hendrix and people like that. Jimi was a big influence. That's when I started doing albums with Richie Havens and John Sebastian. I discovered I liked that, too. So I searched for many years, trying to find out who I was.

Berg: Wasn't your shift from classical to rock to jazz somewhat disorienting?

Bernhardt: It's just a difference in musical roots that makes it difficult for a jazz player to play classical music, or a classical player to play jazz music. You have to get beyond that to recognize the oneness in the music. If you feel uncomfortable at a session, you're rooted in another place than where you are. To get over that you have to focus on what's happening where you are. Then you can start enjoying the group.

Drummers, I think, have taught me the most about the essence of what we call jazz. I spent a year with Jack DeJohnette's group. We've been friends for years—playing with him every night was a great experience.

Donald MacDonald was also important to me. He was a very tasty accompanist, plus, he could play any style. His work has been vastly underrated.

Recently, I've played a lot with Steve Gadd. In my opinion, he's the greatest *musician* I

know. He's coming from a very high place. He's taught me about the time and rhythm of the '70s and of America. It's so beautiful the way he plays—I don't usually heap praise on people like this, but I have to say it because we just finished a tour and he really captivated me. I hope he doesn't burn himself out.

Berg: What tour was that?

Bernhardt: It was with Mike Mainieri, Tony Levin and Steve. We had played together in White Elephant, and then as a quartet called L'Image. For the tour we backed up David Spinozza and Carly Simon. It was fun playing both halves of the show. I thought it was at a high musical level all the way through.

Berg: How did the solo album evolve?

Bernhardt: One facet of playing for a pianist is to venture out as a soloist since the instrument is symphonic in nature. The project came about when I was up in Woodstock, New York. My wife and I were giving a concert, half classical and half improvisation. She's a flutist. We were just doing a little local concert for our friends up there.

I had just come off the road with Jack's band, and my chops were pretty good. Also, Jack had opened up my head to what he calls the spiral concept which involves constant expansion and avoiding getting into the same place twice. A friend of mine, John Holbrook, an engineer with a great studio up in Vermont, said this was the time to record. I uncoiled like a rattlesnake and said, "Let's go."

I produced it myself. Essentially, it's a beginning effort at getting free in the solo realm. There's room for improvement, but I hadn't played solo except in little clubs here and there, and when you're playing as a single, piano bar style, that's different.

So I went into the studio with a beautiful concert grand, a Steinway. It was a lot of fun. My friend Mike Mainieri gave the tapes to Steve Backer at Arista and he said, "Great!" The solo projects, though, are just one aspect.

Berg: What other things would you like to be involved with?

Bernhardt: Well, I've thought about leading a band. But then, I don't know about dealing with personalities. I find it easier just to deal with myself. And I feel much freer. Like last night at the Bottom Line, I felt really free.

There are instances, though, like when I play with Jeremy, where we read each other's minds. There's instantaneous telepathic creativity in a group. So you want to get the greatest cats to record with to make the record. But then you've got the reality of touring. If those cats can't go, what are you going to do? You can get some younger musicians. That's one approach, but I've always felt that that situation holds you back. So when I feel ready to lead a band, I'll lead a band.

Berg: Apparently that's not right around the corner.

Bernhardt: What's around the corner is what's essential. What's essential? Is it essential that I play tonight? To me it is essential. It's nothing, really, if you relate it to the history of humanity. Big deal. But for me, it is a big deal because social and business relationships function in a way that make it necessary.

Essentially, I want to have fun and communicate with people. I want to become less stiff as a musician and really loosen up. I want people to like the music. But I'm not going to demean myself to get their attention.

The real aspiration is to become a better human being. If I can do that by playing, which I think I can, it would be tremendous. ♦♦

FRED ANDERSON

AACM's Biggest Secret

by SHARON FRIEDMAN and LARRY BIRNBAUM

In recent years, members of Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) have received almost universal recognition among critics and cognoscenti around the world. How ironic, then, that one of the founding members and most important voices of that organization has received practically no attention.

A modest, soft-spoken man, tenor saxophonist Fred Anderson allows that opportunity has always been just a shadow away, but the "big break" has simply evaded him. As a teacher, builder, and above all, as a musician, his contributions to Chicago's music scene have been invaluable. Although he has played regularly and steadily with younger musicians whose stars have risen virtually overnight, he himself has never toured the U.S., nor has he ever recorded under his own name. He has substantial sideman roles on three Delmark albums, but he is best heard, perhaps, on the recently issued *Accents* album, on EMI-Electrola, from Hamburg, Germany, where he is featured with a group called Neighbors. He performs on three of his original compositions and another piece by trumpeter Bill Brimfield, his colleague for over 20 years. Neighbors, headed by Austrian conductor-composer Dieter Glawischnig, has brought Fred to Germany on two occasions. Also, the Fred Anderson Quintet played in Moers, Germany, at the Moers Festival in May, 1978.

In May, 1977, Fred opened a small storefront equipped with a bandstand, p.a. system, folding chairs, and a few sofas. He called it the Birdhouse, commemorating Charlie Parker. Plagued with problems stemming from Chicago's political bosses, the Birdhouse operated but intermittently from its inception. Police doubted the authenticity of Fred's stated purpose; his neighborhood alderman perceived the jazz music workshop as a place out of sync with the German-American stores and Oriental restaurants already on the street; city building inspectors studied the Birdhouse's zoning and architectural plans, calling for expensive renovations. Fred's legal counsel advised the Birdhouse maintain a low profile; faced with rising costs, scarce audiences, and the authorities' harassment, the Birdhouse closed at the end of June, 1978.

The experience, however, was well worth the effort. Anderson had a place to teach, practice, perform and present various groups

20 □ down beat



WERNER PANKE

in concert. Anderson said, "The Birdhouse was a very positive thing and I think everyone involved in trying to make the Birdhouse work knew that it was a beautiful endeavor."

Fred's style on tenor is unique among new wave players for its big tone, reminiscent of the open-throated voices of swing era horn players. Contrasting markedly with the often pinched and nasal or raw and quavery tones of young players, Fred plays in the smoothly rounded fashion of a latter-day Lester Young on a speed jag. Hunched over the bandstand, his powerful frame emits dense clusters of notes whose sinuous, darkly shaded lines have little in common with those of the swingsters. As one of the first Chicago players in the new post-Coltrane idiom, Fred's style has been an important influence to all of the younger musicians who have followed in his wake.

Talking to Fred shortly before an upcoming German tour, we were struck by his warm, avuncular manner as he looked back over his long career and discussed the formative years of the Chicago school.

db: When did you get started playing the tenor saxophone?

Anderson: I started playing in about 1946, '47, around in there, at about 15, 16 years old. I began playing horn by listening to Dexter Gordon, Bird, Lester Young...

db: Were you listening to Coleman Hawkins?

Anderson: Well, Coleman came in a little later. Let's say *Body And Soul* was probably one of the first Coleman Hawkins tunes I'd heard because at that time, *Body And Soul* reached the jukebox. So that was really about the first time I got acquainted with Coleman Hawkins' music.

db: You started listening to Lester Young? You have some of his big tone.

Anderson: Right. That was the whole idea. That was my concept. Instead of sacrificing sound for speed, I started trying to deal with sound and the speed, both of them, so that was the whole idea in playing. The guy that really got me interested in listening to sound was Gene Ammons; he had that big sound. But Jug didn't have a whole lot of speed. So what I thought about was how to combine Jug's sound and Charlie Parker's speed. I wondered if it was even possible! I tried to play in that particular style, sort of like how everyone else was playing. I never really did learn how to

play inside [the changes] too well, but I had the concept of what was happening. That's sort of how I developed that particular way; playing sort of different with a big sound and really, it wasn't anything new. You could hear the sound and you could hear the music, but it was all in the sound.

Actually, sound was the most important thing. In those days everybody was trying to get a different sound, or develop their own sound, which is always what I've tried to do. I've tried to get a sound so people could hear me and know that it was me, instead of hear me and say... "Well, he sounds like Dexter" or "He sounds like Lester."

At one time, most of the tenor players were trying to sound like Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, or Dexter Gordon. I remember reading about a woman who asked Lester how come he couldn't sound like Coleman Hawkins. See, he was searching at that time to find his thing too. He didn't want to sound like Coleman—Coleman was Coleman. So this is what I was trying to do.

I wanted to create a sound of my own so it would be a personal thing. I think any jazz cat or any artist has to have this, so people can identify you by your sound. Sound is extremely important.

At one time, we filed our mouthpieces. A friend of mine from Evanston who lives in New York now, Martin Bough, was a saxophone player. He used to be the guy that everybody went to as far as mouthpieces were concerned. He would look at the mouthpiece, file it, and being a saxophone player, they figured he *knew*. Well, he knew a lot about sound, just by looking, but he didn't have precision tools. He just took a file in his hand and changed the mouthpiece. We used to do that until it got to the point where we knew enough about how to deal with the sound. I play on a regular stock mouthpiece now. But at that time we were searching. We'd try just about anything until we came to the conclusion that alterations really don't have that much to do with how you play. Basically, the key to dealing with sound is through air flow.

I had a few teachers. I studied at the Roy Knapp conservatory. I think he still has that school. I had lessons from a guy named Al Poskonka. His brother was a bass player and he was a theory teacher. I studied harmony with him and I studied a lot on my own. I at-

tended for a couple of semesters. I also had a couple private saxophone teachers who taught me a lot of technical stuff. You really learn from the guys that are doing the playing, though. Teachers didn't know as much about it then.

db: What were you doing during the early 1960s?

Anderson: I had a group before the AACM formed. It was a quartet with Billy Brimfield on trumpet, Vernon Thomas on drums, Bill Fletcher on bass, and myself. I had put some of my compositions together. This was about 1962. It was hard because there were so few people around Chicago with this concept. Many of us lived in Evanston [a northern suburb of Chicago].

I played with this quartet and we were doing a lot of experimenting. I had been listening to Ornette Coleman and he gave us new ideas about music. I didn't hear much of Sun Ra then. John Gilmore and Sun Ra lived in Chicago while we were in Evanston. I wasn't trying to copy anyone though, not directly.

I was studying, trying to play lines. I was just trying to learn how to play. Not how to be different, because I didn't have the technique to try to copy Charlie Parker. A lot of players tried to play like Bird, Lester, or Dexter, but I just tried to find my way and play as much as I could.

I met Richard Abrams at a place called 5th Jacks. We started talking and he said, "We should start our own organization called Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians." I agreed. It started out with Abrams, myself, pianist Jodie Christian, trumpeter Phil Cohran, and a few others.

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Then Roscoe Mitchell joined and the AACM really started taking shape. I remember at the first meeting everybody said we should play our own music and be creative. The clubs weren't presenting this music. I played the first AACM concert because I already had a group that was going. Then I hooked up with Joseph Jarman and we met bassist Charles Clark. Bill Brimfield, Jarman, Charles Clark and I; this was really my band.

One of the first drummers in the AACM was Steve McCall. But one of the first drummers of the new music in Chicago was Jack DeJohnette. He played with me first, also a drummer named Arthur Reed. This was before Thurman Barker joined the group. Jarman, Brimfield, Charles Clark, myself and Steve McCall went to Detroit around the end of 1964. We met Archie Shepp there. Thurman Barker was only 18 years old and still in high school when he joined the group. Charles Clark and pianist Christopher Gaddy, both AACM members, passed away by 1969. That was after we recorded on Delmark [under Jarman's name].

db: How come you weren't recorded again after that?

Anderson: That's a mystery to me. Maybe

because I was never really active as a full-time musician. I was working, raising a family and doing the things normal people do. I didn't become really active again until 1972, when I got another band together: the Fred Anderson Sextet. We played community jobs in Evanston and the North Side of Chicago. I had a regular band. Then Steve McCall came back from overseas and called me. So Steve, trombonist Lester Lashley, Billy Brimfield and I played a date at a place called Alice's Revisited. I still have the tapes from that concert.

db: So you have material for recordings?

Anderson: Oh yeah! I've had compositions to record since 1961. I had enough then. Most of the material used between Brimfield and myself was mine. We knew people who recorded the musicians. Bob Koester recorded tenor saxist Kalaparusha, Jarman, Muhai Richard Abrams and Anthony Braxton on Delmark Records. He also recorded Roscoe Mitchell. Maybe they were more ambitious, though. I was basically concerned with my family and mortgage. I knew the music wasn't going to do it. But look, they did it. I could have done it, too.

db: What was your last band like?

Anderson: Well, that was the Fred Anderson Sextet, consisting of myself on tenor saxophone, Douglas Ewart on reeds, Felix Blackmon on upright bass, George Lewis on trombone and Hank Drake on drums. We played regularly at Jay's Place. We started every Friday, then Friday and Saturday nights. We ended up playing midnight sessions on Saturdays, from midnight to 4 a.m. We wanted people to come down after they were done working other places in the city. But most of the

continued on page 46

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***** EXCELLENT / **** VERY GOOD / *** GOOD / ** FAIR / * POOR

CHARLES MINGUS

ME, MYSELF AN EYE—Atlantic SD 8803: *Three Worlds Of Drums*; *Devil Woman*; *Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting*; Carolyn "Keki" Mingus.

Personnel: Mingus, composer; Paul Jeffrey, conductor; Ken Hitchcock, alto and soprano saxes; Akira Ohmori, alto sax; Lee Konitz, Yoshiaki Malta, alto saxes (cuts 2-4); Daniel Block, Michael Brecker, George Coleman, Ricky Ford, tenor saxes; John Tank, tenor sax (2-4); Pepper Adams, Ronnie Cuber, Craig Purpura, baritone saxes; Randy Brecker, Mike Davis, Jack Walrath, trumpets; Jimmy Knepper, trombone; Slide Hampton, trombone (1); Keith O'Quinn, trombone (2-4); Larry Coryell, Ted Dunbar, Jack Wilkins, guitars; Bob Neloms, piano; Eddie Gomez, bass; George Mraz, bass (1); Joe Chambers, Dannie Richmond, drums; Steve Gadd, drums (1); Sammy Figueroa, Ray Mantilla, percussion (1).

***** 1/2

Three Worlds Of Drums opens like a monster work—altos and trumpets announce the travail of a weary conqueror arriving on a mastodon's back of deep horns and broad, angry rhythms, to the twittering of reeds and bristling of electronics. A fanfare announces the drums: neglected composer/trap master Chambers, Mingus' alter ego Richmond, and studio ace Gadd attest to the powerful variety of the ritual pulse brought to jazz through tribal toms, bop snares and cymbals, and the vital backbeat.

Electric guitars awaken; Mingus, as though in recognition of the homage paid his work by some of the best self-conscious fusion improvisers (like McLaughlin and Jeff Beck), here as on *Three Or Four Shades Of Blues* comes to grips with the demon-lord instrument of American popular music, bending it to his own uses. Coryell, Dunbar and Wilkins are alert to Mingus' methods. But the horns rise to make the guitars part rather than parcel of the orchestration. And damn if the Jazz Workshop combo sound—a solid ensemble, *breathing*—doesn't emerge as the sections come together to frame solos starting with Walrath, who is credited for "arrangements and orchestrations... realized... under the supervision of and as dictated by Charles Mingus, through the use of tapes and piano sketches."

For this was Mingus' last recording project, excluding the upcoming "collaboration" with Joni Mitchell. Charles' strong solo on *Cumbia And Jazz Fusion* may be the last of his bass most of us hear. Mingus "dictated" *Me, Myself An Eye* from a wheel chair and was unable to perform. But his leadership is unquestionable, and Jeffrey conducted the 26 man aggregate with acute regard for Mingus' and the drummers' phrasings, as he did at the work's '78 Newport in Saratoga premiere.

Charts rich in expanding harmonies, dramatic percussion breaks, determined solos (especially Mraz colored by Neloms; tough, modal Coleman; Gomez' Latin dance; declamatory Mike Brecker, and schizoid-toned Coryell, whose phase explosion is the most radical music he's created since his

JCOA feature) exciting section writing (Mingus is more generous to the baritones and 'bones than any other composer) and a direct confrontation with the great themes of his career mark *Drums*. To American music, Mingus is as an African general, crossing the mountains of Western tradition blazing his own history to the beat embodied in human expression through sound, and his drummers celebrate his authority. The widely ranging work seems to be resolving in a dirge-like movement which grows quiet, but the final splendid piano-sax bottom-cymbal-guitar chord cadence is an active suspension, echoing on like the Lost Chord. And the main theme throughout is Mingus' tale unspinning like a bad cat's walk, though ever more triumphant.

Solo space on side two belongs to the young players, mostly Coryell and the Breckers, though they work on Mingus' roots—blues, church and family. All the soloists are competent, but not definitive; it's hard to beat the original *Devil Woman* (on *Oh Yeah*, Mingus sang and played piano, with tenor outings by Roland Kirk and Booker Ervin) or *Wednesday Night* (from *Blues And Roots*, waxed by Jackie McLean and John Handy, Ervin and Pepper Adams). Here, after handclapping and chanting, the *Prayer* reading is fast as a roadhouse rendezvous, and Ford blasts open while Brecker reels through their tenor battle. Gomez walks, then skips irrepressibly, a young warrior on bass eager to arrive.

Keki opens with a trumpet invocation and a sensuous alto line carefully considered by Lee Konitz, over an orchestral motif partially reminiscent of Ellington's *Mood Indigo*. Brecker's sax turn is Lester-boppish; Coryell's note-lines knot with tension and unloosen to swing; the orchestra's out choruses are lavish with personal hope and somber, gentle warmth. Mingus left much of his life behind in his music; beautiful new compositions such as *Keiki* and *Drums* are among his enduring hurrahs.

—mandel

CHICO FREEMAN

KINGS OF MALI—India Navigation IN 1035: *Look Up*; *Minstrel's Sundance*; *Kings Of Mali*; *Illas*.

Personnel: Chico Freeman, tenor and soprano saxophone, alto flute, balafon; Jay Hoggard, vibes, balafon; Cecil McBee, bass; Anthony Davis, piano; Famoudou Don Moye, drums, sun percussion, balafon, gongs, whistles.

Chico Freeman is one of the many excellent young players to come out of Chicago's AACM. On *Kings Of Mali* Freeman and company act as musical griots—messengers, storytellers, and historians. They combine the tribal traditions of American and African blacks into one of the most varied and combustible musical statements of 1978.

Side one explores the varied ironies and

joys of urban and country blacks, while side two is an affectionate look at the beauties of the African folk tradition. Freeman's saxophone work has a chanting Traneish character, but unlike the scores of Coltrane clones, Freeman is making significant extensions to this form, probably due in no small part to the horizon-broadening influence of Chico's father Von Freeman, one of the seminal Chicago tenor men.

Dig the spiraling introduction to *Look Up*, as Freeman combines tremolo figures and contrary motion in a manner not unlike a piano. This leads to a descending melodic figure Jay Hoggard plays on vibes, then a tumultuous second section that is the jumping off point for solos by Hoggard, Freeman, and Davis—energy music with a sense of architecture. Don Moye opens *Minstrel's Sundance* with a buoyant martial configuration; Davis introduces some barrelhouse blues chords, and Freeman's tenor takes off over the ever shifting cushions of rhythm and melody. Dig the way Hoggard and Davis build behind (and parallel to) Freeman's chanting melodies, and how the tenorist combines linear ideas with harmonic overblowing in a joyous composition.

Kings Of Mali features Freeman's flute amidst an African balafon dance, with some excellent bass work from McBee. *Illas* is a lilting Afro-Latin ballad, analogous to some of the directions Pharoah Sanders once plotted—but more focused. The flute uses space to create tension, as Moye essays an immaculate ringing cymbal pulse. McBee's solo feature displays his burnished tone and flowing guitar-like ideas that have been too seldom heard in recent years.

The recording could have been better (it's a thin mix), but it's good enough. All of the players on *Kings Of Mali* are innovators in their own right, and Freeman gives every indication of being among the pivotal saxophone-composers of the next decade. He's still young, and his sound could use a little more gravity, but Chico has the heart, and he's got the ideas. More.

—stern

ART LANDE AND RUBISA PATROL

DESERT MARAUDERS—ECM 1-1106: *Rubisa Patrol*; *Livre (Near The Sky)*; *El Pueblo de las Vacas Tristes*; *Perelandra*; *Sansara*.

Personnel: Lande, piano; Mark Isham, trumpet, flugelhorn; Bill Douglass, bass, flute; Kurt Wortman, drums.

***** 1/2

Prior to the release of *Desert Marauders*, there were at least two sides to San Francisco Bay Area pianist Art Lande's musical personality: the delicately romantic, as evidenced in his *Red Lanta* duets with Jan Garbarek and *Rubisa Patrol*'s first ECM album; and the playfully idiosyncratic, displayed on Art's solo interpretations of jazz standards, *The Eccentricities Of Earl Dant*. *Desert Marauders* reflects more the former persona—uplifted by a rhythmic exuberance—with the composer/pianist's usual abundance of grace, wit and warm melodicism. Although Lande is the "leader" of the date, writing four of the five tunes, his presence—while always unquestionable—is never overpowering or excessively upfront. This is indeed a *band*, one that listens to one another, displaying a sort of flowing cohesion that is anything but predictable.

El Pueblo de las Vacas Tristes has the sound

of a mid-tempo tune Keith Jarrett might have written for his European quartet, and *Sansara* is similarly bright, exhibiting the ever-maturing rapport between Lande and trumpeter Isham. They focus the improvised interplay marvelously, following, contrasting, or extrapolating upon each other's statements. *Sansara* also features a short solo by Douglass in which he reflects a deep, Haden-like sonority. *Perelandra*, initiated by an unaccompanied flute solo, soon turns spooky with Lande's thunder, strange flugelhorn/flute pairings, and deep chanting voices. Isham's *Livre* is a simple, lyrical ballad, with exquisite brush work from Wortman.

The album's most compelling and challenging piece by far, however, is Lande's extended 9/8 fantasia, *Rubisa Patrol*. Inspired by the Turkish composer Mafi Falay, *Patrol* opens with Art's ominous chording, Douglass' eerily bowed bass, Isham's twisted, Arabic trumpet wails, and cracking rim shots from Wortman. It soon evolves into a tensely propelled odyssey, full of rhythmic jump-cuts, floating trumpet/percussion interludes, false starts and stops. In blazing ensemble work, Isham gets to Bowie via Miles, snarling and building dense, overlapping clusters with an authority greatly strengthened since his last outing. A highly visual escapade, in *Rubisa Patrol* one can almost see the caravan roaming the desert, encountering beauty as well as fierce desolation before arriving at the bustling, joyous oasis of the marketplace.

—zipkin

RODNEY FRANKLIN

IN THE CENTER—Columbia JC 35558: *Spanish Flight; Yours; I Like The Music Make It Hot; On The Path; The Spring Suite; Festival, Sunrise, May Lady; Life Moves On.*

Personnel: Franklin, electric and acoustic pianos; Dennis Budimir, guitar (except cut 6); Ian Underwood, Oberheim synthesizer (cuts 1, 3-5); Chuck Domanico, electric bass (1-3, 5); Jeff Porcaro, drums (1-3, 5, 7); David T. Walker, guitar (7); Freddie Hubbard, (2); Oscar Brashear, (4, 5, 7), flugelhorn; David Luell, Lyricon, alto sax (4, 5, 7); Ernie Watts, flute, bass clarinet (3, 4, 7); John Guerin, drums (4); Dave Shields, electric bass (7); Victor Feldman, (1, 4, 5, 7); Paulinho Da Costa (2, 4, 5, 7); George Devens (6); percussion; Seawind, horns (2); Bernard and Sandy Ighner, vocals (2); strings (6).

★ ★ ★

Being in the center of things can imply having attained a kind of musical satori; it can also imply being stuck on dead center, unable to choose decisively from one of a hundred possible musical directions. So while it's fascinating to watch a young artist like Rodney Franklin work his way through a kind of musical *bildungsroman* like *In The Center*, it's equally as frustrating to be left not with a portrait of musical growth but rather with a series of tentative jabs in often contradictory directions. An uneven musical metaphysic, at best.

Beginning with *Spanish Flight*, meditative effects music, shop-worn Rhodes gives way to the rhapsodic, Chopinesque solo piano architecture of *Yours*, followed by the slick, Ramsey Lewis-styled funk of *I Like The Music*, a tune enlivened with an interesting solo by Hubbard. But there's a lot of pap to wade through to get to it.

Side two is largely given over to arranger/composer Byron Olsen's *Spring Suite*, a work that pins down exactly where the center of this release is—in an arranger's pen rather than in a keyboardist's hands. The result: Franklin is consigned to being an ensemble player. In spite of his clever electric inter-

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ludes on *Festival* and the frolicsome acoustic solos on the third-streamish *May Lady*, it's hard to escape concluding that Franklin has abdicated his position as pianist/leader and allowed himself to become a complacent sideman in an overly sweetened if pleasant, sometimes even challenging date.

A postscript: at this writing Franklin is working with Freddie Hubbard. Perhaps that sort of gig will give this young musician a firmer sense of musical direction and exposure in a sparser, more revealing context.

—balleras

NEIL LARSEN

JUNGLE FEVER—Horizon SP 733: *Sudden Sabu; Promenade; Windsong; Emerald City; Jungle Fever; Red Desert; Last Tango In Paris; From A Dream.*

Personnel: Larsen, keyboards; Buzz Feiten, guitar; Willie Weeks, bass; Andy Newmark, drums; Ralph MacDonald, percussion; Michael Brecker, tenor saxophone; Larry Williams, alto saxophone, alto flute; Jerry Hey, trumpet, flugelhorn.

★ ★ ★ ★

As jazz-rock releases go, *Jungle Fever* is more rock than jazz, and that's one of the sources of its strength. The head lines are direct, economical and melodic; the solos they frame are rockish and intense. The result is an interface that grabs the listener both emotionally and physically.

Underneath is a bass and drum duo known primarily for its session work with rock stars ranging from Rod Stewart to Randy Newman, and for *Jungle Fever's* purposes, Weeks and Newmark were a good choice. They cook hard, setting up a clean, uncluttered drive that both underscores and propels the simple virtues of Larsen's compositions. Ralph MacDonald is around as well, lending subtle colorations to the sometimes Latin-tinged, Santana-reminiscent rhythms.

The conservative qualities of Larsen's tunes extend into his keyboard playing. On this album he doesn't waste his energy groping for "new" synthesizer sounds. Most of his soloing is done on a plain old Hammond organ which, at this point in pop music history, is an extremely refreshing sound. When *Windsong* moves from the spare head to Larsen's organ spot, the level of intensity shifts up perceptibly as the solo builds dynamically and thematically. That's a hard trick for an electronic keyboardist to pull off in these days of synthesizer glut.

Another principal soloist is guitarist Feiten, a veteran of the Butterfield Blues Band, Stevie Wonder's group, and Full Moon, an early '70s band that included Larsen and drummer Philip Wilson. Feiten, whose personal problems have kept him relatively inactive in the last few years, makes an impressive comeback here. His playing on the title cut has the bite of the best rock players and the flow, variety and continuity of a good jazz solo. The sound is hard yet vocalistic; Feiten bends the notes till they scream without seeming gimmicky or strained. It's a well-developed, personal style.

The remaining solos are handled by Mike Brecker, who brings his customary agility and full tone to *Emerald City*, a lyrical, laid-back melody that gives the saxophonist a springboard for his energetic flutters and busy, r&b-flavored lines. Similarly, his spot on *Last Tango* is a virtuosic romp; he barrels like a Ferrari through the lively gauntlet formed by the rhythm section and Larsen's organ.

Some may complain that the solos, sounds and tunes on *Jungle Fever* are almost too accessible, too simplistic for the hard-core jazz

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fan. But the players' emotional involvement with the material is undeniable, and the music's lyrical and funky qualities are spun together beautifully. That makes for quite an entertaining record. —schneckloth

MIKE MAINIERI & WARREN BERNHARDT

FREE SMILES—Arista Novus AN 3009: *Praise; Song To Seth; Instant Garlic; I'll Sing You Softly; Stella By Starlight; Free Smiles; Mediterranean Waters Calling*.

Personnel: Mainieri, Deagan electric vibes. Synthi-vibe plus Moog synthesizer; Bernhardt, grand piano, Rhodes piano, Clavinet, Moog.

★ ★ ★ ½

The vibes-keyboard pairing on *Free Smiles* may invite comparison with the renowned Gary Burton and Chick Corea duets of yesteryear. After all, Mainieri and Bernhardt have rapidly been gaining respect as soloists on their individual instruments and both men show that they can write fine tunes of diverse appeal. While *Free Smiles* lacks the unforgettable compositional clout of *Crystal Silence*, it is a consistent melodic display with several strengths.

Celebratory and upbeat, *Praise* invokes the feel of a happy gospel romp, Bernhardt's piano and closing Clavinet supporting Mainieri's aggressive vibes solo with repeating funkisms. *Song To Seth* is contrastingly subdued, opening with drizzily, melancholic vibes that shift and echo gently towards Bernhardt's sensitive lead entrance on piano. The twosome changes gears again for the scurrying *Instant Garlic*, where the blowing is freer, but the improvising seems less distinctive... until Bernhardt revs into a two-fisted, Art Tatum-type break.

Similarly, side two's *I'll Sing You Softly* is another bright and rhythmic showcase for piano, one of Bernhardt's stronger statements in an album amicably dominated by Mainieri. Warren drops out entirely, however, during Mike's solo vibes treatment of *Stella*, introduced by subtle, spacious reverberation effects and then casual harmonic experimentations.

Recorded live at Montreux on July 22, 1978, this concert performance closes out with *Free Smiles*, a soulful groove that adds Bernhardt's Moog for a bottom, and then plugs all the way in for a heavier windup, a surprising mixture of electronic sounds from both players. The Swiss crowd wakes up, demands an encore, and the Mainieri-Bernhardt duo returns with the final tune *Mediterranean Waters Calling*, where sunny, balladic vibes give way to Bernhardt's floating synthesizer melody. These last two cuts contribute a welcome tonal contrast to a ringing vibes-piano sound that, at times, seems limited in terms of dynamic range. But in general, *Free Smiles* is a fairly relaxing set of even-tempered jazz, with just enough punch to keep serious listeners involved. —henschen

FEJJ

ALIVE AT THE PILGRIMAGE—Jet Danger J 5302: *Who?; Look Out Ranger; Sunrise On Arrakis; Out To The Car; To The End; Silent Way/Go Ahead John*.

Personnel: Jay Anderson, bass; Steve Bartek, guitar; Lory Cole, trombone; Jim Cox, keyboards; Jeff Donley, trumpet; Tom Ranier, saxophones; Ralph Humphrey, drums; Dave Crigger, drums (cuts 4, 5); Leon Gear, synthesizer bass (4, 5).

★ ★ ★ ★

Fejj is a contemporary outfit from Southern California and they recorded *Alive* at Los Angeles's Pilgrimage Theatre, an outdoor facility

that has been the stage for many free jazz events, through the auspices of the A.F. of M., Local 47, and the L.A. County Board of Supervisors. Unfortunately, these concerts have been guillotined by the unmerciful blade of California's infamous Proposition 13. Kind of a drag, because it was a perfect place to hear, and make, music on a Sunday afternoon, as you can judge by the crowd response here.

On *Alive*, save one from the late '60s-early '70s Miles Davis file, Fejj passes out its own original brand of fresh and inventive jazz-rock. The melodies are crisp and enticing and are read down by the ensemble with vigor and precision. It's a bonus to hear these horns playing the material so tightly. The soloists are also right on top of things and boisterous moments come forth from Ranier, Cox, Donley and Bartek.

Who? is a Ranier line with a two-part head. A strong hold-back rhythm, not exactly a repeated vamp but with the same resulting tension, underlies most of the melody and the solos. There is a welcome release, sort of rock-swing, that tags the head and all the solos. Bartek, Donley and Ranier do the blowing in a consistent, effusive fashion. *Look* is a country-flavored ditty belonging to Cox, who switches from electric to acoustic in mid-solo. *Sunrise* has a delicate air with full, resplendent horn voicings over a bubbling, unevenly accented eighth-note beat propelled by Humphrey, one of the best contemporary drummers who's usually hidden away in the studios. Ranier is heard on soprano and Cox accompanies on acoustic but solos on synthesizer.

For a colorful contrast from the rock-based underpinnings, we have *Out*. Humphrey plays a short trap break and then lays down a steady four-four and the boys play bop, with Ranier the agile tenorist, and Cox the spokesmen.

End is a series of four-bar exchanges, after a brief lead line, with all the solo instrumentalists taking part. The remainder of side two is consumed by *Silent/Go*, which is a collage of Davis works. As interestingly arranged and provocatively performed as it is, it can't match the original efforts that grace this recording.

Alive was produced by the band itself, working on the premise that an album on the air waves and in the stores would increase the possibility of attention from a major label. But homegrown or not, this is a very professional and well constructed album of imaginative and vital jazz-rock that sounds better with each listening. One hopes that the band's example of the self-produced date will lead other bands into the same ballpark. There's always an audience for good music.

—zan stewart

DAVE HOLLAND

EMERALD TEARS—ECM-1-1109: *Spheres; Emerald Tears; Combination; B-40 RS-4-W M23-6K; Under The Redwoods; Solar; Flurries; Hooveling*.

Personnel: Holland, bass.

★ ★ ★ ½

Britisher Holland is one of the few Europeans to win full acceptance among the creative elite of American jazz, as witnessed by his work with Miles Davis, Anthony Braxton, and Sam Rivers. Under his own leadership he has produced masterpieces like *Conference Of The Birds* with Braxton and Rivers, one of the most invigorating releases of the decade. Now, with solo albums turning up from all quarters, Holland has thrown his hat in the

ring with the first album devoted entirely to unaccompanied bass.

Holland's luminous virtuosity is never in doubt, but the arresting lyricism of the *Birds* album is sorely missed here. Alone in the glare of the spotlight, Holland somehow manages to remain in shadow and one is never quite free of the sensation that this is a Music Minus One album turned inside out. Aside from other bass players, few listeners may have the patience to seek out the many rewarding passages in these structured improvisations; Holland's approach will not likely threaten the established role of the bass as a foundation instrument rather than a leading voice.

Holland's rich, varnished tone and throbbing percussive sensitivity are compounded with keen intelligence and a brooding streak of romantic melancholy. An anxious classicism haunts his somber constructions, but the buoyant pulse of his rhythmic imagination drives him through the abstract, often arid landscape of his intellect. Employing a full panoply of modern effects, Holland pursues his sober visions with masterful deftness and aplomb, occasionally bogging down with portentous weightiness on the bowed material. While bursts of momentary transcendence erupt periodically between bouts of earnest groping, only the final *Hooveling* with its *Giant Steps*' exuberance sustains an entire piece with the singing radiance of which Holland is capable. —birnbaum

WALTER BISHOP, JR.

CUBICLE—Muse MR 5151: *Valley Land; My Little Suede Shoes; Those Who Chant; Summertime; Now That You've Left Me; Cubicle*.

Personnel: Bishop, keyboards; Randy Brecker, trumpet, flugelhorn; Rene McLean, alto, tenor, and soprano saxophones; Curtis Fuller, trombone; Pepper Adams, baritone saxophone; Joe Caro, guitar; Bob Cranshaw, bass; Mark Egan, electric bass (cuts 1, 4); Billy Hart, drums; Ray Mantilla, percussion; Carmen Lundy, vocal (1).

★ ★ ★ ½

Is it surprising that a sideman of Bird, Miles, and Blakey, a follower of Bud, is having problems adapting to the eclectic scene of the late '70s? And is it surprising that a pianist of Bishop's stature, the player whom Powell himself asked to preserve his legacy, finds himself stymied by the claustrophobic electric piano?

The way out of this dilemma? Perhaps ultimately for Bishop there might not be any way short of sheer retrogression; his short term solution, though, is to play "fusion" which, in Bishop's terms, is something like bop on top of thick funk or an otherwise obvious rhythmic substructure, an incongruous yet sometimes surprisingly volatile blending.

Using this formula, Parker's tongue-in-cheek bagatelle *My Little Suede Shoes* begins country club Latin, then opens up with one of Curtis Fuller's pyrotechnic, consistently exhilarating solos, followed by outings by Adams and McLean, both of whom favor tangential, boppish phrases. Throughout all, Bishop comps placidly.

Bishop's frequent abdication to pop/rock's soft rhythmic underbelly could almost be forgiven if it weren't for tracks like the abstract *Those Who Chant*, a tribute to the Nichiren Shoshu Buddhists. Following a circular, quartal piano intro, intricately woven, the group breaks into a hypnotic barrage of thick lines. Guitarist Caro solos in phrases at once taut and incantatory and Bishop replies with some intervallic dancing. Fusion music? Yes, but

only in the term's generic, most explosive sense. The pandemonium is similarly free-wheeling on *Cubicle*. Again on acoustic piano, Bishop burns through those fourths he's systematized. As for the remainder of this material, workmanlike, dutiful performances are rendered by all, but just as the electric piano is too small an instrument to contain Bishop's talents, so is the confining, so-called fusion format too narrow an enclosure for players of this magnitude.

—balleras

HANK JONES

ARIGATO—Progressive 7004: *Allen's Alley; I'm Old Fashioned; Night Sadness; Arigato; Majorca; What Am I Here For?; Medley (The Bad And The Beautiful; But Beautiful; You Are Too Beautiful); Gerry's Blues.*

Personnel: Jones, piano; Richard Davis, bass; Ronnie Bedford, drums; Ray Rivera, rhythm guitar (track 5).

★ ★ ★ 1/2

HAVE YOU MET THIS JONES?—MPS 0068.195: *There's A Small Hotel; Portions; The Oregon Grinder; I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good; We're All Together; Like Someone In Love; Now's The Time; Robbins Nest.*

Personnel: Jones, piano; Isla Eckinger, bass; Kurt Bong, drums.

★ ★ ★

On the face of it, these two records are very similar. Both are trio records. Both have the same kind of material—jazz tunes and standards, blues and ballads. Both have the same head-solos-head approach with little or no arranging. Yet the two records—one German, one American—are not interchangeable.

First of all, the records sound different. On the MPS album the bass is too boomy. This is strange because the piano and drums seem crystal clear—almost unnaturally so. On the Progressive sides, it's the other way around: the bass is clean and distinct, but the piano and drums have a ringing, close-up presence. It's a refined studio sound (MPS) versus a more basic, liver sound (Progressive).

Another fundamental difference is the two sets of personnel. Hank's relatively young German sidemen, Eckinger and Bong, are quite competent and have a good jazz feeling. But Eckinger is no match for Richard Davis, whose performance is more adventuresome, playful and various. And if you're looking for jazz drumming, Bedford's Max Roach style has it all over Bong's lighter, restrained approach. Because of the sound and the sidemen, the German record projects a lounge-like quality, the American record a jam session quality.

For the most part, the MPS record has better tunes, but that doesn't seem to matter much. In Hank's case the axiom holds: it's not what you play, it's how you play it. Which brings us to the real point of comparison, Hank's performance. Here the records are pretty evenly matched. (In fact, Hank even uses some of the same licks on both records.) Hank Jones' forte is straightforward swing. He loves to get in that groove and let his right hand go. You can tell when he's digging it because he fills out his playing with his own kind of "wordless vocal." This is more audible on the MPS recording—and why try to cover it up? It's part of his style.

On both records the best cuts are medium tempo tunes on which Hank can really stretch out. On ballads it seems that he can hardly wait to get through the head so he can double-time it and swing a little. He plays ballads like he was holding a tight rein on a frisky horse. But when he is in the groove, few folks swing as well as Hank Jones. Both of these records demonstrate that.

—clark

RONNIE LAWS

FLAME—United Artists LA-881-H: *All For You; These Days; Flame; Living Love; Love Is Here; Grace; Joy; Live Your Life Away.*

Personnel: Laws, tenor, alto and soprano sax, C flute, alto flute, piccolo, piano, Moog bass, vocals; Larry Dunn, piano, synthesizer; Barnaby Finch, piano; Melvin Robinson, guitar; Roland Bautista, guitar; Pat Kelly, guitar; Bobby Vega, bass; Louis Satterfield, bass; Onija (Woody Murray), vibes; Nate Morgan, piano; Raymond Pounds, drums; Fred White, drums; Andrew Acosta, percussion; Art Rodriguez, drums; Debra Laws, Eloise Laws, Lovely Hardy, Diane Reeves, Phillip Bailey, Sylvia St. James, Debra Thomas, vocals.

★

Witness the majestic recorded success attained by this member of jazzdom's King family, the Laws gang. Each new release by Ronnie L. has meteorically streaked to the top, a sure sign that the young hornman has tapped into the same pop-jazz mother lode that Turrentine/Benson/Washington/et. al. have proved so adept at plundering. This surely has heartened the good folk at United Artists, since they have elevated Ronnie to the parent label, forsaking Blue Note (where Ronnie did nothing less than spawn the biggest seller in the 40 years of the jazz line).

So what about this latest chapter in the Laws chronicle? *Flame* finds Ronnie firmly, if uncomfortably, ensconced in his pose as vocalist. Since it's the hip thing for jazzmen to strut vocal chops these days, this shouldn't come as any surprise. It's also no surprise that Laws, the vocalist, proves a flaming disappointment. The opening *All For You* is as cliché-burdened as anything riding the jazz-funk charts. Laws is credited with providing tenor sax but his licks have all the personality of the drummer in the latest MacDonald's commercial. Add the pipings of Ronnie and sisters Debra and Eloise and *All For You* appears guaranteed to be a chart-topper with painful longevity.

The first instrumental, *These Days*, is an appropriate summary of the state of pop jazz, circa '79. There's a little boogie, a lightweight riff and a faceless mix, all adding up to an android blend of sound. The title cut offers a sax "solo" by Laws, a truly uninspired wail that interrupts halfway through the seven-minute chart. *Living Love* and *Love Is Here* share insipid vocal harmonies, obliterating anything that Ronnie gets going. It would be intriguing to know just who walks around humming to all those "doo-ooohs" and "doo-aaahs," just so the hummers can be sent saliva test kits.

Grace and *Joy* are lacking in both, with the only salvation sparingly afforded by a vibes interlude. On *Love Your Life Away*, Ronnie attacks the Moog bass with Herculean ardor. He should refrain before chancing a hernia.

Can Ronnie Laws really play? The question that was raised after his debut release remains unanswered, since his recordings are structured so as to render him anonymous. Can he sing? Even a musical novice should be able to answer that one. Then what is all the fuss about and how come this snake oil sells plastic? Maybe we all have a void to fill and Ronnie's feeble flame fits our furies fine.

Oh, one more thing: apparently UA has doubts about the intelligence of people who purchase this disc. They have seen fit to designate the vocal cuts with a parenthetical "(Vocal)" on the label, lest anybody get all burned out from exposure to the blistering honking on the instrumental tracks. Thanks, guys, that's all heart.

—hohman

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MUNOZ

RENDEVOUS WITH NOW—India Navigation IN 1034: *The Shepherds Chant; Blessings; The Word Of God Chant; Waiting For Now To Be Forever*
 Personnel: Munoz, guitar, percussion, vocals; Cecil McBee, bass; Bernie Senensky, piano; Claude Ranger, drums.

* * *

This is spiritually inflected music by Munoz, a self-taught guitarist who made his initial impact with Pharoah Sanders. The music on *Rendezvous With Now* is analogous at points with the music of Sanders and Devadip Carlos Santana. Munoz uses a Gibson hollow-body guitar, stuffed, apparently, with home insulation. This gives Munoz a raw sustained tone—almost a fuzz tone—and his melodic inventions are built off of this horn-like screaming character. At times Munoz does not get the sustain he appears to desire to manifest some of his ideas, and one must wonder if a solid-body guitar would not give him more of what he is searching for.

Munoz is primarily a lead player, and the structures he chooses to improvise over are open-ended rubato affairs. This writer appreciates the searching quality in his playing, but the implications of infinity the guitarist desires often turn out to be rhythmically sprawling, due to the overly loose playing of drummer Ranger, and pianist Senensky (most egregiously on *The Shepherds Chant*).

McBee is his usual stalwart self, though his full tone is lost somewhere in the mix; he anchors *The Word Of God Chant* with authority, and blends well with Munoz's screaming bird trills. Munoz displays a fluid linear sense of invention on *Waiting For Now To Be Forever*; his wide interval leaps suggest a human voice.

Those who enjoy the forms Pharoah Sanders popularized will probably enjoy this date. Others will find it too confused. With a stronger group concept Munoz could be turning on a lot of people with his guitar. —*stern*

JIM DICKINSON

BEALE STREET SATURDAY NIGHT—Memphis Development Foundation O-101; *Walkin' Down Beale Street; Hernando Horn; Beale Street Blues; Big Fat Mama/Liquor Store; Ol' Beale Street Blues; Furry's Blues; Rock Me Baby; Rock Me Baby (alternate version); Ben Griffin Was Killed In The Monarch...; Frisco Blow; On The Road Again; Mr. Handy Told Me 50 Years Ago...; Chicken Ain't Nothin' But A Bird; Roll On Mississippi*.

Personnel: Sid Selvidge, guitar, vocals (cuts 1, 11); Fred Ford, tenor saxophone (cut 2); Grandma Dixie Davis, piano, vocals (cuts 3, 14); Sleepy John Estes, vocal, guitar (cut 4); Prince Gabe And The Millionaires (cut 5); Furry Lewis, vocal, guitar (cuts 6, 13); Tennie Hodges, guitar, vocal (cut 7); Alex, vocal, ax (cut 8); Thomas Pinkston, narration; Johnny Woods, harmonica (cut 10); Jim Dickinson, drums, piano, vocal (cut 1, 11); Jimmy Crosthwait, washboard (cut 11); Lee Baker, vocal, guitar (cuts 1, 11); Jim Lancaster, tuba (cut 11); Ry Cooder, guitar (cut 4); Pee Wee Womble, trumpet (cut 11); Art Sutton, trombone (cut 11); William Brown, Ruby Wilson, vocals (cut 1); Jill Lancaster, vocals (cut 11); Bill Thurman, Nancy Ditto, Max Huls, violins (cut 11).

* * * * *

Beale Street Saturday Night is a unique glimpse into a possible future direction for record production. Unlike many various artist projects, this LP coheres better than most individual artist concept records. It is a musical history of Beale Street in Memphis, legendary birthplace of the blues, as seen through the eyes of musician-producer-musical-visionary Jim Dickinson. *BSSN* shows Beale as the corrupt hotbed of vice it must have been.

Even with the inclusion of such historically significant bluesmen as Sleepy John Estes,

Furry Lewis, Johnny Woods and Thomas Pinkston (childhood star of W.C. Handy's band), *Beale Street Saturday Night* is all Dickinson. The opening number by Sid Selvidge, which has a refrain in a band setting at the L.P.'s close, serves as the theme. Selvidge's voice is strong and fluid, curiously mixing the best elements of Jimmy Rogers with the roughness of Delta blues. Dickinson moves then to the more urban jazz style of tenor saxophonist Fred Ford, past the late ragtime piano of Grandma Dixie Davis, and through the musical melange that is Beale Street. Interspersed are philosophizing and reminiscing ("Beale Street was the greatest place on earth until they burnt it") by Thomas Pinkston, so the album captures the outlaw aspects of black music in Memphis. Stanley Booth's liner notes reinforce the roughness of the city's history, including a timely account of the unique black/white melding and Beale's slow decay.

The album is appropriately steeped in the pre-WWII traditions of Memphis music. Johnny Woods presents a harmonica train song; John Estes exemplifies the type of country blues played in the parks and street corners on Beale; and Mud Boy & The Neutrons (Dickinson's former group) presents a loosely knit barrelhouse tradition of blues with the standard *On The Road Again*. Furry Lewis, one of the last great original bluesmen, offers two selections. While his guitar technique is less polished than in the 1920s, he retains the minstrel showmanship of his youth. *Chicken Ain't Nothin' But A Bird (Turkey In The Straw)* is a goodtime song performed before a studio audience, which ends when Lewis gets too tickled to continue.

Dickinson has taken certain liberties by including a work song performed by Alex. It is doubtful that work songs were actually performed on Beale but this style of a cappella singing certainly was prevalent in the area and obviously influential to local musicians (for instance the bluesy version of the same tune by Tennie Hodges). The ax sound is real. It seems Alex could not sing without working.

The only conspicuous absence on *Beale Street Saturday Night* is that of a jugband. Some of the best jugbands in the 1920s and 1930s flourished on streetcorners and in the parks on Beale. Dickinson's omission of this significant musical style is odd but probably based on the scarcity of active jugband musicians. The form is all but extinct although the Neutrons' version of *Road* (aka *Kassie Jones*) has the feel of jugband music but is decidedly more modern. In their rendition a tuba takes the place of the jug in providing a bottom end and the instrumentation, while generally true to the style, is much larger than conventional jugbands. The trumpet and trombone, not usually heard in jugbands, play in more of a pre-jazz brass band style while violin, piano, drums and guitars weave an intricate pattern under the roundhouse vocals of Dickinson, Selvidge, Lee Baker and Jill Lancaster, whose singing is one of the highlights of the album. *On The Road Again* is one of the best new recordings of traditional black music in years. Ironically, almost every musician on this track is white.

Beale Street Saturday Night is a potpourri of music from perhaps the most neglected street in America's history, and the product of 75 years of political oppression, racism and violence. It presents the core of America's popular music. —*less*

WAXING ON . . .

Direct-To-Disc Discs

Woody Herman: *Road Father* (Century Records CRDD-1080) ****½ (37 min)

Woody Herman and Flip Phillips: *Together/Flip And Woody* (Century Records CRDD-1090) **** (34 min)

Buddy Rich: *Class Of '78* (Great American Gramophone Company GADD-1030) **** (32 min)

Mel Torme and Buddy Rich: *Together Again—For The First Time* (Century Records CRDD-1100) ****½ (32 min)

Jimmy Henderson and the Glenn Miller Orchestra: *The Direct Disc Sound Of The Glenn Miller Orchestra* (Great American Gramophone Company GADD-1020) ** (32 min)

Les Brown: *Les Brown Goes Direct To Disc* (Great American Gramophone Company GADD-1010) **½ (32 min)

Phil Woods: *Song For Sisyphus* (Century Records CRDD-1050) **** (33 min)

Barry Miles: *Fusion Is* (Century Records CRDD-1070) ****½ (32 min)

Warren Smith and Masami Nakagawa: *Warren Smith And Masami Nakagawa* (RCA Japan RVL-8502) **** (17 min)

Warren Smith and Toki: *Warren Smith And Toki* (RCA Japan RVL-8501) **** (17 min)

Lew Tabackin: *Trackin'* (RCA Japan RDC-3) ****½ (18 min)

David Montgomery and Cecil Lytle: *Ragtime Piano For Four Hands* (Direkt to Disk 6) ****½ (27 min)

Woofers, Tweeters And All That Jazz (Direkt to Disk 7) ****½ (26 min)

Tuxedo Junction: *Tuxedo Junction* (Century Records CRDD-1140) * (12 min)

Art, technology and commerce have again collided at the marketplace. This time, it's called direct-to-disc recording (hereinafter referred to as "d-d").

As the name suggests, d-d eliminates tape from the production process. Consequently, a performance is recorded directly onto a master disc (or several master discs) from which is made a pressing plate that stamps out the albums we might buy.

The chief claim made by d-d proponents is that it reproduces performances with less distortion and greater clarity than conventional discs initially recorded on tape. To check that judgment, I packed up my pile of d-d sides to sample reactions among friends who are musicians, audiophiles or both, and who collectively possess equipment that runs the gamut from dime-store schlock to state-of-the-art. Even though each group reacted favorably overall, there were significant differences.

Among musicians, the novelty of the d-ds' snappy "live" sound quickly faded as attention focused on the music itself. Clarity, full fidelity and dynamic range, for example, didn't prevent a general put-down of Les Brown's sluggish performance. As in getting

acclimated to some of the no-fi reissues of Charlie Parker, the relative force of the music was what counted most for the musicians.

The audiophiles, on the other hand, seemingly are happy listening to anything as long as the sound is "clean," woofers are woofing and tweeters tweeting. Great value is also put on "separation" and "spatial perspective." Predictably, the big bands provided more sonic highs for the audiophiles than the small groups.

For the musicians/audiophiles, there were several divergent opinions. Some noted the tremendous pressure placed on musicians and engineers to get it right without any post-production editing, mixing and dubbing. A related point was that d-d ruled out post-production procedures as legitimate means of creative expression. Others explained that the problem with most conventional releases was not with using tape, but with sloppy pressings and poor quality vinyl.

To sum up the situation, the following briefs are presented:

Advantages:

1. Superior sound: Unquestionably, the d-d pressings present a better sound than conventional recordings. This, however, may be largely due to the greater care taken at every production phase rather than to the technique itself. It should also be added that to be fully appreciated, d-d recordings need to be played back through top-of-the-line equipment; they are the super-premium fuels that make Rolls Royce audio systems purr.

2. Faithful documentation: You can usually be sure that a d-d recording is the real thing, an untampered performance unburdened by "sweetenings" and second guesses. (However, let the buyer beware. On the back of *Tuxedo Junction* it is noted that in the "Direct Disc Phase II" process, "some vocal lines are transferred via magnetic tape.") Also, the many "blowing sessions" and "live" dates recorded on tape should point up the fact that straight-through, unsweetened, unadulterated recordings are in no way unique to d-d.

3. Snob appeal: The liner information on several of the albums makes much of the fact that because there are only several masters, each d-d is one of a limited edition. To accentuate the prestige/collector's-item value, some manufacturers even number their discs like an artist does a run of prints.

Disadvantages:

1. Cost: d-d recordings are two to three times as expensive as conventional pressings. On the other hand, if you're a big spender and like to impress people with your good "taste" (conspicuous ostentation), a d-d jacket next to your bottle of Wild Turkey should do the job. But remember, to fully extract all a d-d has to offer, you need that expensive audio system.

2. Play time: Compounding the initial high cost of each disc is a general reduction in the amount of music you get. It seems absurd, but the more you pay, the less you get. This is most aggravated in the case of those d-ds recorded at 45 rpm. The three Japanese d-ds, for example, have about eight minutes per side which gives each a total of just over sixteen minutes. However, a 33 rpm d-d like Herman's *Road Father* yields over eighteen minutes per side, which is better than many conventional discs.

3. Performance quality: Since an entire side has to be recorded without interruption, the performers do not get a breather between takes. Therefore, a d-d session runs the high risk of including some dross among the gold.

However, one can argue that these "flaws" humanize and personalize the artistic process and its resulting product.

The Bottom Line:

The pros and cons of d-d embrace a dialectic of trade-offs. Yes, the sound quality, given the current state of marketable recording technology, is the best yet. But d-d, when looked at as an interfacing storage and playback system, is a terribly expensive medium.

For the jazz listener, d-d is most effective for big band recordings where aural perspective, separation and clean reproduction of extreme highs and lows are crucial. With small groups, the import of these factors is less.

The Music:

While the record-buying jury will be out for at least another year, there is a crop of recent d-d performances that illustrate the process's

virtues and limitations. The ratings, however, reflect only upon the music.

In his fine liner notes, Herb Wong informs us that the parents of the late Bill Chase hung the handle of "Road Father" on **Woody Herman**. By that, the Chases meant to call attention to Woody's warm, avuncular devotion to the individual musicians of Herds past, present and future. In spite of his sometimes dour on-stage expression, Woody is the kind of guy that genuinely helps his young charges fly from his cozy big band nest.

The *Herd of Road Father*, from January, 1978, includes a galaxy of bright young stars such as arranger/tenorist Gary Anderson, baritonist/composer Bruce Johnstone, tenorist Frank Tiberi, lead trumpeter Jay Sollenberger and flugelhornist Dennis Dotson. With the d-d process, engaging charts, super solos and

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crisp ensembles, being in front of the speakers is like being in front of the bandstand. Woody's gutsy vocal, and the flugel lead/sax ensemble on Charlie Parker's version of *Dark Shadows* embedded within the energetic *I've Got News For You* are especially moving.

Together presents the same **Herd** with tenor saxophonist **Flip Phillips**, plus the strings of **Harry Bluestone**. With exquisite charts by Gary Anderson, Phillips flips in and out of such venerable lyric streams as *The Very Thought Of You*, *There Is No Greater Love*, *The Nearness Of You*, *How Deep Is The Ocean* and *We'll Be Together Again*.

Phillips and Herman go back to 1944 when Flip replaced Vido Musso. After Phillips joined Norman Granz' Jazz at the Philharmonic in 1946, he held his own in the company of such stalwarts as Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Ben Webster, Charlie Parker and Stan Getz. More recently, he has regained national attention with stellar stays at Michael's Pub in Manhattan and an important contribution to Woody Herman's 40th anniversary celebration at Carnegie Hall in 1976.

Throughout *Together*, Flip reveals his lineage to Lester Young. With a rich, full-bodied velvety sound, Flip "sings" as a romanticist with heart on sleeve. His link to Lester is further evidenced, as noted by Wong, by his insistence that lyrics be included on all lead sheets. As did Prez', Phillips' "vocalizations" speak directly to the emotions.

Buddy Rich's latest big band is represented in the *Class Of '78*. The first thing that impresses is the way Buddy's kit is recorded. The ride cymbal sizzles, the hi-hat pops and the snare drum snaps. The bass drum, however, booms, booms, booms. It's just too far out front. Overall, though, the disc comes very close to putting you right at ringside.

Aside from Buddy's bravura breaks and fills, there are fine solo spots by tenor/soprano saxman Steve Marcus, tenorist Gary Pribek, trumpeter Dean Pratt and pianist Barry Keiner. The section work is precise and the ensembles swing with abandon. The reeds, however, suffer in a mix which too often puts them under the brass.

The other Rich effort, *Together Again*, teams the drummer with sometime **db** contributor **Mel Torme**, who also happens to be a singer. Their mutual admiration and musical compatibility are expressed in the music, and in abrasive tongue-in-cheek liner put-downs.

Torme, whose nonpareil musicality and mellow grittiness put him at the top of his league, turns in remarkable performances as singer and arranger. His chart on *Here's That Rainy Day* is introduced by a poignant tracing of *Soon It's Gonna Rain*. Adding their own superb embellishments are altoist Phil Woods and pianist Hank Jones. It's a class act all the way round.

Mel and Buddy sail through *Bluesette* with aplomb. Tenorist Steve Marcus, however, would probably have appreciated another run-down. The inability to combine the best of several performers through editing is one of d-d's basic shortcomings. *Lady Be Good*, Mel's tribute to Ella Fitzgerald, is an exuberant romp featuring the singer's scat work and his lively exchanges with Buddy of fours, twos and ones. Yeah!

The **Glenn Miller Orchestra** directed by Jimmy Henderson is basically in the nostalgia business. Even in its heyday, the Miller aggregation was essentially an arrangers' medium rather than a players'. Today, in spite of a host 30 □ down beat

of young players, the band sounds flabby, out-of-shape and just plain tired.

Even the d-d process sounds flat. There just isn't the same sense of "liveness" that the Herman and Rich recordings have. Though the ensembles are fairly tight, the soloists seem locked into an early '40s time warp. This is a trip down memory lane that hopefully will be soon forgotten.

Fatigue seems to have been a problem for **Les Brown**. The "band of renown" does little more than run through rather routine charts that seem geared more for dancers than listeners. It's a competent outing, but hardly inspired.

The band's soloists are often quite good but the musicians do not receive any solo credits. With four jacket sides potentially available for liner information, this kind of omission seems unconscionable. Someday, the American Federation of Musicians should insist that contributions by its members be properly credited on recordings and tapes.

The most outstanding of the small group discs is **Phil Woods' Song For Sisyphus**. As Dan Morgenstern mentions in his informative annotations, the Woods Quintet is a working unit that combines the best of freedom and discipline. At center stage, though, is the Olympian altoing of Woods.

Whether ballad or burner, Woods' forays are marked by vigorous assertiveness, melodic suppleness and harmonic ingenuity. Quite simply, Woods has all bases covered. On the lovely Harold Arlen melody, *Last Night When We Were Young*, Woods growls, murmurs and shouts. For the Parker/Gillespie tight rope, *Shaw Nuff*, Woods is a bop-inspired aerial acrobat.

Anchoring the rhythm section are bassist Steve Gilmore and drummer Bill Goodwin, who navigate with the finesse of Grand Prix champions. Harry Leahey's guitar work, a graceful plus for the quintet, is given a deserved solo showcase with Django Reinhardt's *Nuages*. Pianist Mike Melillo is the group's resident composer/arranger, an impeccable accompanist and a moving soloist whose sparkling efforts in his Monkish *Monking Around* and Woods' *Song For Sisyphus* deserve special praise.

Another outstanding set of performances are those by the **Barry Miles Quartet** which includes keyboardist Miles, guitarist Vic Juris, bassist Jon Burr and percussionist Terry Silverlight. This is the same group that broke up '77's Berlin Jazztage with highly sophisticated blends of jazz, rock, funk and folk.

The compositions (three by Miles and one each from the others), though striking different moods, are well-crafted and intricate charts that help electronic instruments breathe. They also allow wide ranging improvisational latitude of which the players take full advantage. *Fusion Is* is first rate contemporary music.

Two of the Japanese RCA d-ds present high energy dialogues between American drummer/percussionist **Warren Smith** and two excellent Japanese wind players. The first date, *Warren Smith And Masumi Nakagawa*, features a fine young flutist with a firm background in both classical and jazz. The result of **Nakagawa's** broad experience is a superb technique and a comprehensive knowledge of musical styles spanning baroque to avant garde.

In the Smith-Nakagawa conversation titled *Kaikon*, the free-form exchange bubbles with lithe quicksilver gestures. For *Saiun*, Naka-

gawa switches from standard flute to alto, bass flutes and piccolo. Here, the gradually intensifying drama is built from vibrant lyric arcs.

Warren Smith and **Toki** matches the percussionist with saxophonist **Toki Hidefumi**. The accomplished Toki, in addition to his own groups, has played with Terumasa Hino and Ryo Kawasaki. On *Dialogue* Toki's alto swirls with passionate precision. For *Heritage* Toki moves to soprano and a more melodic approach.

Smith is a sonic explorer whose combinations of percussive stimuli define a broad spectrum of textures, timbres and polyrhythmic overlays. On each disc, Smith's transitions from instrument to instrument trace an aural landscape which is effectively captured by the 45 rpm d-d procedure.

The third Japanese RCA disc focuses on the **Lew Tabackin Quartet**. With the reedman are pianist Toshiko Akiyoshi, bassist Bill Dougherty and drummer Shelly Manne. *Trackin'* is a buoyant outing with Tabackin taking charge on both tenor and flute.

From the start of *I'm All Smiles*, the high quality of playing and engineering mesh well. The sensation for the listener is like being up near the stage; the tenor is in front, the piano and bass in midground, the drums in back. The clean separation and full fidelity bring out aural details that further the sound's "naturalistic" quality.

Tabackin gallops. Plying his rich reedy tone with its echoes of Coleman Hawkins and Chu Berry, Lew scoots through *Cotton Tail*, steam-rolls along *Trackin'* and dances with *Smiles*. His flute traces a sultry *Summertime*. On each, Tabackin's rhythm mates nudge and caress with gleeful delight.

Piano Rags For Four Hands features the keyboard work of **David Montgomery** and **Cecil Lytle** in an engaging performance of nine rags, both old and new. Taking their tempos at a leisurely medium pace, the pianists effectively use dynamics and slight shifts in pulse to accentuate their music's melodic and harmonic contours. The album also includes gracefully written notes by an unidentified ragtime aficionado.

Woofers Tweeters And All That Jazz is reminiscent of the wave of stereo records that appeared in the '50s to demonstrate the wonders of two-channel audio. Thankfully, we don't get jets roaring from speaker to speaker. We do, however, get lots of percussion courtesy of arranger **James Treulich**. Though there are some provocative moments by players like pianist **Art Lande**, overall the group improvisations are doodles geared more toward proving d-d's spatial effects than to any sustaining musical vision.

The indisputable loser among this group of d-ds is *Tuxedo Junction*. With less than 12 minutes of music, the use of magnetic tape, no mention of the musicians (who are probably just as glad), insipid Vegas-style arrangements and a quartet of singers who are more than slightly *desafinado*, this is one that should soon be appearing in the cut-out bins.

One last point. Some of the manufacturers, apparently recognizing the drawback of reduced playing times, fail to include timings on either jackets or labels. So, again, the buyer must beware! (The timings listed after each rating come either from liner information or from my own rough calculations. In spite of imprecision, these should provide a fairly good guide to the *amount* of music per disc.)

—berg



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BY HOWARD MANDEL

Steve Reich, composer, is among the younger academy trained Americans with a new interest in tonal, rhythmic music as well as an active curiosity about non-Western musical traditions. After graduating from Cornell University with a philosophy degree, Reich studied composition with Hall Overton, attended Juilliard, and in 1963 received his M.S. in music from California's Mills College, where his teachers were Lucio Berio and Darius Milhaud. He has since studied the master drumming of the Ewe tribe in Ghana, investigated Balinese gamelan music, and is currently exploring traditional forms of Hebrew chanting.

Following the lead of La Monte Young, Reich, along with composers Terry Riley and Philip Glass, has created a body of work which is mysterious yet mellifluous and very accessible, based partly on acoustic properties of repetition and minor variation; their results have influenced such pop-based electronic musicians as Brian Eno and Michael Hoenig. Reich's early *Come Out* used a "found" vocal object; since, his instrumental input has grown until *Music For 18 Musicians* (recorded in 1976 and released in '78 by ECM) comprises violin, cello, four female voices, six pianos, marimbas, xylophones, metallophone, maracas, clarinets and bass clarinets. Reich and his ensemble make their first American tour in March. A longtime jazz enthusiast, Reich claimed Eric Dolphy as the model for the opening bass clarinet sequence of his latest LP; he also avowed before his first *Blindfold Test* his enduring love of bebop. Prior to listening, he was given no information about the selections played.

1. ERIC DOLPHY. *God Bless The Child, Hi-Fly* (from *The Berlin Concerts*, Inner City). Dolphy, bass clarinet, flute. Recorded 8/30/61.

It's bass clarinet. At first I thought it couldn't be Eric Dolphy because it's too repetitive and tonal, but the high notes sounded like it had to be Dolphy, or someone who had heard Dolphy. Beautiful control and very beautiful solo playing. I usually don't enjoy solo instrumental playing of single line instruments; I find it pretty boring. Whoever this is, he also kept the duration down—it could have gone on a long time, and it didn't. I'd like to hear some more.

On that second cut it's surprising; he sticks remarkably close to the changes on his flute. Most of it is straightahead jazz flute, in a way that I never really heard him play; I wouldn't know if this was before he got to where I heard him or after, shortly before his death, when I wasn't aware of exactly how he was playing. But I've never heard him play so straightahead—I wouldn't have guessed it was Eric Dolphy.

2. DON CHERRY. *Brown Rice* (from Don Cherry, Horizon A&M). Cherry, trumpet, electric piano, voice; Frank Lowe, tenor sax; Ricky Cherry, electric piano; Bunchie Fox, electric bongos; Verna Gillis, voice.

The eight note ostinato seems to be a direct transcription from the Balinese barangan dance. This seems to be an example of the kind of thing I try to avoid myself—taking something from a non-Western context, bringing it into the recording studio, overlaying it, crossing it with what sounds like imitation Jr. Walker tenor (which sounds a lot better when Jr. Walker does it) and some sort of advertisement for a macrobiotic restaurant, whispered in your ear.

The sources at work on the minds of those who made this were probably pretty interesting, at least the two that I could hear right away—the Jr. Walker tenor and the Balinese barangan dance, which is a trance dance. But the main effect of this is very artificial, forced, and the negative side of what can happen when the non-Western music hits

Western ears. Which is to hit the first thing you hear, the ostinato, to belabor it and color it in with poor sounding—that didn't sound to me like either an ordinary xylophone or glockenspiel; possibly a good toy version which nevertheless comes out sounding rather tinny. There's no reason for the ostinato; it doesn't support one fraction of the lines that would accompany a real barangan dance.

I'd say it's kind of a depressing reality, but there's something to be learned from it: people will take the sound—it's the sitar in the rock band or in this case the barangan dance ostinato and psychedelic production—the first noticeable aspect of a music that has nothing to do with you. It's catchy so you play it as you hear it with your own most available instruments, and then overlay—it sounds like studio overlays—with the psychological projections that the musicians in the session have to the source music—which are often very foreign to the real character of that source.

3. TERRY RILEY. *Persian Surgery Dervish* (Shanti/Discomdis 83.501/502.). Riley, electric organ and feedback. Recorded 4/18/71.

We've just heard an entire side of what has to be Terry Riley playing the electric organ, partly into tape delay and maybe some of it not. I haven't heard it before. The opening sounds like some sort of an ostinato in five, and it's more or less in Dorian; Terry's a real good player. The second section he moves into four, and the right hand seems more like his expression of jazz or something that's supposed to sound like jazz. I was very attentive during the opening section—it's relatively simple, but the pitches work. Very often for me, Terry's strongest aspect when he's improvising is his choice of notes; he is very tasty. But as it goes on, I can't really keep my attention going as closely as I could on that opening section. Maybe that's one of the problems of being a solo improviser. I don't have that problem, so I can only say it as a listener.

For me, Terry's best music is *In C*, music I can relate to emotionally and intellectually—here, there are moments when I could get into it as a

feeling, as a mood, but basically it's melody and accompaniment—and this turn of melody I like, that turn I don't like. It's so far away from what I'm personally concerned with that it's not really listening to a composer, it's listening to a player, as he improvises, and either succeeds or fails. I would really be curious to hear Terry do a number of things that come to mind immediately. One, to hear him play piano rather than electric organ; I'd be curious to see him sit down at the piano, which I know he was trained in originally. And without the electronics. Certainly I don't think that he needs them. I'd also be curious to hear him play with other musicians; and mostly I'd be interested to hear him try to compose something again; I'm sure he's capable of doing it. But his choices are what they are. It's good to keep up and hear what Terry's doing.

4. AIR. *G.v.E.* (from *Air Time*, Nessa). Henry Threadgill, flute, hubkaphone; Fred Hopkins, bass, Steve McCall, drums.

I really have no idea who the musicians were. There's something good that could be said: the double stops on the bass and the obviously careful working out of the tom tom thumping with mallets in conjunction made it possible to get enough of a harmonic foundation that you didn't miss a piano. But it's really kind of a boring ostinato in six, and a not very interesting flute melody and a not very far reaching improvisation on that melody, short break and back to the ostinato in six, with the exact same arrangement of double stops and tom tom. [Laughs] Using repetition can really be a terrible pitfall.

In the hands of great jazz musicians like John Coltrane, whose towering influence seems to spread well beyond this record, I guess it was not a problem. And the style of drumming Elvin Jones created with him—there's a pale imitation here; and the style of bass playing Jimmy Garrison did with that group, someone here is looking around for it and not finding it. It's natural that they would have a long term, far reaching effect on many musicians, but as many things it isn't always so fruitful in the hands of the people who are influenced. I wish the players had stretched out a little. I thought at the beginning it was going to be a very freewheeling session, sort of like *Salt Peanuts '78*, a wide open Dizzy Afro-Cuban montuno, but then it got into this really frozen, carefully arranged, nicely worked out relationship between bass and drums, and that was about it. I'd have to go back and hear it again, but the percussion instrument sounded like tuned cowbells, in part, and it's reminiscent of steel drums, but I'm sure it's something I don't know. Conceivably brake drums. It's hubcaps?! Well, I was getting close.

5. CHARLIE PARKER. *Groovin' High* (from *The Comprehensive*, ESP). Parker, alto; Miles Davis, trumpet; Al Haig, piano.

It sure is Charlie Parker and it sure sounds as good as when I first heard it, back in the mid '50s—I'm not sure if it was Miles or Dizzy—I would guess Dizzy—and I think Bud Powell—but the Charlie Parker solo is as clean, as fresh and beautiful as it was when I first heard him 20 years ago. It's like asking what do you think of Johann Sebastian Bach—he's just the standard by which other things are measured. It's become a cliché to say that; I really haven't actually heard a recording of Charlie Parker in at least ten years, so I would pay lip service to any memory bouncing around in my head. But to hear it again and to hear that every note means something, that every note comes effortlessly out! I have very little to say but that it would be very difficult to find any music that was better realized, so succinctly and in such a brief time. And it stands up—the test of any serious music is what does it sound like X number of years later? Okay, you were impressed by it—I'm 41 years old and hearing something I heard when I was 16—and it sounds as good or better than it did then—'cause I've heard a lot more music since then. It's marvelous. It's a pleasure to hear it now.

6. GAMESAN SEMAR PEGULINGAN. (Nonesuch Explorer Series). Recorded in

Teges Kanyinan, Pliatan, Bali, by Robert E. Brown.

It's obviously Balinese gamelan music; I think it's Semar Pegulingan, and I think it might even be the recording that Bob Brown made a few years back. The ensemble work in much gamelan music is phenomenal—on a really good recording like this where it's done in stereo and you can hear the precision of the players, it's really amazing. I talk so much about steady time; when you hear Balinese music you realize there are actually many changes of tempo going on, and those tempos are cued in by the drummer—there are probably more than ten but under 20 musicians here, all cued in to be able to stay together through some really complex changes in tempo. It's beautiful; I've heard it many times, and it also stands up.

7. ORNETTE COLEMAN. *Midnight Sun* (from *Dancing In Your Head*, Horizon A&M). Coleman, alto; the Master Musicians of Joujouka, Morocco, reeds and drums.

Very good musicians on that track, and they've obviously listened to Bismillah Khan, who I heard in New York in Philharmonic Hall three, four or five years ago. He played with side drum and five shenais (double reed wood oboes). Two droned, he would play melody and the other two would be his delay, only they were live, so he didn't need tape recorders. They would play bits of his phrase after him. Here it was the shenai as drone, but the melody has gone over to . . . I don't know whether it's tenor or alto sax. The drummer is really good, and I don't know what he's playing. Not only are his chops good, his phrases are tight, his picking up the tempo is nice. Though I can admire the musicianship, and I really can, I keep wanting to hear Bismillah Khan; it's like the saxophone is getting in the way of the proper soloist, who's not at the session.

It is possible, and Coltrane showed it, in *Chasin' The Trane* and tunes on *Africa Brass*, to take a drone or one or two chords and play, finally, *anything* against it, play noise against it. But it ain't what you do, it's how you do it. To me, this is a different situation than on the Don Cherry track we heard earlier, but it's in the same area—how to deal with something very beautiful that you're hearing. You take the instrument into your ensemble, but not in full context—leaving out, in this case, the centerpiece. The drummer, perhaps he actually has the same side drum; it's not a mrdungam, it's related to that, it's got that slappy, dead sound you get from a heavy headed lateral drum that rests in your lap. It may have been tom toms with mole skin over their heads, I don't know. My knowledge of Indian music is limited, but as far as I know Bismillah Khan is the acknowledged living master of his instrument, and the way he uses it defines my knowledge of how it is used. This seemed to me immediately as though the saxophone was taking his place, which didn't really work, though the musicians were first rate players.

8. MILES DAVIS. *On The Corner* (Columbia). Davis, trumpet; personnel unlisted.

It took about three cuts into it, but lurking behind the wah wah pedals, the atomic gongs, and every other offbeat, including the way Philly Joe started to play his snare around 1955, the sleigh bells, the clapping, the pans, pots and overproduction it sounded like a real good session with Miles Davis. Everything's wrong—it is overproduced, it has too many effects, the wah wah pedal is used outrageously, and yet the net effect of it—it moved me, it's enjoyable—whether it's the greatest thing Miles ever did, probably not, but I enjoyed it. I found myself laughing a lot, because it has a lot of wit, it's got a loose feel, and if you're going to play jazz, and you're going to deal with all the realities we've been talking about—ethnic influences, electronics, producers, all the rest of it, it seems it's all there and Miles seems to be right on the corner, just enjoying himself. It may not be the same as listening to *Donna Lee*; he may not be a pure, straightahead, bebop jazz player anymore, but it's 25, 30 years later, and it's realistic. It's real folk music.

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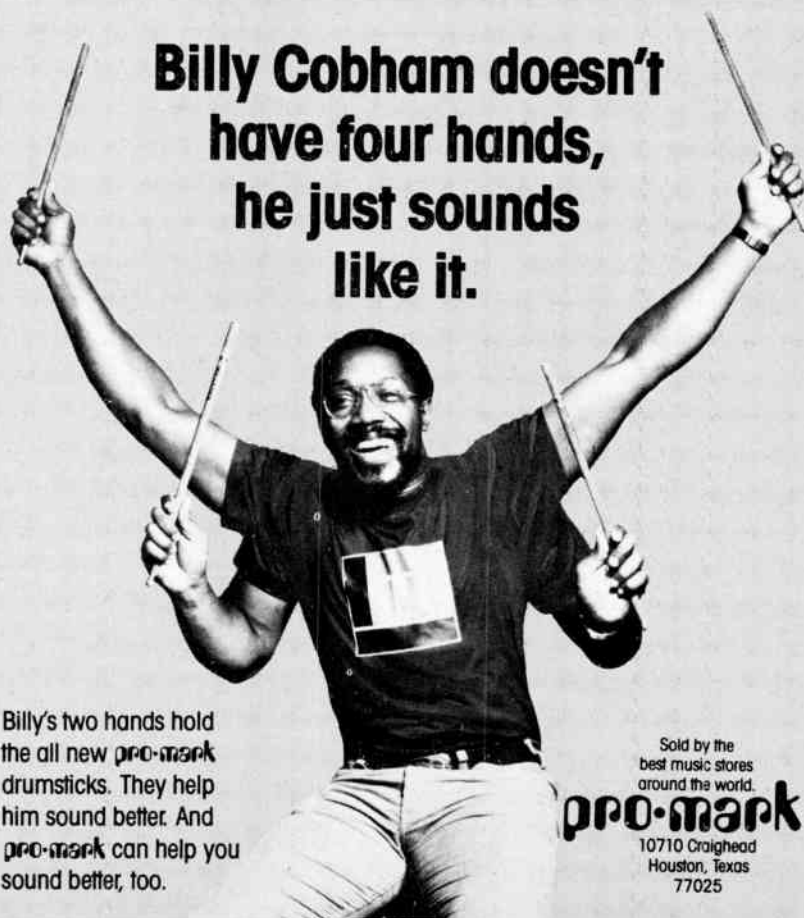
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PROFILE

CHICO FREEMAN

BY PATRICK IRWIN

Chico Freeman is perhaps the most inside "outside" player to emerge from the steadily growing crop of young creative musicians in the contemporary jazz world. Freeman's eclectic style will disabuse any who believe that to take music beyond conventional structures the player must be able to recite from the book of standards. Chico can take a band from a straightahead 4/4 to a screaming collective improvisation with, say, a samba as a transition. And he makes it happen with an air of limitless possibility.

"There are elements of all forms of music in what I do," Chico states emphatically. "I try to take things now gone and past and to reinterpret them in terms of the present and future. Whether it's doing old things in new ways or doing new things in old ways, I just like to think that I make creative music."

Freeman's portentous views reflect the longstanding influence of Muhal Richard Abrams and Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, with whom Chico has been associated since 1972. Chico recalls, "Muhal is the one that taught me I could do whatever I wanted to do musically. Muhal gave me the space to be creative. The atmosphere in the AACM is such that there are no limitations on the things you can do. You can develop yourself to the utmost and to the fullest. The only limits are the ones you place on yourself." Armed with the AACM philosophy and an astounding arsenal of chops, Freeman, in less than three years in New York, has already established that he is a tenor player of profound consequence with an even greater potential.

His decision to emigrate to New York City from Chicago was not planned—New York was merely a stopover from a trip to Brazil with the Governors State University Jazz Band, which was awarded the trip for being the top band at Notre Dame's festival. Chico took the honors for best saxophonist and best soloist at the contest. While in New York, Freeman ended up substituting for his friend Henry Threadgill, of Air, who had a gig with Jeanne Lee. To take the job, Freeman had to extend his visit a week, and the visit turned into a permanent residency. As Chico recalls, "There was a cat who kept looking at me and saying, 'How long are you going to be here?' and I was saying, 'Not that long,' and he kept telling me, 'You're one of those cats who's going to be here.' And he was right, I never went back."

Within two weeks, Chico sat in with Cecil McBee, played a date at Cami Hall for the tribute to Clifford Brown, Fats Navarro, and Kenny Dorham, and had continued working with Jeanne Lee. He has maintained his association with McBee, who alternates with Reggie Workman in Chico's current ensemble.

Freeman has concentrated on cultivating his own band rather than taking on relatively

lucrative offers as a sideman. It is no easy chore being a bandleader but Chico feels that he has always had a natural tendency in that direction. As a result, the Chico Freeman Ensemble, which includes Famoudou Don Moye on percussion, Jay Hoggard on vibes, and either McBee or Workman on bass, is a conscious working ensemble rather than a haphazard conglomerate.



Freeman's first date as a leader took place on his father's birthday. Von Freeman, who is among the many unjustly obscure jazz players, is a hard driving and highly respected Chicago tenor saxophonist, whose latest release is *Serenade And Blues*, on Nessa. Chico credits his father with a rather subliminal influence.

"I think it was an impact that I didn't realize until later, because when you're young you tend to want to move in the direction of your peers and toward what you hear on the radio. My father practiced all the time. I grew up hearing him. He seldom played records so it wasn't like we grew up hearing all the cats. He was always working on his own original thing. His practicing all the time contributed to what harmonic things I hear and how I hear them. The things that he was practicing were so advanced. Of course at the time I couldn't tell. But now, when I hear something I can sort of make a connection."

That "connection" has resulted in two excellent albums on India Navigation and one record, Chico's first, on the Japanese Why-not?-Trio label. Although hindered by a poor mix, the recordings not only reflect his accomplished skill as a multi-reedman but his absorbing abilities as a composer. His compositions exhibit a very intimate harmonic sense that juxtaposes varied timbres and meters.

"I am very involved with experimentation. I am developing my own system of notation as well as using the standard system. I have a cerebral kind of notation that uses psychological interpretations and reinterpretations of thoughts and thought processes. It's a sight-

to-motor response, so to speak."

And how is it notated? "Sometimes using symbols, sometimes using just words which generate ideas which in turn make a composition. Music is the organization of sound, and composition is some kind of notation of that sound in an organized form. All notation is symbols which are defined. So as a result, any method can be applied to any symbol. We live in a world where we experience and take in many things through our psyche and emotions and so forth. Symbols can take on different meanings and interpretations. That's why the compositions take on such a breathing quality and have so many variations just by being played and interpreted."

Look Up, the opening piece on *Kings Of Mali*, Freeman's second release on India Navigation, illustrates his compositional experiments and abilities; the piece is an abstraction on the number four. Chico states the theme on solo soprano sax with a dazzling whirl of polytonality and spliced rhythms. Hoggard, on vibes, joins the melody and takes it, with Chico, through three different time signatures and harmonic changes. The rest of the ensemble—Moye, McBee, and pianist Anthony Davis—burst into the fray, developing the piece in an abstraction of the theme. After a brief suspension, the ensemble restates the theme and collectively improvises, with the only scored requirement being that each musician begin with one aspect of the compositional framework. It could be a rhythmic aspect, a melodic aspect, or a harmonic aspect. Even when one musician is out front soloing, the other musicians are using one or more of the elements of the compositional framework.

It is an ambitious yet solid composition—the abstraction develops into an accessible groove. The ensemble at times recalls Eric Dolphy's *Out To Lunch* LP with its animated and playful arrangements for reeds and vibes. And, like *Out To Lunch*, *Kings Of Mali* is immaculately composed.

Freeman's albums show a careful amalgamation of influences and inspirations. As well as spending time with Abrams and the AACM, Chico has apprenticed with Elvin Jones, Sun Ra, Don Pullen, and the Sam Rivers big band.

Freeman, who plays a Selmer saxophone with Rico reeds, considered Elvin Jones a major influence on his musical development. "He was one of the people I always wanted to play with, because of Coltrane. No one has really recorded Elvin properly and I learned from playing with him live what a phenomenon he really is. Elvin has been a rhythmic influence on me—he and I would get into these poly-rhythmic dialogues and I would find myself trying to imitate what he would do and he would catch it. He has affected my phrasing a lot."

Just after leaving Jones, Freeman joined Sam Rivers. "When I first came to New York, I told Sam that if there was ever an opening at one of his Rivbea festivals that I would like to play. There was an opening, and after Sam saw what I was doing, he asked me to join his big band. We took that band to Europe, which I think is one of the best tours I have ever made. Sam is one of the greatest musicians and composers living.

"He has been a great help to me in New York—musically and otherwise. His standards are so high. Sam has upheld my conceptions of what standards should be. He's a professional and he has a lot of respect for himself, which allows him to have respect for

other people. Therefore I find dealing with him a very positive experience. His whole family, actually, reflects him. And as a musician, Sam plays so much saxophone and so much flute and he's so innovative.

"I'm fortunate in that I have been able to play with people I really enjoy. Their influence has helped me out in my development and to be free. For instance, Don Pullen's style and spirit and way of doing things. I didn't know the piano could produce so much fire and so much energy, but Don can do it, and then all of a sudden he can do the most beautiful progressions and melodic things."

Growing up in Chicago had its own musical rewards for Freeman. Chico gained initial exposure by working with bluesmen Memphis Slim and Junior Wells. Later, while a music education student at Northwestern University, Chico was called to work with the Dells and the Four Tops as well as working with his own band, Thunderfunk Symphony and a local electric combo, Streetdancer. Thunderfunk Symphony was on the verge of breaking with a hit single, but their record company folded because of legal problems. Chico's experience with r&b and blues is clearly evident in his playing.

After graduating from Northwestern in 1972, Chico called Muhal Richard Abrams, who was then in Chicago. Soon, Freeman was studying advanced theory and composition at the AACM school under Abrams' tutelage.

A year's study with Muhal qualified Freeman to teach the beginners and intermediates at the school. As a result of his work at the

AACM school and a local day care center, Freeman was awarded a Gavin scholarship which enabled him to attend Governors State University, where he is just shy of receiving his M.A. in composition and performance. It was at Governors State, under Warrick Carter and Richard McCreary, that Chico became exposed to electronic music as well as to composers in the black classical and European traditions.

Chico's adamant assertion of his indebtedness is reflected in his sound. "I wish that people could hear the band over a period of time... one set doesn't say it. But we have the ability to play in various rhythms, from sambas, African and Afro-Cuban rhythms and reggae to straightahead swinging in four, to playing in odd meters, to playing funk. That's the kind of band that I prefer; there are no limitations. This band can take these forms and never make it sound like any kind of form—it's always creative music. It's like making something new all the time."

As far as categorizing his sound is concerned, Chico demurs. "To label the music as free improvisation has no meaning. Does that mean that I improvise for free? Improvisation can be based on many things. People think that if you don't improvise on harmonic structures or chord changes that it becomes free improvisation. But you don't have to improvise only on harmonic structures, you can improvise on many different elements. And, it's not that I improvise that much or I don't improvise that much, you see. I do whatever I do. You can expect anything from me." **db**

IRV KRATKA

BY BRET PRIMACK

Irv Kratka is the President of the MMO Music Group Inc. His 29-year-old record company, which includes such labels as Inner City, Classic Jazz and the famous Music Minus One series, is growing by leaps and bounds. The company recently moved to larger facilities—a 25,000 square foot location in mid-Manhattan, to house offices, an art department, shipping facilities and a recording studio.

Kratka was born in Brooklyn on May 5, 1928. "I come from a jazz background. I played drums in my teens and into my 20s. I played some jobs professionally, but mainly I jammed with other players. I was a tremendous New Orleans music fan and a faithful follower of the Bunk Johnson band when the New Orleans revival occurred in the early '40s. I even played with Bunk's band on a number of occasions. I numbered among my friends people like Baby Dodds, who was Bunk's drummer for awhile. Dodds of course was the drummer in the Hot Five and Hot Seven Armstrong Bands in the late '20s. I knew his style backwards. Like my friends, I collected jazz records and was familiar with all the players.

"How did I get into the record business? When I was 18 or 19, a friend of mine, who shall remain nameless, was bootlegging jazz records on the Jolly Roger label. At the time the major labels had no reissue programs to speak of, and collectors were legion and interested in obtaining the classic jazz programs, which were not priority items in the minds of

their owners, the major labels. I became familiar with the technique for making a record, the actual physical production, and since that didn't hold me in awe, I decided to try my hand at it. I was always an organizer—when jam sessions were run, I was the one running them. I had people in sessions like Mutt Carey, the great New Orleans trumpeter, Pops Foster, the bassist, Chippie Hill, the blues singer, and the great James P. Johnson, Fats Waller's mentor. In fact, I worked with James P. Johnson at a Trenton Jazz Society Concert. I had this penchant for organization, plus I had the moxie to try it; I wasn't awed by starting a record company.

"This friend was succeeding in a bootleg thing. I wasn't interested in bootlegging but I enjoyed music a lot and the potential excitement of running my own business was more of a challenge to me, at that time, than playing drums. I'd worked sufficiently at playing and enjoyed it immensely but I also felt it wasn't going to satisfy me as a life work. I could also see it wasn't going to be a heavy bread type of thing. You had to be quite unique to make a lot of money in jazz at that time.

"My first label was Relax Records, which I founded in 1950, when I did four 78s with Dick Hyman. But with my typical luck, Columbia at that very moment introduced the LP to the marketplace. I got into LPs real fast after that. There was no records, just the new LP machines, so anything that was made was readily acceptable. I produced a very fine series of classical pipe organ records. At 14 or 15 LPs I had the largest catalogue of such music available. It was a time for committing entire sections of a composer's output to disc, in this case, Cesar Franck. I also got into woodwind and recorder music heavily. Somewhere in '51 or early '52 we started recording our first Music Minus One records, chamber mu-

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"I did it all myself, producing and selling. This was truly the era of the single entrepreneur. I started the company with my own funds, about \$500. I poured just about all my savings into the company. And as a company, it remained marginal for as long as 15 years from the beginning. It was amazing to me, that through my stubbornness, sheer bullheadedness in wanting to succeed, I stayed with it, through some very hard times when we couldn't sell enough records to pay the bills."

Where did Kratka get the idea for the MMO concept? "Actually, I was in Sam Goody's [the large N.Y. area record store] one day and I was talking with the buyer, Abner Levin. I asked him what area of music was worth bringing back or perpetuating in this new LP format. He mentioned the old Columbia Add-A-Part series, which had been born in the 78 era but died because Columbia wasn't interested—they weren't big sellers. The LP format seemed to be perfectly suited for this medium. A chamber music piece that runs 20 minutes would fit on one side of an LP. Formerly, if you put them out on a 78, which is the way Columbia put them out, every four minutes you'd have to stop and turn the record over. That was distracting to the momentum of the piece. So in '52, we put out our first MMO records. Two years later, we put out some rhythm section MMOs which got a great deal more acceptance than the classical items we'd done. So, I produced the rhythm backgrounds in tandem with classical music for the next 20 years. There are now over 700 MMO LPs.

"I'd only put out ten jazz records between 1950 and 1970, mostly by friends. They were all five star records in *down beat* but it didn't trigger anything. The sales hovered around 1000 to 2000 units, and then stopped. I decided that MMO LPs were what I was intended to be involved with in this life. I renewed my efforts and hung in."

How did Inner City begin? "In November of 1975, at a trade show in Las Vegas, I was displaying MMO records and nothing much was happening. It was a poorly attended meeting. A man named Pierre Jaubert representing himself and Musidisc of France came into my booth. He wanted to know if I was interested in leasing product from him. He had some interesting items. Among them, an Archie Shepp LP, with Shepp playing piano, and a Ponty-Grappelli album and six others that were quite interesting, and we struck an agreement. Later, the tapes arrived from Europe. We released our first records on the Inner City label in February of '76: our first release was the Shepp album." So began the Inner City 1000 series.

"Shortly thereafter, we persuaded Nils Wither of SteepleChase Records to license his catalogue to Inner City. In September of '76, we brought out our first 2000 series LP, a Jackie McLean date drawn from this catalogue. After that we licensed Enja Records from Germany and put out a Cecil Taylor record in May '77 which was the start of our 3000 series. In between we licensed many other independent labels and independent items. Owl Records of France provided us with a Randy Weston solo album. Carosello of Italy gave us a two-record set of Earl Hines doing Gershwin. Durium of Italy provided us with a Gato Barbieri/Don Cherry album. From Musidisc of France, we obtained the rights to the seminal Ornette Coleman session, *Live At The Hilcrest*. We also licensed things from the American market. Charles Sullivan had re-

captured the rights to his famed *Genesis* album and after several months of talking, Charles finally told us to see what we could do with it. So we licensed a lot of specific items that I thought had merit and I thought would also have wider potential, properly distributed."

In addition to Inner City, Kratka started Classic Jazz and Aural Explorer. Classic Jazz is devoted to pre-'60s music, more of the rough and ready swing era whereas Inner City contains music by Shepp, Braxton, Cecil Taylor, and more of the post '60s bop era. Aural Explorer is devoted to the music of synthesizers, electronic music that breaks the sound barrier. Some are purely sound experiments. There's a lot going on in this area and we felt we had to represent it."



In addition to licensing recorded material, Inner City began producing original material. "Essentially, I had been doing that all my life. The first date we did ourselves was the Ted Curson Band. We'd started bringing out the SteepleChase product in September of '76 and around that time, I caught Ted Curson's new band at Boomer's. I talked to Ted the next day and we contracted to record the band. We traveled down to Philly and recorded the live side of the album in October, returned to New York and went into a studio on the following day to complete the date. We released the album in December to a great deal of critical acclaim.

"The speed with which we released the record has become a hallmark of what we try to do at Inner City. If we record something, it doesn't stay on the shelf for half a year to a year. We make an effort to let the artist see the fruits of his work within a reasonable amount of time.

"By February of '79, three years after we started Inner City, we'll have released approximately 210 albums. We're averaging 70 records per year which is a mind-boggling pace. It also underscores the wealth of material that is available from both European sources and from Japan. In recent months we have licensed the exquisite East Wind line of Japan. This has yielded Tristano, Ron Carter, Hank Jones, Art Farmer, Reggie Lucas, Hubert Eaves, Abbey Lincoln, Oliver Nelson, and dozens of other major artists.

"We've gotten a great deal of praise for our efforts, but initially there was some unhappi-

ness at the volume of releases issued by Inner City. People said "too much Dexter." We put out eight Dexter Gordon albums in a period of two years. People felt we should have spread them out in a larger time span. We felt that with the Columbia interest in Dexter and the enormous publicity he was getting, it was valid to strengthen our position and get his catalogue out now rather than later. It's really hard to say whether we were right or wrong as a company. I don't know what the bottom line would have been on sales. We might have sold more if we had held back and issued a Dexter every seven months instead of every three-and-a-half months. Jazz records are funny. Their sales curve are not quite predictable.

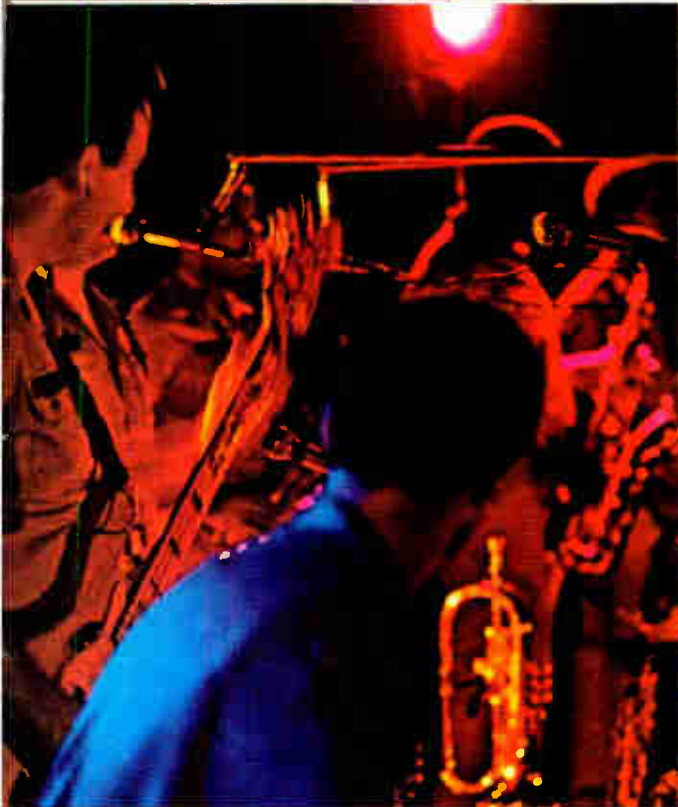
"A lot of what happens here is the work of our sales department. Our sales manager, Mort Hillman, has been very pivotal for us in breaking our jazz product out of the normal Little League boundaries. There is a big difference between the type of distribution we had several years ago and what we have today. Now, we're working either with our own branch operation or with independent distributors. We have a branch in L.A., run by my son David, and we're opening one in Chicago, which is quite unusual for a small company. We distribute throughout the rest of the country via independent distributors. Our L.A. branch has been monumentally successful. We feel this may be a direction for us to go in—with our own distribution we can get greater penetration for our ever enlarging catalogue.

"Our releases are very organized, very scheduled. We know in front by as much as two months what we'll be releasing. It's all done in a very coordinated sales presentation.

"We print a quarter of a million catalogues a year. We print order forms and broadsides, newsletters, and press releases in enormous quantity, and then get them out to all media. Our postal bill looks like the national debt. We'll be mailing half a million pieces in 1979 into American homes. With Music Minus One, we've been using Wats lines. Two such lines, constantly in use, enable us to take orders from anyone in the continental United States. We take credit card orders from people, which bypasses the normal delay of waiting for the mails to arrive, checks to clear and the like.

"MMO is 29 years old and it sells throughout the world. It serves a very vital purpose. It's used by people in areas where they have no access to other musicians and also in areas where our distribution is limited. I've had a man call me from a peninsula in Michigan, somewhere up in the woods. He was astonished that he was talking to a record company president in New York and placing an order for a single record. He had it three days later.

"At this time, we're producing records that have a five or ten or 15,000 sales top. We will reach that point as quickly as we can with the selling procedures we have. We do radio advertising and a lot of radio promotion, interviews, giveaways, and the like. We send out 400 copies of every new release in servicing not only all commercial stations playing jazz in the U.S. and Canada, but also all college stations. In fact, the school stations constitute the largest bloc of stations on our list. We are much more open about it than many of the other jazz labels, many of them having cut off those lists. They've made a hardnosed decision that they're not interested in serving anybody but the commercial stations. We also



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"This rapport has gone right through to the artists. They call and deal with us on a very open and friendly basis. They can always get me in or talk with somebody in the company, usually Andrew. We're also very receptive to new product. I really welcome cassettes. I want to hear new music. But I'm primarily interested in finished work, not music in an embryonic state. We discovered David Pritchard through a cassette. The Gregory James San Francisco band was a cassette submission as was Jeff Lorber, Cam Newton, Dry Jack and a host of other recent finds. This is really the way we audition material.

"I predicate my acceptance on the excellence of the playing, the quality of the recording and the imagination of the artist and what he's doing. But if I can't get a handle on it, it's not rejected—it's passed through to someone else in the company, our staff producer and engineer, Aimee Chiariello, my production chief, Kevin Yatarola, our promotion man, Andrew Sussman. I value and trust their evaluations, and listen even harder where a disagreement as to ma-

terial comes to pass. I am very concerned that in our rush to market, some material may be overlooked, bypassed or given too brief a hearing. It is a responsible decision making time and I really try to give each cassette a full and honest and concerned hearing.

"Kevin is typical of our employees—young (23 I believe), brilliant and focused. Now, believe it or not, Kevin's in total charge of our production each month. The average age of all company personnel is about 25. In addition to production, Kevin handles contracts, management arrangements, and a host of other details including but not limited to foreign dealings and talent acquisition. As this wasn't enough, he's recently taken on the mantle of company photographer, covering all sessions and providing us with some exquisite candids of our artists for jackets and promotion.

"We're a small company, notwithstanding the fact that we are probably the most active company in jazz today, in the world. We employ about 30 people. With 700 MMO items and now 197 jazz items, it's a large catalogue. Another pivotal figure on the company's growth has been David Kratka, whose handling of the L.A. branch, and national input in terms of publicity and promotion from the West Coast, where several of the major trade magazines reside, has been nothing short of superb. Where my attentions and energies flag, anyone of five or more good people at the company jump in, with ideas, concepts and enthusiasm to keep the ball in the air.

"We are making money. Our sales have increased 400% in two years! I feel that the future is very bright."

Kratka, an avid biker, whose ten speed sits near his desk, encourages those interested in a record industry career. "If you want to devote yourself to it, if you're willing to put in your time and pay your dues in the business, if you have a feeling that transcends the immediate glamour of it, it's a good business to get into. It's a growing business, a mushrooming business."

Getting started? "Get affiliated with a company. Get a job, mail room, filing, anything. Get involved and then indicate your interest and hope that someone in the company will spot what you can contribute. Many of the executives in this industry have literally come out of the mailrooms!" **db**

CAUGHT!

LENNY BREAU

SOUND ROOM
STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA

Personnel: Breau, acoustic and electric guitar; Joe di Bartolo, bass; Carl Burnett, drums.

The word among guitarists spread almost as fast as one of those L.A. brush fires: "Lenny Breau's back in town!" "No! Where?" "McCabe's Guitar Shop for one concert, then regular Monday nights at the Sound Room in Studio City." "You goin'?" "You crazy, man? Front row!"

It was understandable that the standing-room-only concert at McCabe's was less than sensational, and that the opening Monday

night at the Sound Room also felt a bit tense, constricted, and self-conscious. Comebacks are tough.

By the fourth Monday night at the Sound Room, however, Breau had relaxed. Accompanied by *Tonight Show* bassist Joe di Bartolo and by drummer Carl Burnett of Freddie Hubbard fame, Lenny showed off his stuff with style. This was the kind of music the guitar players in the SRO audience had come to hear.

Breau opened *Days Of Wine And Roses* with a flurry of harmonics, the bell-like tones that have become a Breau trademark. Fingerpicking his custom-made guitar (longer, wider neck), he agilely demonstrated his sensitive, finely-honed touch. Moving into a medium-slow bop tempo, with bassist di Bartolo energetically bolstering the bottom, Breau im-

provided complex, lyrical melodies while punctuating his phrases with widely-voiced bass-range chords. The set was rolling.

He moved from *Roses* to Bill Evans' fast-bop *Funkalero* to Charlie Parker's searing *Billie's Bounce*. He didn't stop there.

"I'd like to take you back to my country roots," he said, launching into Bob Dylan's *Don't Think Twice* and then into Gene Autry's *Back In The Saddle Again*. He knocked over both folkies and jazzers with his Chet Atkins fingerpicking, his vocal/musical humor, and his cosmopolitan blend of jazz harmonies with country rhythms and melodies.

From there, never using a flat pick (thumb pick and fingernails only), he moved into the dulcet *Five O'Clock Bells*, a tune he penned himself in 1965. After an acoustic flamenco number, Breau concluded the set on electric guitar, playing a terrifyingly speedy version of John Coltrane's *Impressions*.

Throughout the journey, bassist di Bartolo and drummer Burnett played with taste, purpose and fire. What had been a hesitant trio at McCabe's had become a poised and dynamic team at the Sound Room.

Breau's comeback story reads like a Hollywood scenario—which is one reason why it took him more than a month to shed the self-consciousness that inhibited his debut performances. At 37, he's already a legend, an almost impossible label to live up to.

In 1968 and '69, he created quite a stir in L.A., recording two RCA albums, *Guitar Sounds Of Lenny Breau* and *Velvet Touch Of Lenny Breau* (recorded live at Shelly's Manne Hole).

Then he disappeared. Personal problems took control of his life. He moved to Auburn, Maine, near his parents. He played the Cellar Door club once in awhile, and made occasional trips to Nashville for studio work (notably with Chet Atkins).

It wasn't until the fall of 1978 that Scott Page, guitarist with Seals and Crofts and a long-time Breau fan, heard Lenny was in Auburn. Page drove some 150 miles out of his way to check the story. He found Breau in good health, encouraged him to return to L.A., and paid his way back. Page booked the McCabe's and Sound Room gigs, and, with guitarist/engineer Dan Sawyer, is now independently producing Breau's new LP.

Aside from his awesome Autry-to-Coltrane diversity, Breau is also an accomplished improvisational stylist of rare originality and taste. He's back in the saddle again, hopefully for the long, enjoyable and prosperous ride he so well deserves.

—lee underwood

OTIS RUSH

LONE STAR CAFE
NEW YORK CITY

Personnel: Rush, guitar and vocals, with the Nighthawks: Jim Thackery, guitar; Mark Wenner, harmonica; Jan Zukowski, bass; Pete Ragusa, drums.

Although the name of Otis Rush stirs blues cognoscenti to feverish levels of excitement, the man himself has been heard but infrequently outside of his Chicago environs, where he has performed regularly for 22 years.

One reason that his out-of-town forays arouse such interest is that Otis is so inadequately represented on vinyl. On wax as in

life, the bluesman has been dogged by hard times and troubles, and the powerful tremolo note clusters that are his trademark have too often been squelched by some producers' notions of accompaniment. Considering his international reputation, the relative mediocrity of his studio output since the classic Cobra sides of the '50s is ironic. After years of unkept promises, unpaid royalties, and a lack of any widespread recognition, Rush is considering starting his own record company. "I owe it to myself to give it a try," he says, "and see what happens."

The extraordinary penetrating vibrancy of his instrumental work brings to mind Chuck Berry's legendary Johnny B. Goode, who "could play a guitar just like ringin' a bell." Indeed, Rush's shimmering high notes resound with a unique, bell-like timbre, owing in part to the upside-down and backwards left-handed technique he shares with Albert King and Jimi Hendrix, enabling him to bend the top strings down all the way across the fretboard rather than up as most guitarists do. His stinging tone also reflects his youthful attempts to emulate bottleneck effects with his fingers. "That way I could move faster and I didn't have that pipe to fiddle with." Although his earliest recordings display the twin influences of B. B. King and Muddy Waters, Otis credits no one but himself for his mature style, adding that "everybody's got their own sound—it's like a fingerprint."

Otis allows that he's had his share of misfortune—his son was shot to death, his mother died, his house burned down, his wife left him, and he was hospitalized, all in rapid succession. Surely all these woes have contributed not a little to the piercingly plaintive quality that infuses his vocal and instrumental styles alike. Yet he remains optimistic, and referring to both his career and personal life, he avers, "It's beginning to fall in place, little by little."

The music most certainly fell into place during Otis' most recent New York engagement at the Lone Star Cafe. Looking weary after having been detained en route to the Big Apple, Rush arrived too late for a sound check on opening night. He was backed by the Nighthawks, an excellent blues band from Washington, D.C., who warmed the house with a rousing set before Otis stepped tentatively to the stage.

A wave of anticipation swept through the crowd, and the phlegmatic, seemingly detached bluesman quickly returned the energy tenfold. Hunched over his instrument, bent slightly at the waist, Rush unleashed a barrage of blistering, finely wrought flash that threatened to surpass his every recorded memory. He fed the fans with thrills and little surprises until they didn't know whether to laugh or beg for mercy, acknowledging their response intermittently with a guarded smile.

Spurred by the Nighthawks' tight rhythm section, with Butterfield-styled harpist Mark Wenner and guitarist Jim Thackery, Otis combined wailing lines and sustained bends with breathtaking whiplash endings. Even his references to other players contained unpredictable variations, turning the stock Albert King octave jump, for example, into a descending phrase. In the process of developing a solo he would latch onto a familiar series of notes, reshaping and reorganizing them until he had infused a new, reverberant life into a former cliché. As for his own patented licks, even the most threadbare among them still delivered a special emotional charge.

Rush seemed most comfortable with his



own material. Although he ripped the back off of the first half of Muddy Waters' *Got My Mojo Working*, he seemed to lose interest before the end, lapsing into some distracting, uncharacteristically repetitive excesses that drained the song of its initial momentum. On Willie Dixon's *Little Red Rooster*, his highly-charged voice was typically resilient, but he used the mike to poor advantage, depriving the tune of any sustained thrust.

His own unforgettable *Double Trouble* suffered from a lackluster intro but cooked anyway, and when Otis sang, "In this generation of millionaires/It's hard for me to keep decent clothes to wear," you knew he meant it. In extended, no-holds-barred performances of his *Right Place*, *Wrong Time* and *It's My Own Fault*, Otis demonstrated in no uncertain terms the solid basis for his legendary status. Both renditions were *tours de force* of awesome proportions, as mind-bending in their improvisational creativity as they were cathartic in their sheer brute power.

On the second night, Rush outdid himself. In typical fashion, he walked out and plugged in nonchalantly. Slipping almost imperceptibly into the Nighthawks' backup, he churned out low-volume chords that gradually heated up to a slow burn. It sounded deceptively like a cursory warmup, but closer listening revealed a slew of entirely fresh Rush-isms combined with Wes Montgomery-like octaves and other mannerisms to form a subtle and coherent statement. Poised, ready and more relaxed than the night before, Otis rocked the jam-packed house. A couple of tunes fizzled at the end, but it was not for lack of effort.

Otis Rush takes risks, eschewing the tried-and-true in favor of spontaneity. While often erratic, he is also incredibly successful most of the time. Unconventional descending lines that land unexpectedly on a bass note, staccato runs, tumbling riffs laced with suspended tremolos—this is the substance of Rush's art. On one unidentified shuffle Otis found a screech at the top of the fretboard that was so full and intense as to be almost unimaginable—and yet he took it still higher. "You got the truth," Rush had said after his conversation with me. He might have said the same about his music.

—procter lippincott

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melodic system I know of in the West. It's really opened my eyes melodically." Collin's latest project for ECM—due out in March—is a trio date with Cherry and percussionist Nana Vasconcelos.

In his projects for ECM, Ralph Towner has undoubtedly appeared in the widest variety of contexts of any Oregon member, from *Trios/Solos* (with other Oregon members), through the solo *Diary*; duets with Gary Burton (*Matchbook*), John Abercrombie (*Sargasso Sea*) and Jan Garbarek (*Dis*); the two *Solstice* quartet records (with Garbarek, Eberhard Weber and Jon Christensen); his latest with Eddie Gomez and Jack DeJohnette; and a recently recorded quartet date with Gomez, Kenny Wheeler and Double Image drummer Mike DiPasqua. As with so many approaches associated with Oregon, Towner's many endeavors serve specific, ultimately freeing purposes.

"Each record should show some development, either in terms of playing or writing," Towner says. "I think about each project maybe a year in advance, and submit it to Manfred [Eicher, president and producer for ECM]. He has suggestions, but I can't look to please him at the expense of what I want to do, because then it would become a hollow thing. The trio record with Eddie and Jack [*Batik*] was fun, a different experience. After playing with horns for so long, I wanted to get back into the melodic voice thing."

Due to his prolific composing for Oregon (though as of late other members have been contributing more and more) and his numerous outside projects, Towner was and still is the group's best-known member—in short, the "star." And the attention he began to get led to some tense, uncertain times for the band.

"It put me in a strange place, and the band in a strange place, too," Towner recalls with a grimace, "particularly in Europe. When we did our first tour—I'd already been there several times, and was very established—the posters would say, 'Ralph Towner's Oregon,' with 'Oregon' in little letters. It caused a lot of tension, and the guilt I felt for having a little bit more recognition was really terrible. But we kept it all above board, and it passed; and everyone started getting recognized anyway. Ultimately, it's one of those things that is really a peripheral issue to the actual issue of making music."

"A lot of bands really get behind one of their members who becomes a star," says McCandless, "and that can really break up a group. That happened with us, but what eventually came out was that we were really enriched by our experience outside the group, and became wider people, musically and personally."

By the time this article appears, Oregon should be back at Longview Farms, mixing their second LP for Elektra. After five years and seven albums (with two more on the way), last fall Oregon released their first for Elektra, *Out Of The Woods*, probably the band's most highly realized work to date. All the elements that made the Vanguard albums so special—unusual, instrumentally diverse compositions; close attention to details; and above all, acutely empathetic collective improvisation—are present on *Woods*, many-fold. You can really hear them all, brought into sharp focus by, among other things, engineer Dave

Green's exceptional recording acumen.

"David's really into capturing the sound of the instruments," McCandless says glowingly, "with very little knob-widdling. We spent a whole day just getting the mike placement right, and then we recorded at 30 i.p.s., without Dolby, so we didn't have to sacrifice anything in brilliance. We got a very good pressing, and it feels very tastefully done all around."

Paul expresses equally laudatory comments about Oregon's new relationship with Elektra, particularly after the group's long tenure with Vanguard. "I can say freely that all the guys in the band are really pleased with the way it's gone. Joe Smith [Elektra/Asylum/Nonesuch president] wanted us to make the music we wanted to make, get it on a disc as beautifully as it could be done, and get it around to everyone—to try to change the face of American pop music and let people know there's a lot richer life musically for them than they even know about."

Along with recording Oregon as a group, part of the new agreement includes solo albums by Moore and McCandless. Paul plans to use pianist Art Lande and vibes player Dave Samuels for his record, which he hopes will include some of his music for woodwind octet. At the time of our discussion, Moore had just finished the recording for his project at Longview, featuring Winter Consort cellist David Darling, violinist Zbigniew Seifert (who appeared on *Violin*, Oregon's final Vanguard release), and Jan Hammer on drums!

"I use Jan on three pieces because he has a real musical sense of the drums," Moore explains excitedly. "The rest are trios (cello, violin and bass or piano), duets or solos. There's eight minutes of solo piano, some solo bass pieces, a six-and-a-half minute improvised duet with David and me on cello and piano—some interesting things, and some very lively things. Among the string things there are some totally improvised pieces, and some pieces that involve large amounts of improvising chords after the initial melody and the *spirit* of the melody have been established. They sound like improvised Bartok or something—very angular, wonderfully percussive pieces. Each tune sets up a different character, or series of characters, and then those characters conspire and dance around a little."

It's interesting to note Glen's use of a trap drummer on his album, for, although Moore's pre-Oregon experiences included work with Chico Hamilton, Oregon itself never uses traps per se in concert, and traps were heard only once (the *Together* album, with Elvin Jones) on an LP by the band.

"For the strictly string trios on my album," says Moore, "you hear things that sound like flutes and so many other things because of the mixtures of the harmonics. Now, when the drums are playing and the cymbals are crashing and all that, you tend to play much harder, and you don't notice the resonating strings, all the overtones and the stuff that's like ground cover, or clouds. Paul and I have done some trios with a trap drummer, and it's very exciting and electric—like the stuff with Jan—but when we get to Oregon, we're very thankful to be able to hear every little breath, and to be able to play very quietly—down to just a whisper—and still have it swing very hard. A lot of the magic that happens with Oregon has to do with the drums *not* being there."

And what of the new Oregon project? Everyone seems excited about it; Towner calls

it "absolutely the best thing we've done, with some new and amazing treatments of song form." Among the tunes recorded were a piece by Moore, based on an Egyptian poem, that includes unaccompanied solos by each member; something of Collin's with overdubbed thumb pianos ("I made my own sort of tribe," he says, laughing) and a triply overdubbed free piece. "The last night in the studio," relates Collin, "we turned on all the microphones and let loose, and came up with 15 minutes of free playing that is just extraordinary."

Aside from these recording projects, Moore hopes to tour with Seifert and Darling in the spring; Walcott with Cherry and Nana. Towner's future plans include a solo guitar outing for ECM ("a real exposed record, with no overdubs"), and McCandless is working on more woodwind octet music. Collin will appear on Nana's first record for ECM, and is scheduled to share a Creative Music Studio workshop in May with Nana, Don Moye and Jack DeJohnette. Oregon, as a group and as individual musicians, will be teaching at Boulder's Naropa Institute this summer. Until then, they have their new record to put together—a double-disc set—and tapes from their Thanksgiving concert at Carnegie Hall to sift through.

Where will it all end? With a major label behind this group that is constantly absorbing fresh musical experiences ("whole continuums into our mental libraries" is how McCandless describes it), Oregon will continue to flourish. Says Walcott simply, "We'll just keep going until we don't want to anymore. But we still haven't come close to that time. Not in the least." **db**

BYARD

continued from page 16

was supposed to be a sequel to my *Freedom Together*, but it doesn't quite reach it. I had enough time but I didn't have the groove. The type of improvisation I did wasn't rhythmically involved; it was more melodically involved.

"I wanted to cool it in the '70s; I wanted to take it easy and I goofed." In the '60s he recorded prolifically; why did he want to cool it? "Just to have something to say. I don't know whether a person progresses in making umpteen million albums or not." I suggest that concert promoters usually only hire a lesser-known artist if he's got an album on the charts. "That's what I'm trying to combat. It seems like that's a necessity now. I can tour if I want to but that's not part of my thing. I don't care that much for supporting the Sherraton chain, TWA and Eastern Airlines and Greyhound."

Jaki says he's been in "semi-retirement" since the late '60s. "I bring in a salary in a span of two and a half days. I leave here Tuesday at three, I'm back Thursday at 10 p.m. He commutes by car from his New York home to the Julius Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut, where he teaches a course with altoist Jackie McLean. From there he goes to the New England Conservatory where he teaches orchestration, composition and piano.

He occasionally works for Eddie Jefferson and Al McKusik as a sideman and still does "background music" jobs now and then. "To me it's like missionary work. You play and you grab a few people—a few people from these gigs have come to Ali's and have bought my albums."

continued on page 46

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HOW TO

EXTEND ELECTRIC BASSICS

BY DR. WILLIAM L. FOWLER

As soon as its evenly-distributed tonal strength at the lower end of the Fletcher-Munson curve had earned the electric bass an important place live on stage, demand for trained players exceeded the supply. To fill the gap, acoustic bassists and guitarists often doubled, the former already familiar with fretless fingering and pizzicato plucking, the latter with chords and picks, and both with E-A-D-G open-string tuning.

As electric bass usage proliferated into every type of group outside classical music, one might have expected Mus. Ed. sooner or later to seize the educational opportunity. Not so, though—getting to be a pro on electric has largely remained a do-it-yourself project, with a little help from friends and records and more recently from self-help instruction manuals written by such active-performer authorities as guitarist-turned-electric-bassist Carol Kaye or acoustic-doubling-electric bassist Rufus Reid.

The scarcity of formal training, however, hasn't seemed to stifle individual inventiveness, as today's top players prove. Combined, they're redesigning and redefining both procedures and potentials in the lower reaches of pitch. Several of them, headed by Chuck Rainey, now have formed the faculty at the first school primarily for the electric—Pat Hicks' Los Angeles Bass Institute Of Technology. And one, Valda Hammick, has authored a unique self-help book on up-to-the-minute professional procedures—the two-volume *Electric Bass Technique*.

The B.I.T. classroom subject list reads like a definition of all the skills an electric bassist must master to succeed as a professional. Students saturate their daytime hours in sight-reading and improvising, soloing, and accompanying, transcribing and transposing, training ears and taping ideas, and performing all the styles of the music profession. They simulate all performing situations—rock concerts, Broadway shows, Country-Western jamborees, studio sessions, jazz bashes—and sit in on master classes from artists like Ray Brown, Richard Davis, Chuck Domanico, and Jim Hughart.

They learn their craft under the exact conditions they will encounter as professional musicians. And they extend their musicianship beyond craftsmanship through study of master composers and master improvisors like the late Charles Mingus.

The B.I.T. policy of special workshops in musical areas related to electric bass often produces unexpected results. After an Emmett Chapman exposé of the hammer-on string-activation technique he uses on his Slick, a B.I.T. student-participant, Dwight Stone, worked out his own system of hammer-on walking bass lines against hammer-on chord-comping on his Fender bass.

The B.I.T. curriculum, special workshops and all, is to the bass what the Guitar Institute Of Technology is to guitar. Actually, the former grew out of the success of the latter, and both thriving Institutes now occupy the same teaching facility, where bass faculty and guitar faculty freely mingle with bass students and guitar students, and consequently where concepts converge. Howard Roberts' adroit plectrum methods, for example, add accuracy and speed to bass students' picking, and John Williams' and James Jamerson's and Bob Cranshaw's and David Shield's collective bass-line knowledge adds life to guitar students' chord-lines. And since the upper reaches of the bass pitch range correspond to the middle register of the guitar, a pitch area where harmony sounds warm yet clear, B.I.T. students benefit from guitar chord-melody techniques, techniques made accessible by the cut-away design of the fretted bass, and being made more accessible by Valda Hammick's extension of her bass fretboard to a full two octaves above the open strings.

Where the B.I.T. curriculum defines musical skills necessary to professional success, Ms. Hammick's *Electric Bass Technique* table of contents pinpoints specific technical skills an electric bassist must practice to reach instrumental competency. In clear detail and through extended examples, volumes I and II cover fingerstyle and pickstyle string activations, slurs and hammer-ons and pull-offs, pivots and slides and alternate fingerings for large or small hands, the artful use of fills and rests, kick-notes and foot-pats, straight scale lines and octaves and tenths, standard phrases and their variations, double stops and sustained tones and tremolos, chord progressions and modulations and bass-line decorations, all illuminated through progressively difficult exercises designed to promote coordination and sight-reading and individual imagination.

A page from the Hammick book might best illustrate the conciseness and the variety of this substantial aid to electric bass self-training:

Slow Ballad (Double-Time Feel)

The next example—the last eight bars of a standard tune—is in slow Straight 8ths, with a double-time feel. It demonstrates one way of playing a written bass part that consists mainly of dotted quarter notes and 8th notes. NOTE: Using 10ths the way they are illustrated in Bar 1 will depend mainly on what notes are in the vocal line—as well as

what the different sections of the orchestra are playing: you have to LISTEN! If such a moving 10ths line would intrude on the String Section's lines, for example, you wouldn't use it; on the other hand, it could sound good in a Trio backing group. In Bar 3 of Ex. 4, note the open A used together with double-stopped 4ths on the D

He feels being a teacher-performer is ideal. "It's just about one of the greatest setups." He has the security of a steady income and the freedom to choose what gigs he wants to do.

During his paid summer vacations, Jaki used to go on world tours with Zoot Sims, Paul Desmond, Clark Terry and others. But he hesitates to do it anymore because of something that happened on his last tour.

"It was about three years ago. I don't know if I should get into this. I thought I was going back to Europe on my own—I was supposed to be booked for three weeks—but I was a sideman, part of a sideshow. I was just part of a collage of 40 or 50 musicians and I didn't get the gigs I was supposed to, although I got paid for them. And I was placed with other pianists, which I don't approve of—not today. The musicians were my friends, but it was like being in a battle of piano players, like breaking down your ego. I only played two or three gigs. . . .

"I had had the impression that I was going to be guided by a certain impresario when in fact that impresario was being guided by another impresario who took the whole thing over. It wasn't a festival, it was a farcical. It was one of the biggest disappointments in my life."

He does still do mini-tours in this country, although not often. "I've got to play Bismarck Junior College in Bismarck, North Dakota; I've been doing it for the past four or five years, usually in February. This year we're gonna be with Ernie Wilkins, Clark Terry, Kenny Burrell, Alan Dawson, and it should be a nice little show. We're gonna jam and probably do Clark's book. The guy who's putting it together knows what he's doing—he's got all my albums. I usually do a solo recital, give a piano class. I'm there five days, usually, and then he brings on the rest of the cats for a Friday concert. From there I'll go on to the Keystone Korner club in San Francisco."

He also lectures occasionally, but in general he wants nothing to do with the "system" most artists feel compelled to use for commercial success: press agents, managers, commercial music, tours. It's not that he lacks ambition. Herb Pomeroy says, "He's very open about how he's not getting a fair shake in this business like he should with his ability and talent; I agree with him." I ask Byard's wife Louise, his constant companion, why he wouldn't try at least to get more gigs. "He never thinks that way," she says. "Anything that has happened to him has happened through people calling him. He's never had an agent or anyone that would make calls or write letters. In his early years he used to say he didn't want to go on the road. When we lived in Boston he worked at certain places for a long time [he still does this] and it worked out pretty well; it was difficult at times."

Byard admits that waiting for things to come to him could slow his progress toward commercial success, but it runs against his grain to do it otherwise. "I'm trying to make everything happen naturally. I don't force myself into the business itself. See, you called me, I didn't call you. It was a natural process. Everything that has happened to me has happened naturally. A guy called me to go to the Keystone Korner [he played a six-day stint in August, '78] and I broke all attendance records. I followed Les McCann; Horace Silver was there a week before, Miles has been there,

Sarah's been there, Freddie Hubbard. It was in *Billboard*: 'Jaki Byard broke all attendance records at the Keystone Korner and he doesn't even have a hit.'

"If it happens naturally I'll feel better for myself. A lot of people become successful very unnaturally—and that even goes for poll winning and awards and things like that.

"I've had people ask me why I don't write to Steinway to try to get a free piano. The hell with it. If they want it they'll come to me. So they haven't come to me [giggles] . . . so I lose out [giggles]."

It's not bravado; it's his outlook on life, and the serene expression on Byard's face bespeaks the benefits of his philosophy. He wants to make it without records and touring, to continue playing one local club for a long time and he wants to remain in semi-retirement—all of which will hinder him.

He also knows his versatility hinders him. "Commercially, yes. I've been asked, 'Why don't you sit down and play just one way through a session, or record an album just one way,' and I refuse."

I ask Ron Carter why the jazz greats who have already made it don't use Jaki more, to introduce him to the public. He feels one reason is, "He's not available to players. He's not visible."

Jaki indirectly concurs: "I don't get calls because people think I'm busy. Bill Evans and I talked about it one time, why cats don't call us for gigs; they think we're busy."

Phil Wilson believes Jaki threatens musicians with his talent.

Herb Pomeroy has another perspective. "When he played with Mingus that was a perfect setting; Mingus to me was a small edition of Ellington—everybody's spirit was allowed to remain; you weren't subordinated into these secondary roles. Jaki needs that to play freely. Playing with other people can be difficult because he has so many changes of direction in his playing, abrupt changes of mood. Unless he's dealing with players that are both capable of it and willing to make these changes, like Mingus, he's probably too strong a musical personality to play with other people."

Age plays a role, too. "I should be playing with the best," says Jaki, "but they can't afford to pay me if they want to get the money they want. If you'll notice, the best musicians usually use up-and-coming musicians, for financial reasons." Byard perpetuates this system in his two bands.

He's too experienced to be a sideman. "See, I'm 56 and I can't afford to be a sideman. I'm on a project of my own. I have about 20 albums out and on those albums there are about 30 or 40 compositions of mine that I have to market myself, and I have to do it with my own group. When I go in another man's group I don't bother playing my own tunes; I don't play for myself because if I did I would become too involved with myself and would take away from him."

But, "It all depends on the artist. I'm a sideman with Al McKusik; I just did a record date with Archie Shepp. I was a sideman with Eddie Jefferson last Saturday. You know, he's 70, and he's got an album out called *Still On This Planet* [laughs]. Playing with cats like him is, is . . . [expresses admiration]."

There are few guys as nice as Jaki, or more deserving of wider recognition. Commercial success might come looking for Jaki some day, or perhaps it has been knocking and he just has to get up and answer the door. **db**

time they were too tired. Hamiet Bluiett came by once. So did Cecil Taylor, but we didn't have a piano. Oliver Lake came down and a lot of local jazz players would sit in.

db: How did the Birdhouse get started?

Anderson: When Dieter Glawischnig invited Brimfield and I to do a tour of West Germany in 1977. We were gone for a month. When we came home, we didn't have a place to play. I'd heard about a storefront that was up for rent, so I decided to grab it. I always wanted a place of my own to practice and play and a place for other musicians to come and sit in. The idea was to have the Birdhouse pay for itself. The weekend performances would pay for rent and during the week, we could have workshops. We had original artwork on display and a phonograph in the back for listening. A theater group rehearsed every Monday night at the Birdhouse. We tried to do all these simple things and got a lot of flack from the city at the same time, which made things very difficult.

db: Who is in your group now, and what are your plans?

Anderson: Right now I've got Billy Perry on alto saxophone, Billy Brimfield on trumpet, and myself on tenor, as far as the horns go. I'm using Hank Drake on drums, when he's not with the Mandingo Griot Society, and we're not working with a steady bassist at this time. All I do know is that I'm going to continue playing as much as possible. **db**

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Las Vegas Jazz Society: Call for special events 734-8556.

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N.E. Ohio Jazz Society: Information and membership, call 429-1513 between 11 am and 8 pm daily.

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Buttonwood Tree: Roy Searcy (Tue.-Sat.).

Nick's: Frank Smith Trio (Mon.-Sat.); Sherri Ross and Friends (Sun., 5-9 pm).

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Chick, when did you first Play a Rhodes?

When I started with Miles Davis. We were in a studio, and Miles pointed to this electric piano and said, "Play it." I didn't like it.

Didn't like it?

Not because of the instrument. I just didn't like being told what to do. No musician does. But when I started concentrating on the Rhodes, I came to appreciate all it could do. Bach would have loved it.

Bach? The Rhodes?

Sure. My background is classical, and I still play acoustic piano. I was influenced by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Bartok, Stravinsky. Anyway, Bach didn't really write for the acoustic piano. He probably would have done a lot of experimenting with a Rhodes.

That's quite a leap—from classical to jazz.

Not really. You can't get into any branch of music without knowing the basics. I've also been influenced by Ellington, Miles, Coltrane, Charlie Parker. They were fundamental musicians, too.

Is that why you've never limited yourself to any one school of jazz?

Sure. It's like the controversy about going from mainstream to crossover. A musician has to create, to explore, to play what feels good to him. All music has validity.

And the Rhodes?

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