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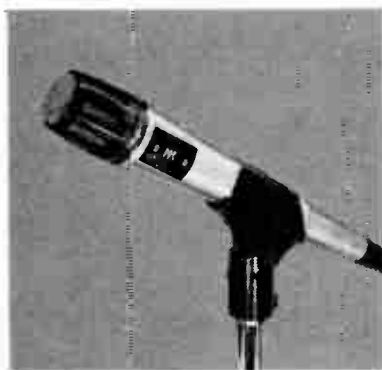
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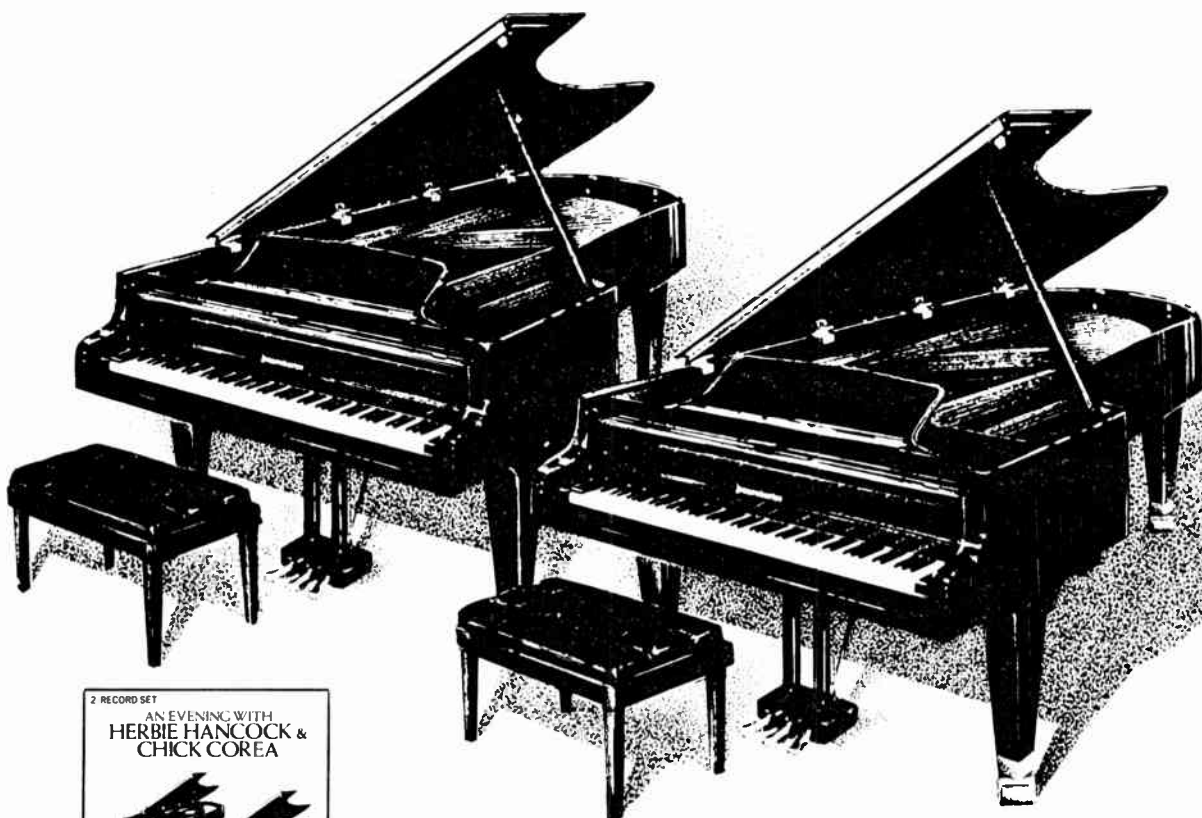
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the first chorus

BY CHARLES SUBER

The art of survival and the survival of an art are major factors in the careers of the Art Ensemble of Chicago and singer Betty Carter. The AEC musicians, together for 15 years, regard survival as an inevitable consequence of their commitment to their music. Betty Carter, one of the few surviving singers who deserve to be called—and who prefer to be called—a jazz singer, is angry at those musicians who have, in her opinion, betrayed the jazz art form.

Lester Bowie, a founding member of the AEC, says: "We've learned, through all these years, that we can survive what we're doing, and we don't have to care. We don't have to change our music, put a disco beat behind it to sell . . . The idea is to continue to survive, to try to remain innovative, to be serious with our music."

Another reason for the AEC's survival and its continuing success would seem to be their refusal to allow a label to be applied to their music. They make critics and audiences meet their terms. And indeed this has been the case with white audiences. Acceptance by black audiences, however, has been relatively meager. Lester Bowie, AEC horn player, avers that this is not so, that AEC audiences are proportionate to the population.

Betty Carter may have a different explanation. She believes that the AEC style of free music has little appeal to black audiences—". . . free jazz and the late years of Coltrane [and Ornette Coleman and the electronic Miles Davis] turned black people away from the music. They did not absorb it. They cannot relate to free, non-rhythmic music."

In the same vein, Carter takes issue with the *down beat* Readers Poll. She does not believe that it is an accurate judge of jazz vocalists. Good point.

The persistent paradox of jazz vocals has been reflected in the Readers Poll throughout its 43 years. Witness these early winners of the Female Vocalist category: Helen O'Connell, Helen Forrest, Jo Stafford, and Dinah Shore. Billie Holiday never won a *down beat* poll until the readers voted her into the Hall of Fame in 1961, two years after she died. The only other non-instrumentalist singer, male or female, in the Hall of Fame is Bessie Smith, voted in by the critics in 1967.

In the 26 years that *down beat* has polled the jazz critics, Ella Fitzgerald has won 21 times, Sarah Vaughan, five times. Sarah appreciates the honor of #1 Female Vocalist but doesn't relish the "jazz" tag. In a recent newspaper interview, she is quoted as saying: "I'm not a jazz singer. I'd call Betty Carter a jazz singer. A singer—that's what I do. I sing." And the Art Ensemble of Chicago plays music. Bless them all.

Next issue features three very different keyboard players: Herbie Hancock, whose current interests include singing (via Vocorder), dancing, and Buddhism; Denny Zeitlin, whose practice includes synthesizers and psychiatry; and Earl Hines, who remains the eternal Fatha; plus profiles of Rodney Franklin, young West Coast pianist/composer; and Ron Odrich, clarinetist and periodontist.

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CHORDS AND DISCORDS

Upside-down guitarists

In an otherwise very fine story on blues dynamo Otis Rush (*Caught*, 3/8) writer Procter Lippincott is driving without poetic license in grouping guitarists Rush, Albert King and Jimi Hendrix.

True, all three reverse(d) their axes so the right hand flies over the fingerboard while the left hand picks and plays with the knobs. After flipping their guitars, King and Rush leave the strings in place so the light gauge, high-pitched strings are then across the neck up and away from the fingers. Lippincott rightly asserts that by adapting to this rare subspecies of guitar, Rush and King developed individualistic characteristics from the word go. And they surely play some blues, don't they?

When Hendrix flipped over his guitar, he restrung his Strats so the high strings were closer to his feet, thus more easily accessible to his fingers. Jimi, then, faced a mirror image of the world most guitarists see. Of course, just how he explored that territory is a story far beyond set-up and technique.

Peter Nelson

Champaign, Ill.

Parade Goes On

Pete Welding's review (2/8) of the *New Orleans Parade* album by the All-Star Marching Band fails to comprehend that the brass band music of New Orleans is a continuous, living tradition that is still developing, and survives

because it serves a need of the citizens of New Orleans—not record reviewers who delight in past glories. The musicians on this album are men who make a living playing music in New Orleans. That includes second line activities, burial society funerals, conventions and yes, even that horror of horrors, Bourbon Street.

In putting this album together, Gene Norman and I sought to provide a glimpse of the current trends in New Orleans street music by some of the finest players of that style, uncluttered by the tangle of political and social relationships that hold the established brass bands together, often with a mixture of excellent and inferior players. I believe we have been successful in doing what we set out to do and along with the musicians on the album, I would like to thank Mr. Norman for taking the time to come to New Orleans to see what is happening now.

John Berthelot

New Orleans

Associate Producer, *New Orleans Parade*

Lenny Breau lives

Lenny Breau fans appreciate your coverage of his recent comeback (*Caught*, 3/8/79). Readers who are not country-western music lovers may not be aware that Lenny's distinctive jazz guitar stylings can also be heard on a 1977 direct-to-disc recording by Nashville fiddler Buddy Spicher, *Yesterday And Today* (Direct Disk DD 102). All of Lenny's fans will want a copy of this album.

Ralph Sheets

Springfield, Mo.

Re Re Re-reviews

I can't help but agree with the comments of the editor in the 2/8/79 issue (*Chords*) concerning the contradictory record reviews of Richard Beirach's *Hubris* album. One of the

interesting points of jazz criticism is how one can use varying sorts of subjective aesthetic appreciation with varying sorts of jazz material. Thus, we cannot truly judge Dizzy Gillespie's music by the same criteria that we judge Ornette Coleman. Similarly, even the *same* material can be judged with different criteria. This particular sort of judgment is well demonstrated by the disparity of De Muth and Berg's ratings of *Hubris*. It is smart to pick the reviewer whose admittedly subjective aesthetic criteria match your own.

Eric J. Van Denburg

Roanoke, Virginia

Having writers sign their own material is not nearly enough, because very few people anywhere—especially young professional musicians—have enough money to buy enough records to know whether critics share their own musical values. Is a particular writer an unreconstructed bebopper, militant avant gardist or a rock fiend? Is he a musician who can write or a journalist who has become a sophisticated listener? What is the point of view of one who awards five stars to Captain Beefheart and one to Weather Report?

I figure it would take a minimum of five records per reviewer to decide whether said reviewer had his head on straight according to my musical values—and *db* has fifteen reviewers. The arithmetic makes the editor's comment in "Re Re-reviews" (2/8) a bit fatuous.

I emphasize that I am not complaining about the reviews themselves or suggesting that your reviewers be clones who hear music the way I do. I am simply suggesting that statements of backgrounds and values of your writers would be interesting and valuable to many of your readers.

Bob Crow

Los Altos, Cal.



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For many musicians, Denver has become the ideal stopping-off place between points East and West, and sensibly so. The audience is young, highly educated, and supportive of all genres of music. And with its mild climate, Denver has been experiencing a population boom as musicians and fans alike leave the Snow Belt and crowded West Coast for the Rocky Mountain region.

February's bookings reflected the incredible influx of talent to the area. During a slow business month in anyone's fiscal calendar, more than 30 top name jazz entertainers kept fans wondering not *what* to do but *who* to see, in *which* club. Phil Woods, Dexter Gordon, Eddie Jefferson with Richie Cole, the Heath Brothers, Johnny Smith, Ahmad Jamal, Dave Brubeck, Les McCann, Herbie Mann, George Coleman with Harold Mabern and Dannie Moore, Betty Carter, Gil Scott-Heron, Angie Bofill, Buddy Rich's band, Red Rodney and Howard McGhee were among those passing through.

Barry Fey, *Billboard's* 1978 Promoter of the Year, and KADX radio (Denver's 24-hour, 100,000 watt, FM-stereo jazz station) sold out two Al Jarreau shows, at the new Rainbow Music Hall on a Monday night.

(Professional promoters are

not solely responsible for the success of jazz in Denver. Private affairs such as Dick Gibson's Great Rocky Mountain Jazz Party, an annual invitation-only Labor Day weekend event featuring dozens of artists, have blossomed into a series of public concerts.)

A 24-hour jazz station provides Denver with an accessible center for activity and information. KADX both supports jazz activity in the region and creates a few events on its own, like the first Chuck Mangione concert at the spectacular outdoor Red Rocks concert facility in 1975.

A symbiotic relationship between KADX and the area clubs results in bringing new fans to jazz. Each club puts forth a different personality, from local talent in bricklined basement beer halls (Wall St.) to top name entertainers in Las Vegas styled show rooms (the Century). Boulder's college crowd supports the Blue Note and Tulagi's. Clyde's Pub imports East Coast stalwarts on the recommendation of musicians who have been surprised by its jamming ambience—in March Clifford Jordan, Larry Willis and Nick Brignola were there.

Local colleges and universities showcase some touring acts, but the region has its own flourishing jazz programs—the Rocky Mountain Jazz Stageband fest highlights high school and junior high big bands with some success; in '77 a Denver suburban high school won honors in the college level division at Montreux's competition.

While Denver's mile-high air makes some horn players gasp during their first set, the atmosphere is charged with talk: in Denver, jazz is hot.

—jeffrey abrahams

Shankar's Sounds From India On Cassettes In Health Food Stores

LOS ANGELES—The Ravi Shankar Music Circle, an Indian cultural organization founded by Dick Bock and Ravi Shankar in the fall of 1977, has issued 16 classical Indian music cassettes.

"In 1957," said Bock, head of Pacific Jazz and World Pacific in the '50s and '60s, "Ravi started putting out music on World Pacific. He felt that some of his best efforts were done there, but the catalogue has been out of print. We managed to obtain the cassette rights to those things, and we have recorded new material as well. The music covers Ravi's '68 ensemble, his '65 concert in

New York, his '63 concert at UCLA, all the way back to '57.

"Paul Horn, Bud Shank, Zakir Hussain (formerly with John McLaughlin's Shakti), Alla Rakha, L. Subramaniam and others also appear on some of the tapes.

"We hope to become involved with LPs soon," said Bock. "At present, however, we are exploring the possibilities of cassettes only, which are available in various New Age stores in California, and by mail order. We have no national or international distribution." (For prices and catalogue, write to the Ravi Shankar Music Circle, 7911 Wiloughby Ave., L.A., Calif. 90046).

NEWS

Bob James Goes Home Again, With Friends



ANDY FREEBERG/ENCORE

ANN ARBOR—Bob James' February appearance here was the sort of triumphant homecoming most performers dream of but never see. When James last played in Ann Arbor, over 15 years ago, he was a promising young pianist recently graduated from the University of Michigan, a regular on the local club scene, with a penchant for the sort of classically-informed experimentation featured on his first album *Explosion* (recorded in 1965 for ESP and long out-of-print). If that early experimentation has been replaced by a more broadly appealing idiom, the near-sellout crowd in Hill Auditorium on the UM campus strongly approved.

The UM student-run Eclipse Jazz organization, promoters of the concert, had left the size and composition of James' back-up group up to him, and he surprised them by bringing a special 15 piece all star band: Randy Brecker, Ron Toolyr, Mike Lawrence, trumpets; Dave Taylor, Barry Rogers, trombones; Dave Sanborn, Mike Brecker, George Marge, reeds; Biff Hannon, synthesizer; Gary King, electric bass; Idris Muhammad, drums; Jimmy Maelen, percussion; and Eric Gale and Hiram Bullock, guitars. The top selling composer / producer / arranger played electric and acoustic pianos. James and his wife (they

met as UM students) arrived a day early to revisit Ann Arbor, although—as he told the Sunday night audience—most of the places they remembered are now parking lots.

James' two long sets featured charts from his several recent albums, especially the current *Touchdown* (on his own Tappan Zee label). While the arranged material tended towards a certain sameness in tempo, rhythm and modal harmony, extended solos by James, the Breckers, Sanborn and Gale more than compensated. *Caribbean Nights*, in the second set, featured both Breckers at the front of the stage, trading fours and dueting; *We're All Alone* brought Sanborn and Mike Brecker forward to duet, and brother Randy and his trumpet section-mates followed for a climactic brass explosion. *Women Of Ireland* earlier in the set showcased both James (in a richly voiced acoustic introduction) and Marge's wood flute. The band encored with James' arrangement of Bizet's *Faradole*. New Yorkers heard the same program in March at Avery Fisher Hall.

Eclipse always tries to bring its artists and audience together outside the concert hall, but James' two-day residency following the concert was especially interesting for local musicians. Workshops entitled "Arranging and Composing" quickly developed into open seminars on music, with James offering candid, detailed explanations and unusual insights into aspects of the recording industry and the music business in general. He also led the UM Jazz Band through several of his charts at an open rehearsal.

James evidently enjoyed his return to Ann Arbor. At one workshop he remarked, "I may even get tired of the rat race I'm in and come back here and teach. Being a student here was the highlight of my life."

RELEASES

Just getting to our turntable: **John Abercrombie** Quartet's *Arcade* (ECM); *Stuff It* by **Stuff** (Warner Bros.) and **Richard Tee's** *Stokin'* (Columbia); man-

dolinist **David Grisman's** *Hot Dawg* (Horizon/A&M); **Spyro Gyra's** *Morning Dance* (Infinity); **Horace Silver's** *Sterling Silver* (cuts from '56 to '63 on Blue Note); **Tony Williams' Joy Of Flying** (Col.); composer **Michael Colombier** on Chrysalis with **Gadd, Pastorious, Hancock**, etc.

POTPOURRI

Steve Reich, Philip Glass, John Cale and Nico, Model Citizens, and Leroy Jenkins donated their musical services at a Carnegie Hall benefit for radio station WKCR-FM, on April Fools Day.

Cellist David Eyges performed with his quartet at the Lower East side non-profit Entermidia Theatre, in a March festival he organized featuring Anthony Braxton, Jeanne Lee and Dave Burrell (all performing solo), and the groups of Don Cherry and Archie Shepp.

Producer/saxophonist/composer Teo Macero dedicated his program of compositions to the memory of the late Charles Mingus, at the first Saint Peter's Duke Ellington composers' series in New York City—Pepper

Adams, Britt Woodman, Jon Faddis and Don Butterfield were some of the players.

Dutch promoter Wim Wigt scheduled a month long tour for Beaver Harris' quintet (Ricky Ford and Ken McIntyre, reeds; Don Pullen, piano), and dates in Europe for Dexter Gordon's quartet, Bobby Hutcherson's foursome, the Jazz Messengers and a Dizzy Gillespie Reunion Big Band (in September).

Duke Jordan, onetime Charlie Parker pianist, debuted in Britain at the Camden Jazz Festival in late March, with bassist Ron Matthewson and drummer Martin Drew. Danish Steeplechase records is preparing as its 100th release a boxed set of Jordan's compositions as piano solos.

Grover Washington Jr.'s band Locksmith signed with Arista—leaving the successful saxist without the combo that keyed Reed Seed. Will he return to recording with studio superstars?

Levon Helm, former Band member, is cast as Loretta Lynn's father in *Coal Miner's Daughter*, being filmed by Universal Pictures. Sissy Spacek plays Loretta.

Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. hosts the World Saxophone Congress June 28-July 1—the saxes haven't gathered in the U.S. in ten years; the focus will be new music.

The Flora Purim Story may be a made-for-TV film for CBS, as writer Ian Hunter prepares a two hour treatment of the Brazilian singer's arrest and imprisonment—with a happy ending, we hope.

Altoist Art Pepper recorded three sessions for LPs on Artists House with Hank Jones, Ron Carter and Al Foster providing support; Jimmy Rowles, Buster Williams and Billy Hart were a second rhythm section. Pepper also dueted with guitarist Jim Hall.

Trumpeter Donald Byrd and the members of the Blackbyrds are suing each other over contract disagreements. Don't invite them to the same party.

Creative Music Studio has set a June 18-July 22 session on World Music with Don Cherry as Artistic Director; July 30-Sept. 2, Roscoe Mitchell will lead explorations of New Concepts in Composition.

Quinnipiac College honored Benny Goodman at its Intercollegiate Jazz Festival in late April, the school's 50th year fete.

CBS Invades Cuba, Returns With Irakere

NEW YORK—CBS and Fidel Castro joined forces in early March to produce the Havana Jam—three days of concerts in Karl Marx Stadium, featuring Columbia Records' artists and Cuban groups.

The American performers included Weather Report, Billy Joel, Kris Kristofferson and Rita Coolidge, Stephen Stills, the Fania All Stars, a trio consisting of Tony Williams, Jaco Pastorius and John McLaughlin, the CBS Jazz All Stars (Woody Shaw, Hubert Laws, Dexter Gordon, Stan Getz, Jimmy Heath, Bobby Hutcherson, Cedar Walton, Percy Heath and Williams), and the CBS Fusion All Stars, featuring Rodney Franklin, Richard Tee, Eric Gale, Hubert Laws, Arthur Blythe, Willie Bobo, Gerry Brown and John Lee. Cuban performers included: Zaida Arrate and the Yaguarimo Group, an experi-

mental band fusing Cuban folkloric music with unusual time signatures; Orquesta Aragon, a charanga band; Tata Guines and Los Papines, a percussion ensemble; Manquare, another band fusing Cuban percussion, folk music and jazz; the percussion ensemble from the Cuban national dance company; Irakere (which then toured the U.S., opening for Stills), and Elena Burke, a "new song" stylist. All of the concerts but Billy Joel's were recorded and videotaped.

The American contingent was housed at the Marazul Hotel, 15 miles from the center of Havana, and bused to the concerts. The oceanfront site was the scene of much interaction among the American musicians.

"Getting to know my associates in a personal way, socializing with cats you usually never find together was definitely a

highlight of the trip," Jimmy Heath reported. Cedar Walton, who made the Cuban trip just after returning from seven weeks on the road in Europe, told *db*, "The beach was beautiful, the weather was perfect and the water was out of sight!"

Although the Americans were treated with the greatest respect, the Cubans may have downplayed the event itself, which happened to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the Cuban revolution. There was a steady flow of anti-imperialist rhetoric in the Cuban media; U.S. conveniences like hot water, meat and coffee were practically non-existent (perhaps due to the OAS enforced embargo). Another snag was a six and half hour departure delay at the airport. Luggage conveyor belts broke down and after Cubans declined the job several Americans, including Jaco Pastorius, loaded the plane. Generally there were good feelings about the Cuban people themselves, who pianist Walton described as "a very proud people full of warmth and friendliness."

The straightahead sounds of the CBS Jazz All Stars were well received, with many Cubans hoping for more than the 40 minutes allotted to the group. Two Jimmy Heath originals, *Project S* and *A Sound for Sore Ears*, Walton's arrangement of *Tin Tin Deo* (the Dizzy Gillespie composition dedicated to Cuban percussionist Chano Pozo), and a feature

for Getz and Gordon, *Polka Dots And Moonbeams*, comprised their program.

Very little jamming actually took place; American musicians found themselves on a rigid schedule that left little room for stretching out. Jimmy Heath cited the difference in repertoire as a stumbling block. At several of the banquets held in honor of the Americans, Larry Harlow and Johnny Pacheco from the Fania All Stars, Willie Bobo and Joe Lala (Stills' percussionist), jammed with Cuban players. Pastorius, Getz, McLaughlin and Tee tried playing with Irakere.

Roger Dawson, a conga player, host of New York's popular *Sunday Salsa Show* on WRVR radio, a member of Ted Dunbar's big band and a former student of Mongo Santamaria, Armando Peraza and Patato Valdez, made the trip to gain a greater insight into the conga's roots. "The most exciting group I heard down there was Afro-Cuba, a band that combines Cuban rhythms, African chants and Coltrane modes," he said.

Columbia president Bruce Lundvall with Fania head Jerry Masucci set up the U.S. involvement. Portions of the Havana jam were broadcast on radio in April through the *King Biscuit Hour*; a CBS crew supplied film for a Hughes-Rudd *Sunday Morning News* report on the festival, and Columbia has producers Mike Berniker and Bert de Couteaux at work culling the festival's music for potential LP releases.



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"You're gonna sit in a loft and say, 'I'm a genius'? You don't say that. We tell you that—after you have done your groundwork and your on the job training on stage."

BETTY CARTER: Bebopper Breathes Fire

by LINDA PRINCE

Betty Carter thinks she's a keeper of a dying flame. Sometimes she may seem like a creative reactionary, an intriguing paradox reflecting both her own artistic stance and her views of others' musical directions, but given her deep commitment to and understanding of the musical traditions which have shaped her art, Carter's disparaging comments on the current state of jazz cannot be written off as lacking foundation and substance. And who is Betty Carter? Simply the finest contemporary representative of that breed that has defied definition since its bright burning was first noted: the jazz singer.

The generations of jazz singers are linked by an instrumental approach to vocalizing; at this Betty Carter excels. Great jazz singers improvise as horns might, often using lyrics as vehicles to transport their rhythmic fancies. Their voices approach the tonal qualities of horns, and the development of jazz vocal styles is closely aligned with the dominance of certain instruments within the music.

When saxophones gained prominence in jazz through the innovations of Lester Young and Charlie Parker, jazz singers evolved from the reeds. (In the '30s, Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday had derived their initial stylistic impetus from Louis Armstrong's trumpet—Ella in range and clarity, Billie in rhythmic approach.) Anita O'Day and Sarah Vaughan shaped their vocal lines like Young and Parker, utilizing their complex rhythmic and harmonic foundations. Betty Carter, profoundly influenced by Parker, later revealed a rhythmic virtuosity comparable to Sonny Rollins in the late '50s; just hear their versions of *Wagon Wheels*—Rollins' from *Way Out West* (Contemporary 7530), Carter's from *Now It's My Turn* (Roulette). Carter also absorbed some of John Coltrane's stylizations, as on her *My Favorite Things* (*Inside Betty Carter*, United Artists).

In recent years, electronic keyboards and synthesizers have stimulated vocal developments. Al Jarreau, Flora Purim and Ursula Dudziak represent a new generation with standards in conflict with their predecessors. How often have Flora and Ursula been likened to synthesizers? Aren't Jarreau's instrumental imitations modeled after the mechanical flexibility of the synthesizer? Dominating popular music, electronics are subtly changing the public's conception, and perhaps that of the vocalists themselves, of what the jazz vocal tradition is.

Thus Betty Carter's art may well represent the most highly refined step in the evolution of classic, acoustic, horn-influenced singing. **down beat's** Readers Poll '78 indicates the changing attitudes: Flora placed first and Betty fourth, just one vote ahead of rock star Joni



VERYL OAKLAND



VERYL OAKLAND

Mitchell. Carter says, "The Critics Poll has been in my favor [she placed second the past two years] but the Readers Poll has been fixed. Why say fixed? I could be sued for that. But I don't believe in it."

What she *does* believe in is tradition, and that her tradition is worth passing on. She believes big band training is invaluable to jazz singers, having taught them control, a variety of instrumental approaches, sustaining power, delivery and showmanship. She believes in the beauty of changes as opposed to vamps, and the need to educate the young in the jazz heritage. Yet Betty represents innovation, too. She's the first vocalist who has placed herself amid—not just in front of—a small band, and that's her link to the younger singers of today.

She traces that development to the rise of the most complex combo jazz—bebop.

"I go back to the bebop days. Before that I used to do a lot of things with the Detroit musicians. I'm from Detroit.

"When bebop first came on the scene with Charlie Parker and Dizzy and the guys, I was a fan, a bebopper all the way. I had the walk, the talk, the attitude, the whole thing. I thought that music was the greatest. I was called Betty Behop. Listen, I was *with* it.

"When I joined Hamp in '48, I really wanted to join Dizzy but he didn't have any females. He always had men like Pancho Hagood, Joe Carroll and Johnny Hartman. I loved Dizzy and his big band but I got with Hamp, who was doing *Flying Home* and

Hamp's Boogie Woogie. Fine musician, great vibist; had the best sound on vibes that anybody's ever had. Nobody else could produce his full effect. Wonderful man for rhythm, but just a little earlier than bebop—he was still in the swing era. So here I come into his band with the attitude of the bebop cat and had to listen to *Flying Home*, which was an experience for me. I learned a lot.

"I learned how to write arrangements. I wrote some for myself but Hamp wouldn't let me sing them.

"Hamp used to ask me which band I liked better, his or Dizzy's. I would say Dizzy's and he'd fire me. Gladys Hampton, his wife, loved my work and had a funny feeling that I might do something. Every time he'd fire me, she'd rehire me.

"He fired me seven times and I stayed with the band two and a half years, struggling; but I don't regret it, because Hamp provided me with a training ground. I went everywhere and I was young and I was doing my little thing and I was scatting. I was learning.

"Bobby Plater taught me how to write arrangements on the bus, without the piano. My first big band arrangement was called *Good Night Irene* and we played it in Philadelphia and I screamed, 'Oh, this isn't me.' But I felt great because I *did* it.

"Then I decided to write one for myself to go into the Apollo and Hamp didn't trust me. He was mad at me. He stayed mad at me a long time. But I think he really loved me because I was so *different*."

"I started out not really knowing what I had going for me. I didn't know whether I had the right voice. Sarah Vaughan had been on the scene a couple of minutes and there was a 'Sarah Vaughan voice.' Billie Holiday had had a concept of jazz, but here was this beautiful voice coming on the scene. Right away we knew that with that voice there was no way of stopping her.

"I didn't have anything like that in the beginning. But I had a musical ear and a concept and a way of being interesting to people when I sang.

"Later on I found out that I had other attributes, one of which was my body. It's a fact. I had a nice figure. I was in an evening gown when I realized the figure I had, and that nobody was listening to me. It was a handicap and also an asset because if an audience looks at a figure first and then you get them quiet enough to listen to the singing, then you have really done something.

"In the Apollo I would be about eight bars into my tune before anyone realized I was singing. Redd Foxx used to say to me that it was a whole year before he realized I could sing.

"I tried to be so musical they would cancel what I looked like on the stage and just listen to my music. It kept me thinking all the time.

"Later on I was at the Apollo three times in six months, which was rare. I was there with Brook Benton, Ray Charles and Miles Davis; on his show there was Miles, Monk, Moody, Moms Mabley, Eddie Jefferson.

"Another package I was on at the Apollo, a knockout: Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker, John Lee Hooker, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Bo Diddley and *me*! Is that unbelievable?

"And I was there in the '50s with the Orioles, the Flamingos, the Moonglows, the Isley Brothers, Ike and Tina Turner, all the people. I did my little bebop thing with everybody."

Constant travel and performance before a variety of audiences, and exposure to a wide range of other talent, has developed Betty Carter the performing artist, so that each of her shows is a polished gem, the surface spontaneity of which took years to perfect. She prides herself on her unique stage act.

"In the '50s when we were brought up, we were brought up to be different. I could not be a Sarah Vaughan or an Ella Fitzgerald and make it," she says.

Now she usually begins a set with the musical definition of her artistic philosophy, *I Can't Help It (That's The Way That I Am)*; she has enough confidence to start with a ballad.

Immediately an observer is struck by Carter's tone quality and her physical involvement with her music. Though occasionally put down as a contortionist, she is visually as well as musically entrancing.

Dark and smoky, Carter's voice becomes crystal clear as it careens to her upper register. Dramatic, unexpected forays to her lower register are as startling as the deep blasts of a foghorn on a sunny day.

Betty Carter has unequalled rhythmic imagination. She straddles different tempos and time signatures with remarkable ease and agility. This rhythmic daring is her most astonishing quality and it places heavy demands on John Hicks' accompanying trio.

Pianist Hicks has become a partner in a musical dialogue; his interplay with Carter is of the highest order. Of their seemingly telepathic rapport Carter says, "All that is spontaneous. What you hear are chord structures, but all that on top is spontaneous, always different because everybody feels different each night."

For several years the Hicks trio had, as constants, Hicks and drummer Clifford Barbaro. Regrettably, Barbaro has left and no one tells why, except to say that Carter is very demanding. Bassists must supply a steady rhythmic and melodic pulse behind her ever-shifting rhythms and harmonies. Her bass players seem to change every two or three months. Currently, Cameron Brown, best known for his impressive work with Archie Shepp, fills the role.

Carter's concerts always include tributes to Billie Holiday (*Don't Weep For The Lady*) and Charlie Parker (*Star Eyes/Just Friends*), and always an emotional give and take with the audience.

"I'm telling you about it, I'm not going to leave you out," she says, "I'm not up there to ignore you, I want you to understand a particular tune. I want you to understand what it's all about."

Her concluding highlight is *Movin' On*. Depending on the audience and her level of inspiration, the tune can last up to 30 minutes. As yet unrecorded, *Movin' On* is a summation of Betty Carter's virtuosity, as she moves in and out of tempo like a modern dancer. It proves that, at her best, Carter is the most imaginative scat singer alive. She involves the audience so much that one leaves a successful Carter performance feeling partially responsible for its success.

Betty's detractors insist she repeats her routines by rote. She vehemently protests: "The attitudes, not the routines, are set. I refuse to do the same thing. I can't. I mean, I just don't like it."

The attitudes of her musical generation have, in large measure, shaped her performing stance and public image. Her attitude is that 14 □ down beat

of a bebopper—a fighter and a survivor. She considers the proud tradition of jazz, which she has fought for and survived in, lying in ruin, and attacks the musicians and musical forces who have taken the "easy route" and left an "uneducated" younger generation behind.

"Bebop involved a whole cult that turned music around. You see, there were a lot of technical musicians who had learned their horns very well. But there was a new approach to the music that was difficult for them to handle."

Carter bitterly contrasts the bebop pioneers and their collective "attitude" (honed after much public and critical abuse was heaped upon the music and the musicians) with that of the musicians involved in the "free jazz" revolution of the '60s.

"You're gonna sit in a loft and say, 'I'm a genius'? You don't say that. *We* tell you that—after you have done your groundwork and your on the job training on stage. In front of us you make mistakes; you do your thing and you grow.

"It's okay for you to make mistakes, but you

SELECTED CARTER DISCOGRAPHY

in print:

KING PLEASURE: THE SOURCE (with King Pleasure: Carter is heard on one track, *Red Top*)—Prestige 24017

FINALLY BETTY CARTER—Roulette 5000

AFTER MIDNIGHT—Roulette 5001

BETTY CARTER—Bet-Car Productions MK 1001

BETTY CARTER ALBUM—Bet-Car Productions MK 1002

NOW IT'S MY TURN—Roulette 5005

out of print:

BETTY CARTER AND RAY BRYANT (with Jo Jones)—Epic 3202

OUT THERE (with Kenny Dorham)—Progressive Jazz 90

THE MODERN SOUND OF BETTY CARTER—ABC Paramount 363

WHAT A LITTLE MOONLIGHT CAN DO (reissue of *Out There* and *Modern Sound*)—Impulse ASD 9321

RAY CHARLES AND BETTY CARTER—ABC Paramount 385

ROUND MIDNIGHT (with Oliver Nelson)—Atco 33-152

INSIDE BETTY CARTER—United Artists UAS-5639

can't do it unless you work. I can't sit in my bedroom and tell you that I'm the greatest singer in the world. How do I place in the polls if I don't fight for it onstage and get somebody to dig it? But that's what they were doing—sitting at home complaining.

"Charlie Parker didn't complain; he worked. He worked until he died. Anywhere and for anybody. And he did his thing. He didn't sit back and say, 'I'm the greatest so I don't need to do this and I don't need to do that and when you come and catch me I'll show you that I'm the greatest.'

"And most of you listeners go there and don't accept it, but you say, 'I'm supposed to accept it.' I'm sitting in the audience at one of these free jazz concerts and some kids sitting behind me say this. I'd been thinking it all the time and it was just a message to me that I had been right. They said, 'I'm supposed to like this.' They were confused. They didn't like it.

"Be honest. If you don't like it, you don't like it. I'm being honest because I think they cheated you by not giving you everything they had to give. By sitting on their asses they cheated you, so you're not getting everything.

You're getting intellectual shit and being told you're supposed to dig it because you're 'intellectual-tu-al.' No good!"

Carter will insist, however, that outside of free jazz there are other musicians abusing their musicianship.

"Herbie Hancock and Donald Byrd. Miles Davis, I have to admit. I hate to do that to the boy, but I've known him for 31 years so I could care less what he thinks about the whole thing. But he did the same thing, for money. Everybody looked up to him and most of the young kids looked up to Herbie Hancock and Tony Williams, who was one of the first to go into electronics.

"Now the three year old kid who was turned on to the electronics has been told by the media that because certain musicians were associated with jazz at one time, no matter what they play, it's jazz.

"Herbie Hancock and Donald Byrd know they're playing idiot music. They've got to know. It's all about money. They use excuses. They have a 'reasonable' excuse for the why of what they're doing, but the only excuse is money. In order for you to get with a top notch record company you're going to have to do what they want you to do.

"The amazing thing that happened was V.S.O.P. The guys get together in order to do this concert tour, right? We had five leaders who had gone through a period of jazz, then had gone through a period of making money, and finally had to get together to play some jazz. Those five men could really do a job on young minds if they cared to. It would mean they would have to step back to catch up. I know I am singing more music than they are playing. It may be chesty for me to say that, but I'm a singer and I know it.

"Any jazz musician of the '50s who contributed anything to the bebop era and to the new music of that time who's alive today is making money today. That includes Dizzy, Max, Sarah, Art Blakey. Everybody who's alive today and contributed anything at all to the music of the '50s is making money 20, 30 years later and will be making money until they die.

"That's what these guys should think about. What will sustain you? What is going to make you last? It isn't what *Bitches Brew* did for Miles Davis that will make Miles Davis last. It's what he did before *Bitches Brew* that made his name what it is today.

"But they're throwing the word 'jazz' on anything these days, even if you just improvise a little, teeny-weeny bit. They'll say, 'I do a little jazz.' How dare they say that to me, like it ain't nothing. *It's hard work.*"

Vitally important to Betty Carter is keeping her tradition alive for young people.

"You know, there was no second Charlie Parker, there was only one. There were five or ten John Coltranes in the late '60s. Nobody imitated John Coltrane in the '50s when chord changes were involved, when the music was more involved and you had to think in order to play it.

"In the '60s the music became vamps. We got hung up with one note, even in jazz: one note and vamps. So the poor kid who was three years old in the '60s heard nothing but one note and a vamp. What does he know? What can he say? What are his values? He's been brought up with electronics and one note, one note, one note. Bless his heart, what does he know?"

"A young musician today who wants to cut a record first gets the equipment, then he's got

Art Ensemble of Chicago

15 YEARS OF GREAT BLACK MUSIC

by LARRY BIRNBAUM



ROSCOE MITCHELL

They have been called "the premier avant garde free improvisational ensemble of the day," (John Rockwell, *New York Times*) although their music is highly structured and notated. Their style has been dubbed "guerrilla jazz" (Gary Giddins, *Village Voice*) although they reject the term "jazz" and deny that their work is politically motivated. They have been likened to such modern classicists as Webern and Stockhausen, but they claim that the Western academic tradition is foreign to their mentality. More eclectic than any "fusion" band, they have nothing in common with that popular electric school. Through periods of acclaim and obscurity, they have doggedly followed their own muse, unmindful of commercial and revisionist trends. After some 15 years of stubborn perseverance, they may at last be standing on the brink of wider acceptance with the issuance of an ECM album, *Nice Guys*, as the musical genre which they helped set in motion gradually comes to be recognized as the legitimate heir to the tradition of black art music. How then to describe the Art Ensemble of Chicago, who have pushed the heritage of Great Black Music, as they call it, to new frontiers of creativity? Perhaps a bit of history is in order.

In a recent *down beat* interview (12/21/78) Archie Shepp cited Lester Young as the first self-conscious art musician in the Afro-American tradition; yet Pres remained a popular figure, idolized in the black community. Charlie Parker transformed the music irrevocably into a listener's idiom, leaving the dancing audience uncomprehendingly behind. In the following decade, musicians like Miles Davis struggled to win respect for their art on a par with classical music, while retaining a considerable following of "sophisticates." Then in the '60s, Ornette Coleman and his followers abandoned what remained of convention to explore a visionary realm of pure artistic experimentation. Many listeners turned away in bafflement, and by the end of the decade pundits and industry executives were proclaiming the demise of jazz.

Nonetheless, the late '60s constituted a period of creative ferment perhaps unparalleled in the history of the music, the achievements of which have yet to be fully acknowledged. It was during those years that the Chicago co-operative known as the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) was founded, whence sprang many of today's most original and creative voices. While the New York scene foundered on the shoals of

commercial rivalry or spent itself in endless diluted Coltrane imitations, the Chicagoans, for lack of commercial outlets, turned to one another for support and kept their music vital and innovative.

Among the earliest and most accomplished units to emerge from the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) was the Art Ensemble of Chicago. First in Chicago, then in Europe and back in the States, the Art Ensemble members were the point men of the AACM, exposing the music to new audiences and opening doors for their brethren to follow. They expanded traditional concepts of performance with a spectacle of aural and visual effects—employing arsenals of gongs, chimes, whistles, kazoos, all manner of exotic percussion, face paint, elaborate Third World costumes, poetry, dance, comedy, mime, and multi-media effects—fashioning an organic cross-cultural theater unique in modern music.

Ornette, replying to his critics, maintained that he was drawing on the inspiration of the early New Orleans musicians. The Art Ensemble took him at his word, then went a step further. Reviving the tradition of the multi-in-

SELECTED ART ENSEMBLE DISCOGRAPHY

PEOPLE IN SORROW—Nessa N3
 REESE AND THE SMOOTH ONES—BYG 27
 A JACKSON IN YOUR HOUSE—BYG 28
 MESSAGE TO OUR FOLKS—BYG 29
 LES STANCES A SOPHIE—Nessa N4
 THE PARIS SESSION—Arista 1903
 TUTANKHAMUN—Arista/Freedom 40122
 CERTAIN BLACKS—Inner City 1004
 HOME—Galloway 600502
 PHASE ONE—Prestige 10064
 ART ENSEMBLE with FONTELLA BASS—Prestige 10049
 CHI-CONGO—Paula 4001
 BAP-TIZUM—Atlantic SD 1639
 FANFARE FOR THE WARRIORS—Atlantic SD 1651
 LIVE AT MANDEL HALL—Delmark 432/33
 NICE GUYS—ECM 1126
 KABALABA—AECO 004

Unique, too, was the group's expansion of the timbral spectrum to include sonorities not previously considered musical. Mitchell pioneered the use of "little instruments," comprising everything from rattles and klaxon horns to half-filled water buckets, to produce

who soon defected to the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. The group continued as a drummerless quartet with the addition of Jarman, an early colleague of Mitchell and Favors whose own band had disintegrated with the tragic deaths of pianist Christopher Gaddy and bassist Charles Clark.

Although they made occasional out-of-town forays, the Art Ensemble remained largely unknown outside their South Side homebase, where they frequently performed in the environs of the University of Chicago. There, in a climate of political and cultural upheaval, they developed their revolutionary brand of conceptual theater, parading around and even outside of halls, once scheduling a concert at a specified location and performing at another. Another time listeners were given paper bags to wear over their heads. Audiences were attentive but small, and many people were bewildered or intimidated by the band's bizarre antics, costumes, and paraphernalia. In June of '69, the group pulled up stakes and set off for Paris with the parting words to a concert audience, "America is in your hands now."

In France, the Art Ensemble created an im-



MALACHI FAVORS

strumentalist, reedmen Roscoe Mitchell and Joseph Jarman resurrected the entire saxophone family, from the ungainly bass sax to the tiny sopranino, as well as oboes, bassoons, piccolos, and other instruments unseen in the jazz world for half a century. St. Louis bred trumpeter Lester Bowie reached back to Armstrong and beyond to evoke the vocalisms and animal imitations of minstrelsy. The tradition of parody that had extended from vaudeville through Fats Waller was resuscitated with a mocking wit unique in contemporary music.

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DON MOYE

uncanny tonal effects. The others followed suit, accumulating a huge battery of unusual sonic devices that grew to envelop them onstage like a theater set. Conventional instruments, too, were deployed outside of their normal timbral ranges to achieve an amazing variety of original voicings.

Members of the group had been playing together since 1961, but it was not until 1968 that the Roscoe Mitchell Art Ensemble made its official debut with Mitchell, Bowie, bassist Malachi Favors and drummer Phillip Wilson,

mediate sensation. They recorded 11 albums and three film scores, made dozens of TV and radio appearances, and played hundreds of government sponsored concerts in large halls and opera houses throughout Western Europe. Also in Paris they acquired drummer Don Moye, who had met Jarman at an artists' workshop in Detroit before embarking for Europe with a quartet called Detroit Free Jazz. For all their notoriety there, the group felt that their music was actually less well understood in Europe than at home. Unpaid for

"It should be evident to everyone by now that we're going to continue as a group. We've been continuing for about 15 years, so we figure that we're an institution."

their recordings, they were penniless by the time they returned to the States in April of '71 to renew their inspiration at its source.

Back in America, the Art Ensemble again took a cue from Ornette and demanded a fee commensurate with their critically heralded talents. Consequently, the next two years were lean ones, spent mainly in rehearsing, although they "managed to work out two or three gigs a year right along," according to Moye.

"We damn near died," said Bowie. Gradually, interest picked up; government grants and university workshops provided sustenance until, in 1975, the group played an extended engagement at the Five Spot in New York, followed by another triumph at Ali's Alley and a ravishly received West Coast tour.

Between widely scattered gigs, the members of the unit have undertaken an ambitious series of individual projects, including solo and duet recordings and collaborations with AACM and like-minded musicians. Jarman,

transplanted Chicagoan who was active in the early days of the AACM.

All five musicians have won critical acclaim as masters of their respective instruments.

Jarman and Mitchell have been slighted in the polls simply because they defy categorization; from alto each has developed equal facility on all saxophones, not to mention flutes, woodwinds and miscellaneous percussion. Their styles, while related, are quite distinct. Both draw on the models of Ornette and others of the new wave, especially Albert Ayler, but each has developed a unique, original voice imitative of no one. Mitchell admired Wayne Shorter and met Ayler in the Army; his compositions combine complex abstraction with an expressive, angular lyricism, and his breathtaking technique embraces the entire spectrum of possible reed intonations. Jarman will tackle any instrument from a Theremin to a kazoo. Verbally as well as musically articulate, Jarman publishes and recites poetry, and

his delicate, shakuhachi-like flute shadings are as striking as his emotive, throaty sax work.

Favors, who has added the surname Magoustous, is virtually without peer in the contemporary bass idiom. A Wilbur Ware protégé, he couples his mentor's resplendently resonant tone with an uncanny sense of timing and harmony, plucking eerily hypnotic ostinatos or creating fantastic arco overtone structures.

Famoudou Don Moye is a fiery speed demon on percussion, a smoke-curling soloist as well as a sensitive accompanist who is equally adept on traps, congas and marimbas. Each player is strong enough to front his own group; together they join in a continuous, five-sided dialogue of equals, and after some 15 years together their empathy is virtually telepathic.

Onstage, the Art Ensemble presents a spectacle unlike anything in the world. Jarman, Favors, and Moye bedeck themselves in



VERYL OAKLAND

LESTER BOWIE

who has recorded with Anthony Braxton, Muhal Richard Abrams and Frank Lowe, returned to Europe for an extended stay. Mitchell has expanded the concept of the solo saxophonist with performances and recordings in the U.S. and Europe. Favors and Moye have also recorded solo sessions, and have worked behind many units—AACM and otherwise—in New York and Chicago. Bowie lived for a time in Jamaica, and is presently involved as featured soloist with the new Directions band of drummer Jack DeJohnette, a



VERYL OAKLAND

JOSEPH JARMAN

African-style face paint, flowing robes, batiked pantaloons, coolie hats, and bracelets of bells at wrists and ankles. Bowie generally appears in a long white lab coat and railroad cap, with optional bow tie. Mitchell, by contrast, favors faded Levis and pullover shirts. Framing them on every side are walls of equipment—their patented and much-copied gong racks festooned with tintinnabula of all dimensions; shelves of whistles, clappers, schoolbells, calabashes, ballophones, xylophones, and log drums combine to form a

ART ENSEMBLE EQUIPMENT

Joseph Jarman: Buffet S-1 saxophones and clarinets; Douglas Ewart wood flutes; Latin Percussion.

Roscoe Mitchell: Buffet S-1 saxophones and clarinets; Selmer curved soprano saxophone; Douglas Ewart wood flutes.

Famoudou Don Moye: Sonor rosewood drums; Paiste cymbals and gongs; Latin Percussion.

Jazz Alive!: Ad-Free Radio Taylored For You

by W.A. BROWER

Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman: "Yeah, yeah, you said it, you said it. We're moving and grooving now. Well jiggle my nerves and call me shaky, if it ain't the dreamboat herself. Delightful . . . delectable . . . delovely . . . DeLena Horne! (audience applause) Well, how are you butterball? (scattered snickering) That's a lovely green dress you are wearing."

Lena Horne: "Thanks Ernie. That's a pretty red tie you are wearing."

Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman: "Red tie? Oh that, that's just my tongue hanging out. Huh, well Lena what's the tonsil treat for the night?"

*Lena Horne: "It's called Deed I Do."**

*Billy Taylor: "From Chicago, Illinois and Boston, Massachusetts, this is Jazz Alive! I'm Billy Taylor, and our featured artists are Art Blakey and his Jazz Messengers at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago, and Milt Jackson with the Ray Santisi Trio at the Jazz Workshop in Boston. Blakey is a master drummer in the American extension of that age-old African tradition. He conceives, directs, and inspires his musicians to constantly create music that reflects their own identity, even when the musical approaches are as different as those represented by Clifford Brown, Horace Silver, Benny Golson, Jackie McLean or Chuck Mangione. The Jazz Messengers swing. And the music is bold and aggressive. Those roots are in the swing of the big bands like Chick Webb and Fletcher Henderson and Earl Hines. Art is an unabashed bebopper. He loves the compositions and the players, but he always added his own dimension. Call it funky or hard bop or whatever—it swings. We often played together at Birdland. And some of the most exciting performances for me were in a trio context with Art and bassist Oscar Pettiford."***

It's a long way from the high energy hokum and verbal antics of Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman to the urbanity and refined commentary of Billy Taylor. It's the distance from the days when jazz and commercial radio enjoyed a mutually beneficial liaison to now, when possibly the best hope for jazz on radio is headquartered in one beehive-like office in National Public Radio's (NPR) suite of offices at 2025 M St. N.W. in Washington, D.C. This office houses NPR's most listened-to syndicated program, *Jazz Alive!* (according to a NPR-commissioned study conducted by the Roper polling service).

Jazz Alive! producer Tim Owens thinks that

*From *The Legendary Band Of Billy Eckstine* (Spotlite 100), a recording made from a Jubilee Network broadcast out of the Plantation Club in Los Angeles, probably recorded in February or March 1945.

**Excerpted from Billy Taylor's introduction to *Jazz Alive!* program #781008 which will be released the week of June 17 throughout the 218 station National Public Radio (NPR) network.

"the difference between what we are doing now and what was done in the '30s, '40s and '50s on radio is that our approach may be a little more sophisticated, which has a lot to do with Billy Taylor and his approach to the introduction to the music. Rather than an announcer coming on like in the '40s, it's a little more subdued. The early jazz radio personalities were shouters and barkers. Radio was loud and it was commercial. We are non-commercial, so we are not having to worry about commercial interruptions and being sponsored by the Chase & Sanborn company."

Jazz was not *always* self-consciously an art wherein professional behavior aimed at pop-

"swung" but because it was conveyed nationally by radio, as in the Jubilee broadcasts. NBC radio, as much as anything else, made Benny Goodman "The King of Swing."

According to Owens' taste, "The music that was broadcast on the air in the '30s and '40s was much more powerful and better than the music presented today on our show. Unfortunately there is really no way we can grab hold of those years. I am talking about Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Jimmy Lunceford and Count Basie."

Indeed it was radio's golden era. Perhaps because radio was too new to know worse, it gave America Roy Eldridge from the Three



Billy Taylor, *Jazz Alive!* commentator

ular success was equated, ipso facto, with selling out the music. In today's terms the humor of an Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman would be thought tasteless, suitable for a burlesque or a burlesque of a burlesque.

A little more than a generation ago, jazz was a genuinely popular music, albeit bursting at the seams with the artful. The popular Billy Eckstine band of 1945 sported brilliant musicians like Fats Navarro, Gene Ammons, Budd Johnson, Art Blakey, Sarah Vaughan and Tadd Dameron. Jazz was a peculiarly American mix of high living and high art, played in places where people went to be entertained and to dance. Jazz became a national music, however, not only because it was "hot" or

Deuces in Chicago; Count Basie from the Chatterbox in Pittsburgh; Earl Hines from the Grand Terrace and Cab Calloway from the Club Zanzibar in Chicago; Duke Ellington from the Crystal Ballroom in Fargo, North Dakota; and Bird with Bud Powell, Fats Navarro, Curly Russell and Art Blakey at Birdland.

During its embryonic stage, radio found in jazz a dynamic and self-packaging entertainment form that just happened to be America's most important contribution to the performing arts. In the '50s the marriage of convenience between jazz and commercial radio fell apart. The generation which reached adolescence in the '50s has few (if any) magical

memories of discovering jazz via early morning broadcasts from romantic ballrooms or legendary jazz spas. There just weren't many such moments to be heard. The displacement of jazz on commercial radio by other, supposedly more entertaining and thus marketable musics, has left many Americans ignorant of their musical legacy and unprepared to consider its contemporary manifestations.

Because of its national hookup and non-commercial status NPR is in a unique position to help reverse this cultural lag. According to Owens, *Jazz Alive!* is meant to be "entertaining and educational with the primary emphasis being on entertaining. It's educating while you are being entertained. It's a case of building a commentary into a program for an audience that knows nothing about jazz and can have an opportunity to be turned on to it. The people who know the music can pick up something out of what Billy Taylor has to say, and certainly from the music, that is meaningful to them but not necessarily new to them. So it's trying to walk that tightrope down the middle. Sometimes it succeeds and sometimes it doesn't. When you get Dizzy Gillespie on three or four times you sort of run out of things to say."

One tightrope Owens and his assistant, Paulette Pecca, have to walk is between their

Eve Jazz Alive! did eight and a half hours live. The first half originated from Sandy's Jazz Revival in Beverley, Mass. and featured Jo Jones, Major Holley, Jay McShann, Jimmy Forrest, Al Grey and Bobby Durham. That was followed by a session from San Francisco's Keystone Korner, loaded with folks like Joe Henderson, Albert Dailey, Charles McPherson, Julian Priester and an Ornette Coleman alumni group called Old and New Dreams with Dewey Redman, Don Cherry, Charlie Haden and Ed Blackwell.

"That went off fantastically," beamed Owens, "more live jazz at one time than has ever been broadcast, to our knowledge. We got more publicity on that and more critical review than any other program except for the White House project." Things don't always go that well. Owens remembers New Year's Eve 1978 when "we thought we had it all set up with Stanley Turrentine to present him live. We'd done all this publicity. We were gonna do Stanley Turrentine live and then all of a sudden Stanley says his manager didn't tell him anything about that—an hour before the show is to go on. So we had to negotiate everything. Then there's the situation where you are scheduled to go on at ten and your first act isn't there. It always works out fine but the trials and tribulations..."

says Owens, "with us having an interest in recording an artist, or one of our station affiliates says they would like to submit a tape they have or go out and record a show. At that point I say we are interested or not interested. It depends on whether or not they can do it technically, and then on how much I think we need it according to how the artist is performing at this particular period in time and whether or not we have had this artist before in recent times. These criteria come into play besides the aesthetics.

"So the process is making contact with musicians and clearing it with them. Then we go to the festival producer, club owner or whomever and get his okay. Either an engineering team from the field tapes the concert or we get a crew together. Either way we get a tape. We make a copy for the artist so that the artist knows what's going on. We audition what we've got, proceed to cut it into a set and combine other sets with it.

"Then we write a script in very rough form, mainly laying out facts. We send it to Billy Taylor. Billy gets the script a couple of weeks before he has to come and lay his tracks down. So he rewrites and comes down to NPR (from New York).

"We get into the studio and play him back portions of the show. He responds to the portion of the show that he hears and then reads the script. We take what Billy read and we cut it up and then take both Billy's tracks and the music tracks into the studio again and mix the two together so that we have some kind of unified and cohesive show. Once that is done the tapes are taken to a duplication center. After duplication they are sent to all of the stations carrying *Jazz Alive!* They have a two week release period in which to use the shows beginning from the date we assign. They finish with the tape and send it back. The tapes are erased. The process begins again."

If Owens has anything to say about it, the process will soon change. He sees great programming potentials for *Jazz Alive!* in the satellite technology that will soon be available for radio. "NPR is going to a complete satellite system by probably September 1980. All of our stations will be linked up by satellite where we can send out a signal from Washington or anyplace in the country that will go to the satellite in what's called stereo 15 kilohertz lines, which are high grade quality signals that you normally get off of a record. When that goes into effect, NPR is going to shift gears and start doing more live programs. And when they get into doing more live programs we are going to get to the point where rather than riding second and third totem pole on a gig and broadcasting it live, we are going to be creating our own gigs, doing things people cannot do in a concert or club situation. Bring in an Art Blakey and build a band around him. Bring in Dizzy and build a band around Dizzy. These things you may only see at Monterey or Newport—if you see them at all. It's definite that we are going to go more live in our programming because we have the situation that we can now give people live programming with very, very high quality sound. What is not definite is what is going to go into that live programming with respect to doing jazz specials. I know there are people in the powers that be around here [NPR] that want to see it."

One thing Owens would like to see is more outreach to audiences that might not typically tune in public non-commercial radio. "Word of mouth," he says, "is the biggest advertise-



Tim Owens, *Jazz Alive!* producer

programmatic ambitions and the *Jazz Alive!* budget. NPR gets its main funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The *Jazz Alive!* share of the pie is a modest \$139,000. An additional \$25,000 is supplied by the National Endowment for the Arts to support specials. With that grand total of \$164,000 *Jazz Alive!* generates 52 weeks of programming—about \$3100 per program must pay for everything, including musicians' fees. Even so, *Jazz Alive!* has taken America to the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, to Newport and Sweet Basil's in New York, to the Telluride Jazz Festival in Colorado, to the Jazz Showcase in Chicago and, last May, to the south lawn of the White House. Last New Year's

The path to a completed *Jazz Alive!* segment isn't usually that helter skelter. Live broadcasts are the exception rather than the rule. As Owens explains, "Basically, it goes down as live on tape. We'll go out and record a concert and then we'll bring it back to the studio and edit it down to a set. And we'll usually combine one or two other concerts with that to make a program. In actuality it's live on tape, although the feel is live. That makes it different. Live, there are a lot of mistakes happening that we have the opportunity to cut out because of the recording."

What *Jazz Alive!* does for most of its program segments is more like producing records than the traditional live broadcast. "It starts,"

Presenting the Winners, Part I: The Second Annual down beat Student Recording Awards

The results of several categories of the second annual **down beat** Student Recording Awards have been tabulated. The winners of the big band, jazz group, and engineering awards are listed below. As the judges need more time to evaluate the large number of entries in the remaining categories—solos, arrangements and compositions—these winners will be announced in the next issue.

The stated purpose of the **deebee** contest is to "honor the accomplishments of U.S. and Canadian high school and college students in the recording arts and sciences." The categories and the judging criteria are patterned after the NARAS Grammy Awards. The chairman judges are voting members of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS). Editorial staff members of **down beat** assisted in the judging and the initial screening of the entries. All decisions and final judging are made solely on the basis of ability demonstrated on the candidate recordings. Recordings are judged "blind"; that is, candidate recordings are known to the judges only by number.

Best Jazz Performance by a Big Band—High School Division: High School for Performing & Visual Arts Jazz Ensemble (21 musicians), Houston, TX, Dr. Robert Morgan, faculty director. **Honorable Mention:** Penfield High School Monday-Thursday Jazz Ensemble (21 musicians), Penfield, NY, Ned Corman, faculty director. Student personnel: trumpets—Abel Santillan, Richard Peterson, Nelson Morales, Rene Gonzalez, Kirk Hooper; trombones—Robby Negrin, Roderick Harris, Sal Gonzales, Collins Sita, Nancy Ottmers; saxes—John McDaniel, Shelton Crocker, Everette Harp, Warren Sneed, Lisa Mandelstein, Nancy Moser; rhythm—Mike Rojas, p; Marc Perkins, g; Keith Robinson Jr., b; Michael Aguilar and Herman Matthews, drums. Selections: *Take The A Train* (Strayhorn, arr. Don Menza), *Maria* (Bernstein/Sondheim, arr. Willie Maiden), *Let It Go* (Stanley Turrentine, arr. Andy Anderson), *Corner Pocket* (Freddie Green, adapted Jeff Lindberg).

Best Jazz Performance by a Big Band—College Division: Mayville State College Jazz Ensemble (17 musicians), Mayville, ND; Francis Colby, faculty director. Student Personnel: trumpets—John Pederson (flg), Fred McMurry, Roberta Knute; trombones—Mark Vrem, Tom Loff, Lynn Schroeder, Dan Finley; saxes, clarinet and flutes—Conrad Miska, Merlin VanBruggen, Kelly Willwand, Diane Strong, Paul Dickson; rhythm—Kirk Overmore, p; Kris Eylands, g, cga; Harley Strong, b-g; Scott Greenwood and Mike DeFoe, perc. Selections: *Tip Toe* (Thad Jones), *Spanish Gypsy* (Don Menza), *Bones Alone* (Don Menza), *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* (Don Menza). **Honorable Mention:** The Northern Illinois University Jazz Ensemble (19 musicians), DeKalb, IL; Ron Modell, faculty director.

Best Jazz Performance by a Group—High School Division: Denver City-Wide High 20 □ down beat

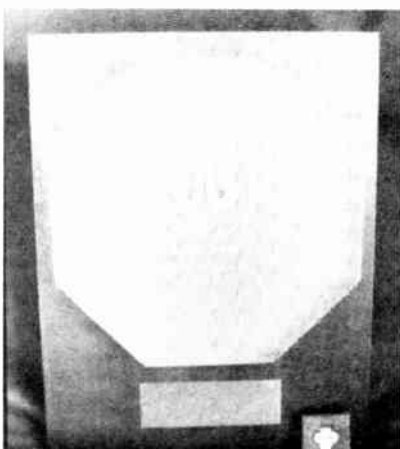


The Shure Gold Microphone Award

School Jazz Ensemble, Career Education Center (10 musicians), Denver, CO; Neil W. Bridge, faculty advisor. Student Personnel: Nelson Rangell, fl; Steve Watts, ts; Greg Carroll, vibes; Randy Jacobs and David Pearl, pnos; Keith Redmond, g; George Pegues, b; J. D. Maniscalco and Rick Litzman, drums; Gary Sosias, cga. Selections: *Dig* (Miles Davis), *Naima* (John Coltrane), *Freedom Jazz Dance* (Eddie Harris.)

Best Jazz Performance by a Group—College Division: Steve Harrow-Ed Czach Quartet, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY; Rayburn Wright, faculty advisor. Student personnel: Harrow, tp, flg, voc; Czach, p; David Finck, b; Dave Ratajczak, d. Selections: *Cottontail* (Duke Ellington), *Winoka Village* (Harrow), *Waking Forest* (Harrow), *There Will Never Be Another You* (Warren/Gordon). **Honorable Mention:** Saxophone Combo (nine musicians), Chaffey College, Rancho Cucamonga, CA; Jack Mason and Jim Linahon, faculty advisors.

Best Engineered Studio Recording—High School Division: Denver Citywide High School Jazz Ensemble (ten musicians) engineered and mixed by Todd Linn (17, grade 12); Tom



The deebee Plaque and Pin Award

Likes (Audio Engineering Instructor) and Gerry Sutton, faculty advisors.

Equipment: two TASCAM model 5 mixers; TASCAM 80-8 Recorder (on 2-track master); Allison Gain Brain; dbx Model 155 Noise Reduction; five mics—Shure SM59, E-V PL76; AKG 451 condensers, Sennheiser 421, Shure Direct Transformers.

Best Engineered Studio Recording—College Division: *Sanctuary* (5 musicians, 1 vocal) engineered and mixed by Pat Kennihan (22, senior), Jack King (22, senior), and Jim Rosebrook (22, senior), all members of Group #5, Electrical Engineering 627; Ohio State University, Columbus, OH; Prof. R. B. Lackey, faculty advisor.

Equipment: eight mics—Neumann U-47, U-67, U-85, U-87, U-88, E-V RE15 and 666, and Shure 545; 3M M56 16-track recorder on Scotch 250 @ 30 ips (no noise reduction); Quntum (QM-3000 Mixing Console with LH Audio Clarifier, Mus-I-Col House Reverb (large plate), Allison Kexep Expanders, Urei Limiting Amp, White 142 Sound Analyzer; Mixdown by Ampex 440B 2-track on Scotch 250 @ 15 ips with dbx.

Honorable Mention: *Before The Aftermath* (11 instruments, 1 vocal) engineered and mixed by Bill Gwynne (20, junior), College Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati; OH; Paul Pillen, Chairman Winds, Brass & Percussion Dept., faculty advisor.

Best Engineered Live Recording—High School Division: no contest.

Best Engineered Live Recording—College Division: no contest.

About the Winners

George Simon—Special Consultant, for the Grammy Awards, author of *The Big Bands* (MacMillan) former editor of *Metronome*—**chairman judge, Big Bands:** "All the college bands I found to be excellent or very good with one absolutely sensational, namely the Mayville State College Jazz Ensemble. Their playing is utterly charming, tasteful, original-sounding with superb use of dynamics and unusual voicings. The musicianship is superior and of all their soloists, the flugelhorn player, pianist, guitarist and drummer impressed me the most. (I made a dub of the Mayville band and am playing it for everyone who walks by my office.)

"The Northern Illinois band is something else again: its power and precision are awesome, and though it doesn't have the subtlety of the Mayville Group, its total effect is so overpowering that one has to admire it. The lead trumpet player [Dave Frohlichstein] is a monster and the drummer [John Battaglia] is terrific.

"I am very impressed with the musicianship and ensemble playing of the high school bands. The Houston band is truly outstanding and shows excellent direction."

Kenny Soderblom—studio musician and contractor, leader of jazz groups, member of jazz craft committee, Chicago, for Grammy awards), **chairman judge, Groups:** "All the



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IRAKERE

IRAKERE—Columbia JC 35655: *Juana Mil Ciento*; *Ilya*; *Adagio*; *Misa Negra (The Black Mass)*; *Aguanile*.

Personnel: Jesus "Chucho" Valdés, keyboards, arranger; Arturo Sandoval, trumpet, flugelhorn, trombone, vocal; Jorge Varona, trumpet, flugelhorn; Paquito D'Rivera, soprano, baritone, and alto saxophones, flute; Carlos Averhoff, soprano and tenor sax, flute, piccolo; Carlos Emilio Morales, electric guitar; Carlos del Puerto, bass; Enrique Plá, drums; Jorge "El Niño" Alfonso, congas; Oscar Valdés, percussion, vocal; Armando Cervero, percussion, vocal.

MONGO SANTAMARIA

RED HOT—Columbia/Tappan Zee JC 35696: *Watermelon Man*; *A Mi No Me Engañan (You Better Believe It)*; *Jai Alai (Rena)*; *Jamaican Sunrise*; *Afro-Cuban Fantasy*; *Sambira*.

Personnel: Santamaria, congas, bongos, bata drums, guateca, percussion; Bob James, piano, Oberheim synthesizer (cut 1), electric balls (3), Rhodes piano, electric log drums (5); Barry Miles, Minimoog, Rhodes piano (3), piano (4); Charlie Palmieri, piano (2); Bill O'Connell, piano (6); Jeff Layton, guitar (1, 3); Eric Gale, guitar (3-6); Lance Quinn, guitar (1); Gary King, bass (1, 3-5); Sal Cuevas, bass (2); Lee Smith, bass (6); Harry Vigiano, tres (2); Jimmy Young, drums (1); Steve Berrios, drums (2, 3), timbales (2), bata drums, shekere (5); Idris Muhammad, drums (4); Steve Gadd, drums (5); Thelmo Porto, drums, percussion (6); Jimmy Maelen, percussion (1, 3, 4); Hector Hernandez and Julio Collazo, bata drums (5); Mike Brecker, tenor sax (1); Doug Harris, flute (4); Mark Colby, soprano sax (5); Hubert Laws, flute (6); Randy Brecker, trumpet (1); Jon Faddis, trumpet (3); La Lupé, vocals (1); Vivian Cherry, Gwen Guthrie, and Brenda Frazier, background vocals (1, 2); Hector Aponte, Zach Sanders, Raymond Simpson, and Frank Floyd, background vocals (2); Marty Sheller, arranger (2); Jay Chattaway, producer, arranger (all other cuts).

*** 1/2

What better place for the Cold War to begin its thaw than in the Caribbean? First it was Gillespie and Getz cruising behind the Sugar Cane Curtain; more recently it is Columbia Records taking Weather Report, Billy Joel, and other label stars south for a huge stadium affair in Havana. By recording Mongo Santamaria Columbia/Tappan Zee has renewed the impetus of a career bridging Afro-Cuban and commercial American music for 25 years, but by recording Irakere the parent company has opened up our door and our ears to progressive Third World music.

We've been naive to assume that Cuba is anything less than a hotbed of musical activity, and Irakere shows on this stunning Columbia debut that Cuban artists are neither out of touch with what's happening nor easily slam-banged into rumba, Cubop, salsa or Latin pigeonholes. Irakere plays Afro-Cuban-jazz-folk-rock of staggering diversity. Comprised of musicians from the Cuban Modern Music Orchestra circa 1972, this band is feverish with creativity and full of accomplished improvisers. Recorded live at Newport and Montreux in 1978, Irakere is caught in an act that rates five stars for sheer excitement. The ramifications for jazz in the U.S.

and abroad could be profound.

Juana Mil Ciento opens, appropriately, with an awesome percussive buildup that immediately recalls decades of Cuban rhythm heritage (Leonardo Acosta's excellent liner notes put the Cuban musical contribution into vivid historical perspective). But rather than settle into a merely danceable salsa tempo the cut is goosed by a vocal chant, a sizzling horn climax, then a super fast and funky jazz passage by the whole ensemble. More hot changes distinguish *Ilya*, Hancock-type electric piano and rock-jazz guitar following brisk brass heads and horn choruses. Warming into a slow, funky groove, the piece is used to introduce members of the band, then cuts out fast with a theme song.

Side one ends with an amazing interpretation of Mozart's *Adagio*. After a pristine flute preface, a reedy blast from D'Rivera's soprano sends Irakere into a contemporary blues groove a la Lou Marini and the Saturday Night Live Band. From here the saxophonist scales down to an unaccompanied tour de force, leaping idiomatic barriers in single bounds, urging laughter, bebop quotes, and jazz-folk-classical licks from his horn. This brilliantly uninhibited solo resolves into a high wailing gospel-blues cum New Orleans, a fascinating display of individual virtuosity and compositional imagination.

If D'Rivera's Mozart chart covers impressive ground, Chucho Valdés is even more all-encompassing on *Misa Negra (The Black Mass)*, announced before the tune as "one of our most important works." Mysterious group discord resolves into a theme of dark power (horns) and fiery crashes (drums and percussion). A gentle, buoyant island melody then emerges, building slowly with ascending chord changes and good tenor sax. But as the development reaches an emotional peak, the band drops out and leaves Valdés on his own. What follows must certainly rank as one of this year's most extraordinary piano solos, a stream of consciousness that answers introspection with effusive rhythmic, and balances articulate modernism with a knowledge of jazz piano styles going back to day one. A crescendo of horns and skins sends Irakere back into action, evolving through Afro chants, free ensemble blowing, a conga solo, percussion jam, reprise of initial theme, then outer trumpet flurries by Sandoval with passionate bouts of mayhem.

Aguanile, the most one-dimensional piece on the album, but still smoking, gets basic with steaming salsa rhythms and vocals. It's high key creativity from start to finish for Irakere, a band uniquely positioned to influence jazz in the '80s.

While Irakere balances artistic creativity with equal amounts of commercial clout, Mongo Santamaria dives right into America's marketplace mainstream. *Red Hot* is a big

name session in the familiar Bob James mold, with Tappan Zee regulars augmented by other studio cats and some people from Santamaria's steady band. Side one tries hard to validate the "red hot" claim, igniting *Watermelon Man* with high octane percussion, feverish pantings from La Lupé, and Brecker Brother horns.

But as the beat kicks its way to stylized disco proportions, adding a slick vocal chorus designed for the suburban marketplace, this begins to look like a fast food version of the *Watermelon Man* we used to know and love. Similarly, the side-ending *Jai Alai* gets a vibrant Latin pulse going with recorded bullfight "Oles!" and a Corealike Minimoog solo, but precludes any genuine soulfulness with introductory party sounds, disco rhythms, and—ugh—more of those Star Wars laser beeps.

Side one cooks under the surface, but the only penetration beneath Chattaway's classy veneer comes during Charlie Palmieri's piano break on *A Mi No Me Engañan*, his aggressive solo forcing the other musicians out of their controlled fast lane for several emotional moments.

Side two is not disco and it's not so frenetically hot, but it finds Santamaria in a setting that somehow works more effectively. Doug Harris' flute soothes *Jamaican Sunrise*; Mark Colby's soprano is featured on the equally pretty *Afro-Cuban Fantasy*. Chattaway's Spanish heart shows there on horn flourishes and an increasing pulse from bata drums, the various percussion providing an ethnic feel. Hubert Laws heads up the breezy finale, *Sambira*, his flute inspired by still more percussion and rich electric piano.

So the LP ends with three pleasing tunes and a softer touch for Santamaria, the production a direct descendant of the Creed Taylor School. Had more of Mongo Santamaria's personality gone into these natty arrangements, the recording would have been more noteworthy. As is, fans of lightweight, glossy jazz will enjoy *Red Hot*; Irakere is much meatier.

—henschen

IRA SULLIVAN

IRA SULLIVAN—Flying Fish FF-075: *The Girl From Ipanema*; *Monday's Dance*; *Circumstantial*; *Stranger In Paradise*; *Angel Eyes*; *That's Earl, Brother*.

Personnel: Sullivan, trumpet, flugelhorn, soprano sax, flute; Jodie Christian, piano; Simon Salz, guitar; Dan Shapera, bass; Wilbur Campbell, drums.

*** 1/2

Over the past 30 years, Ira Sullivan has shared the bandstand with virtually every significant figure in modern jazz, yet, like many, he finds his most rewarding moments in the company of musically attuned friends, both old and new. Sullivan is far from a sentimentalist, but in his earned maturity he has come to value as the supreme artistic good that creative experience which is shared by all concerned. He is not overly interested in reaching the masses—his extended, self-imposed exile is testament to that—but he does want to communicate. His message may not commend itself uniformly throughout society, but it does have a special impact for a devoted minority.

Sullivan is something of a cult personality, and not a little by his own doing. Shunning the fame his multi-instrumental and creative talents deserved, he fled Chicago at the height of his powers to seek refuge in the musicians' graveyard that was Miami in the '60s. Hopelessly embroiled in glitter and rock, Miami was the least likely place for a jazz musician

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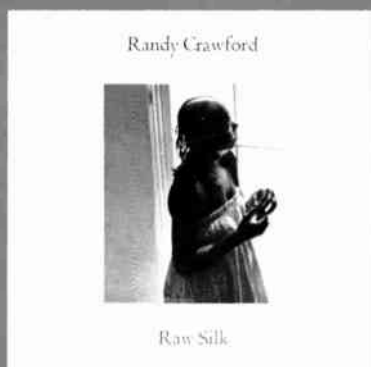
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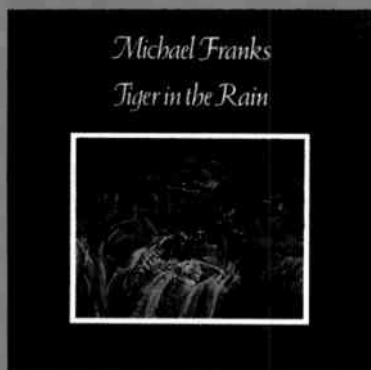
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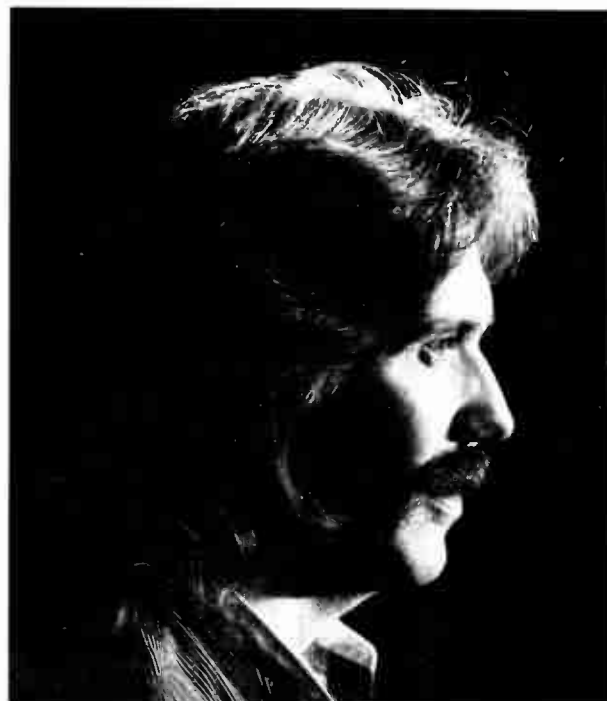
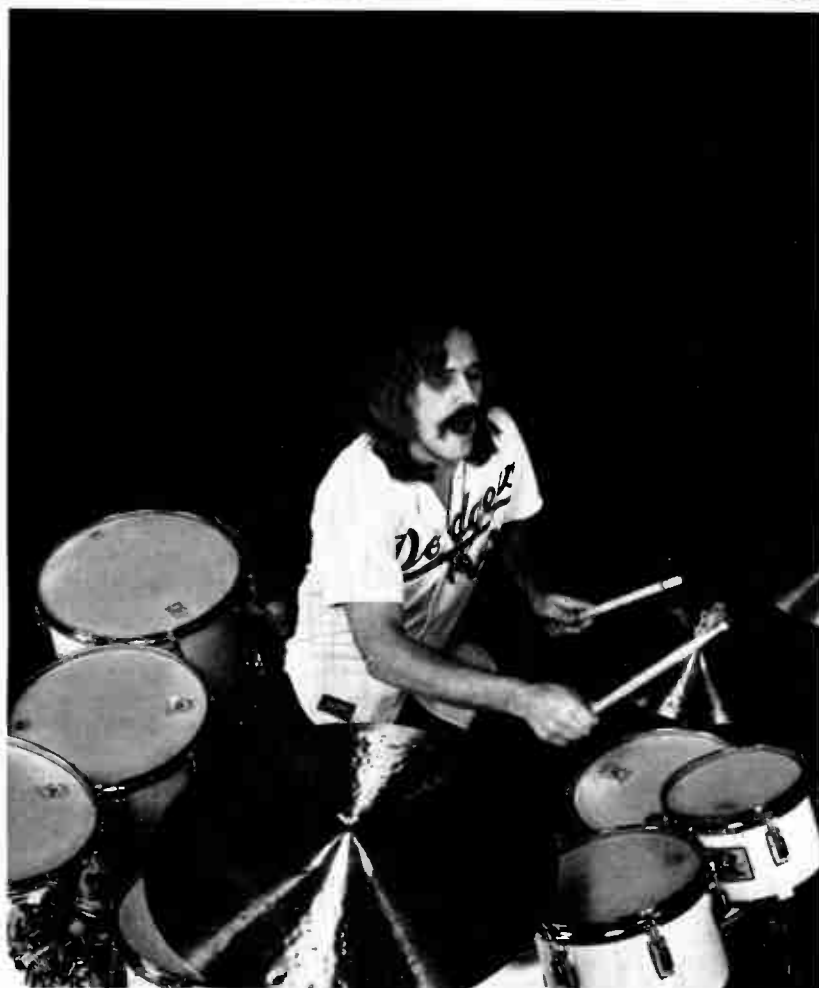


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to survive. But Sullivan did—and without going the hotel route, but by playing pure jazz. In time, he uncovered an audience, and in so doing helped foster the renaissance that Miami has since enjoyed. As in Chicago, Sullivan's gifts were immediately recognized, but there were no recordings during this period, and that—coupled with an extravagant reputation—is the stuff from which legends are made.

Fortunately, Sullivan has been recording of late, not with the profusion his many admirers would choose, but enough to insure the spread of his name. That he is a multi-instrumentalist, equally proficient on tenor, alto, soprano, flute, trumpet, and flugelhorn, is by now well known. But belying the stigma of gimmickry that often accompanies such displays of versatility, Sullivan's purposes are above reproach. There is no doubt that he actually needs all those horns, for each enables him to express a different facet of his multiple musical personality.

To hear him live and to savor the ease with which he darts from one instrument to another, outdoing himself at each unexpected turn, is to witness a rare marvel. To actually see him play bebop heads on trumpet and alto simultaneously (yes, two different embouchures and two different mouthpieces in the same chops at the same time!) is to doubt the continued reliability of one's perception. But the music he plays justifies the dramatic circumstances of its production. This record offers no such sensational performances. Indeed, with the exception of the uniformly high quality of the playing throughout, there is nothing spectacular about it at all. Understandably, the focus of attention is on Sullivan, but not at the expense of his companions. Salz, a dexterous and thoughtful guitarist, is also heavily featured, his preferred acoustic instrument and classical technique affording a luxurious complement to the diverse sounds created by Sullivan. Also heard in solo is Jodie Christian, who directs his crisp touch with equal intensity to both acoustic and electric pianos. Though not showcased, the roles played by Shapera and Campbell deserve commensurate praise as well.

Sullivan treats *The Girl* to a decidedly non-Latin outing in which a highlight is found in the piano/guitar interplay. An original, *Monday's Dance* (so named in reference to his weekly presiding role at the jazz dances staged at Miami's Unitarian Church) is an attractive jazz waltz notable primarily for its variety of tone colors. Swing's the thing on *Circumstantial*, another Sullivan composition upon which Salz demonstrates his thoroughly logical synthesis of blues and classical traditions. The imagination and control evident in Sullivan's flute playing is here surpassed only by his Gillespie-intoned flight on trumpet.

Stranger exposes the curiously nasal sonority of Sullivan's soprano, a timbre he likens to that of the oboe, but which ultimately resolves to a matter of taste. I have always preferred his tenor playing, a strength regrettably not exercised on this album. *Angel Eyes*, with its singular bass solo, offers a tasteful prelude to the seldom-played Gillespie opus, *That's Earl, Brother*. Note here Sullivan's subtly effective use of vibrato in an otherwise idiomatic bop solo.

This is exceedingly accessible contemporary jazz that Sullivan plays, and it is music that accomplishes its purposes without benefit of the fusion clichés elsewhere so abundant.

—jack sohmer

ARTHUR BLYTHE

THE GRIP—India Navigation IN 1029: *The Grip; Spirits In The Field; Sunrise Service; Lower Nile; As Of Yet; My Son Ra*.

Personnel: Blythe, alto sax; Ahmed Abdullah, trumpet; Bob Stewart, tuba; Abdul Wadud, cello; Steve Reid, drums; Muhammad Abdullah, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★

BUSH BABY—Adelphi AD 5008: *Mamie Lee; For Fats; Off The Top; Bush Baby*.

Personnel: Blythe, alto sax; Bob Stewart, tuba; Ahkmed Abdullah, conga.

★ ★ ★ ★

LENOX AVENUE BREAKDOWN—Columbia JC 35638: *Down San Diego Way; Lenox Avenue Breakdown; Slidin' Through; Odessa*.

Personnel: Blythe, alto sax; James Newton, flute; Bob Stewart, tuba; James "Blood" Ulmer, guitar; Cecil McBee, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums; Guilherme Franco, percussion.

★ ★ ★ 1/2

The most immediately stunning thing about the music of Arthur Blythe is his tone. It is hard, chubby, pliant, vibratoless. Taken together, these albums round out the picture—showing his bold rhythmic invention, his lithe sense of melody, a warping of pitch and timbre that indicates his complete control of the saxophone, and an impressive group concept and ear for orchestration—but Arthur Blythe's tone serves as the entranceway to this funhouse. It's tough, broad, a sound like that of a beaver's tail smacking the water.

Stanley Crouch's liner notes for *Lenox Avenue Breakdown* suggest Blythe may be "the most impressive player of his instrument" in 15 years. I find the field rather more crowded—Roscoe Mitchell, Sonny Fortune, and Anthony Braxton come to mind—but Blythe does possess awesome aural credentials. First with Chico Hamilton, then with Gil Evans, and more recently with his own groups he has garnered New York's critical kudos, culminating in *Breakdown* (a Columbia album you'd have done well to think could never appear on Columbia). The less circumspect have compared him favorably to Charlie Parker, but the mantle of Cannonball Adderley appears more fitting (the track *For Fats* from *Bush Baby* affords the best example). There's more to this than the fact that Blythe has refined, and redefined, some of the things Adderley was working on. To compare Blythe with Bird is to assign him the status of a major revolutionary, but there's little evidence of that—despite his emergence as one of the most accessible and lucid practitioners of what has been called the avant garde. Already 39, the California-bred Blythe arrives with a well ripened style more open than that of the Chicagoans, mature musical goals and no bridges burning behind him.

As expected, Blythe's challenging yet amiable improvisational abilities are best showcased in the reduced instrumentation of *Bush Baby* (recorded under a former rubric, "Black Arthur Blythe"). Although this is pure Blythe—Stewart, nimble and versatile on tuba, plays a mostly subordinate role; Abdullah colors and complements, but rarely sets the rhythms—there is still a flowing interaction that's hard to find on the other LPs. What's more, Blythe can give full vent to the rhythmic freedom only hinted at elsewhere. His melodic contours are wide-ranging, now soaring, now squirrelish, and following them is a delightful journey; but along with his tone, the key element to Blythe's individualism is the lack of rhythmic constraint imposed on his lines. On *Bush Baby*, his solos breathe more naturally, and with more variety, than most people speak. (Indeed, here is the one as-

pect of Blythe's style that invokes the Park-
erian muse.)

Mumie Lee, a memorable outing, bisects its quickening tune with a slower mid-section in which Blythe draws his solo over Stewart's biphonal pedal note. *For Fats* starts with a conventional bass-and-drums (tuba and conga) walking background and serves up something boppish, which is really just two alternated riffs, before the exuberant solo. *Off The Top* is weakest, a bit too disjunct for its own good, but the title track—which starts with a jungle beat, builds a melody of the simplest of riffs, and includes a powerful mid-section rubato—is a tour de force.

If Arthur Blythe, alto sax virtuoso, is displayed most accurately on *Bush Baby*, Blythe the composer/arranger is well seen on *The Grip* (which, while two years old, was never reviewed in these pages). Recorded in concert, Blythe's sextet is a small orchestra with an historical perspective: as he explains it, the tuba is used to recall the earliest New Orleans jazz, the cello represents European influence, and Abdullah's conga the roots of the jazz experience. *The Grip* grasps this orchestral potential firmly, from the texturally dense polyphony of the title cut to the cello-sax duet that emerges from *Sunrise Service*, to the throwaway solo piece with which the date ends.

Hearing Wadud and Blythe in tandem provides yet another perspective on the saxist's tone. On *Service*, they play in the same registers long enough to show how well Blythe is matched to the cello's dark, sweeping romance. Wadud is a remarkable player, of admirable detail and an improvisatory daring that's often lacking on non-traditional jazz instruments; he is equally adept when called on to anchor the proceedings with a plucked bass line. Both Wadud and Steve Reid (a little-known master of shifting energies) instill the necessary tension in *Spirits* (the only piece Blythe did not write), which is a mournful, Ornette-ish dirge. *Lower Nile* is interesting for its simplicity—it's a catchy, Mid Eastern line—and for the way, at one point, Blythe distorts his tone to near strangulation. The slightly labored *As Of Yet* is notable for all the frontline solos, particularly that of trumpeter Ahmed Abdullah, whose considered use of space offsets Blythe's own instrumental juggernaut.

Breakdown proves that separate can be equal: while *The Grip*'s occasional gaffes are those of execution, the almost-as-good *Breakdown* suffers more from conception. Producer Bob Thiele has not only rounded off the stark edges in the tone of Blythe, as well as the recently well-received flutist James Newton; he has also rounded off the music. The arrangements are glitzy and monolithic: for that matter, Blythe's music has been to some degree codified. Many of the compositions on the other albums are, like *Breakdown*'s, just a matter of an attractive, jazzy riff repeated a few times; but here, the riff is repeated for most of each piece, serving as an ultimately annoying ostinato for Blythe to solo above. This proves rather restraining—Blythe's rhythmic flights are sorely curtailed—and prevents, for the most part, any real interaction between star and talented associates.

Still, everyone gets solo space here: Newton has one grand break on the title tune, Ulmer re-creates the trumpet role on *The Grip* in his fragmented solos and Stewart benefits from the superior Columbia recording quality. De-Johnette is uniformly excellent, enlivening the island vamp of the sprightly *San Diego* with sudden and inexplicable sunbursts of cymbals.

On the title, Blythe sounds too straightforwardly Trane-like for so true an originator, but he plays hard and wild on the last two cuts.

That, plus the fact that it's on Columbia, makes this the most important of Blythe's albums to date, since there are stretches of undiluted, avant garde rawness made available (and even accessible, through the settings) to the company's vast audience. Blythe himself sounds quite ebullient, his tone made even more brilliant by the mix; but that symbolizes the heart of *Breakdown*'s problem. Blythe's darker side is missing, and with it, the tinge of mystery that gives his music its dimensionality.

—tesser

ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS

HARD DRIVE—Bethlehem 6037: *For Minors Only*; *Right Down Front*; *Deo-X*; *Sweet Sakeena*; *For Miles And Miles*; *Krafty*; *Late Spring*.

Personnel: Bill Hardman, trumpet; Johnny Griffin, tenor sax; Sam Dockery (cut 3), Junior Mance, piano; Spanky DeBrest, bass; Blakey, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

By 1957, with Horace Silver, Donald Byrd, and Hank Mobley gone, Blakey was rebuilding the Messengers' book with outsiders' contributions (notably Duke Jordan's, Mal Waldron's, and on this LP, Jimmy Heath's) as well as the band members'. As a soloist, Griffin was an ideal Messenger; Hardman was too, but his depth of purpose and stylistic consistency was a bit much for those used to Byrd's flighty pyrotechnics. Dockery and Mance proved pale Silvers, but DeBrest's big sound was the kind of foundation to build castles upon, and although Blakey himself was more aggressive on other sessions in this period, his distinctive sound and swing power this group. This was a transitional band: Blakey's search for ensemble identity began to bear most distinctive fruit late in '58, with Lee Morgan, Benny Golson, and Bobby Timmons.

The wealth of double-timing and tonal effects in Hardman's lines are the surface of a rigorous style that, in its way, is admirable. Did he deliberately reject the swagger and advanced technique of Brown? Assuredly, Hardman's firm sense of solo construction and love for melody lend a sense of purpose to the band, most evident after Griffin and Mance throw away their *Front* solos, and in the trumpeter's genuinely thematic use of the *Krafty* cadence in his solo (again, hear Griffin and Mance try the trick, for contrast). His single-minded purposefulness is emphasized by his less-than-full tone and especially by his *For Minors* mute, but let no one accuse him of limitations—the sense of neo-Brown well-being that pervades his *For Miles* and *Spring* solos, with their rhythmic variety, are contrary evidence. He seems happiest when most active, so the attention his solos demand, in *Deo-X*, *Sakeena*, and *Krafty* particularly, will be rewarded.

At its most attractive, Griffin's heavy tenor sound has the buoyancy of a fat man on a trampoline. He seems to begin his solos with a structural purpose in mind, then get whelmed away by impulse. Thus the weird triplets that begin his *For Minors* serve as a kind of loony refrain, as he then pecks whimsically at the beat, and wanders into a real flea market of a solo. Recurringly there's a spirit of harmonic adventure in his basically hard-cooking style, but that daring tends to lead to disorganization. For all his mastery, Griffin's wildness takes on a scary edge at times in *Spring* and



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Sakeena; yet who could not be moved by the blowing strength of *Sakeena* and *Deo-X*? Particularly in his adventures with *Krafty*, Griffin's lines have a pleasing '50s Chicago air.

Mance's assembly-line solos are beyond comment. The two Hardman lines, *Deo-X* and *Sakeena*, are perfect Messengers compositions, and one wonders why they didn't get the full Blakey production treatment, or why Griffin's *Krafty* received more powerful Blakey treatment in a Griffin date six months earlier. Even so, the drum accompaniment moves ripples to waves behind Hardman in *Sakeena*, gathers snare density behind both *Krafty* horns, and generally is in typical inspiring character. Using Heath's *For Miles* and *For Minors* instead of standards was admirable on Blakey's part, yet the Griffin and Hardman originals are truer both to Blakey principles and to the core of the hard bop style, as well as being more substantial pieces of writing. In 1957, this band was in the pure creative center of the hard bop movement; the high standards of swing and imagination serve as fine examples of the mainstream of jazz. —litweiler

STAN GETZ

ANOTHER WORLD—Columbia JG 35513: *Pretty City*; *Keep Dreaming*; *Sabra*; *Anna*; *Another World*; *Sum Sum*; *Willow Weep For Me*; *Blue Serge*; *Brave Little Pernille*; *Club 7 And Other Wild Places*.

Personnel: Getz, tenor saxophone; Andy Laverne, keyboards; Mike Richmond, acoustic and fretless electric bass; Billy Hart, drums; Efrain Toro, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

I have some good news and some bad news. The good news is that there is enough choice jazz here to make one very satisfying album. The bad news is that it is a double album.

Pretty City goes at a full gallop, and Getz rides it well, clearing hedges with ease. Toro's percussive textures are a positive contribution; Laverne's synthesized bird calls are not. *Keep Dreaming* is probably as close as Getz will ever come to funk. It's just as well since he doesn't seem to feel it (a great jazz dancer doesn't have to do the Hustle). On this and a few other cuts (*Sum Sum*, *Club 7*), Laverne adds a layer of synthesized strings, which is like adding a layer of haze to a clear day: who needs it?

Sabra is a modified blues, straightahead and swinging. Getz gets in the groove and stays there throughout his solo. Laverne plays a textbook solo, which means that the sparks fly but the tinder never quite ignites no matter how hard he blows. Andy Laverne is obviously a very talented pianist, but he has not yet come into his own. His best solo, filled with touches of Satie, occurs on *Brave Little Pernille*, a pleasant if somewhat monochromatic waltz.

The title track is Getz fooling around with a digital delay and Echoplex. It is a series of fast takes, 30 second sketches, brief ideas that take a few breaths and then fade away. It's another world alright, and I'm glad Getz is just a tourist there. Getz' real home is any tune with some good changes. Most of the originals here (there are four by Mike Richmond and three by Andy Laverne) are harmonically lean. So when Getz hits *Willow Weep For Me*, it's like he just came home and slipped into something comfortable. He luxuriates in the tune, and so can we. The same is true of *Blue Serge* on which Getz plays an exquisite solo, perfectly phrased and shaded. Of course, Getz is also comfortable in a bossa nova, but Richmond's *Sum Sum* lacks the harmonic richness of a

Jobim classic, and this in turn impoverishes Getz's solo.

Club 7 is a happy exception, whether or not it proves any rule. It is a driving, uptempo tune—highly rhythmic except in the bridge where time is momentarily suspended—and not very lyrical. But Getz dances around the thin changes like a boxer around a weak opponent. He attacks in flurries, making his lines bob and weave, jabbing, dodging, jabbing again. Hart and Toro provide plenty of support from the corner. It's quite a show.

Getz is a teacher as well as a master musician. His sidemen are usually young and talented—Chick Corea, Albert Dailey, Joanne Brackeen, Gary Burton, Clint Houston and Steve Swallow are all alumni of Getz U. Drummer Billy Hart is the only veteran; Toro, the youngest, is 20. Maybe Getz could have made a better album with seasoned musicians. Fortunately for the future of jazz, we'll never know. And as I said at the top, half of this album is excellent. —clark

CLIFFORD JORDAN

INWARD FIRE—Muse MR 5128: *Inward Fire*; *Abracadabra*; *The Look*; *Toy*; *Buddy Bolden's Call*; *Eat At Joe's*.

Personnel: Jordan, tenor, flute; Dizzy Reese, trumpet; Pat Patrick, tenor, flute; Howard Johnson, tuba; Muhal Richard Abrams, piano; Richard Davis, bass; Azzedine Weston, congas; Louis Hayes, drums; Jimmy Ponder, guitar; Grover Everett, drums (cuts 2, 5); Joe Lee Wilson, vocal (5); Donna Jewell Jordan, vocal (2).

★ ★ ★ ★

Tenorist Jordan served his apprenticeship with the likes of Roach, Silver, and Mingus before going on to lead numerous groups of his own. As a community organizer and co-founder of the Strata-East label he has been one of the pillars of the jazz confraternity.

Along with classmates Johnny Griffin and John Gilmore, he was a pupil of the legendary Captain Walter Dyett at Chicago's DuSable High. Dyett's tutelage is reflected in Jordan's solid, swinging, craftsmanlike approach to his instrument, incorporating the smooth phrasing of Lester Young with the harmonic intricacies of Charlie Parker in a style that sometimes suggests Don Byas or Wardell Gray. His associations with noteworthy composers have rubbed off on him, and his classic hard-bop constructions combine the ingratiating harmonies of Silver with the linear logic of Mingus to generate infectious, memorable tunes that are superb blowing vehicles as well. Here he has assembled a distinguished cast of old colleagues from Chicago days along with more recent acquaintances in a loose and feelingful impromptu session that features meaty and extended solo improvisations in a familiar idiom.

The title track is a fiery jamming tune with Jordan sizzling like Prez on a speed jag to lead Dizzy Reese, Pat Patrick, and Muhal Richard Abrams in a series of driving, twisting bop solos. *Abracadabra* sports a lilting, Silverish head vivaciously vocalized by Clifford's daughter Donna Jewell. Trumpeter Reese contributes *The Look*, a muddled 5/4 venture into Middle East modality over Muhal's dissonant piano vamp. Side two spotlights Jordan's strongest works, the gorgeous and irresistible *Toy* from 1959 and the Mingus-like *Buddy Bolden's Call*, featuring Joe Lee Wilson singing an amiable minstrel parody of *Swanee River* behind Reese's smeary valve effects. One is reminded that Clifford once devoted an entire album to the music of Leadbelly.

Jordan's deep respect for tradition is con-

sistently apparent; his use of well known "outside" musicians like Muhal and Patrick as well as such funk-associated players as Jimmy Ponder bespeaks a unifying principle in his work, an attempt to define a "new mainstream" out of post-bop ingredients. Many of the seasoned veterans on this session cut their teeth on just such music, and they whiz through the changes with a spontaneity as natural as breathing. Thus, despite the evident lack of rehearsal time, the skillful solo work and crisp rhythms by Louis Hayes, Richard Davis, and Azzedine Weston make this an album well worth having. —birnbaum

DOUBLE IMAGE

DAWN—ECM 1-1146: *Passage; The Next Event; Sunset Glow; Crossing.*

Personnel: David Friedman, Dave Samuels, vibraharp and marimba; Harvie Swartz, bass; Michael Di Pasqua, drums and percussion.

★ ★ ★ ½

What sets mallet percussion instruments apart from other tools of music making? It might be that creating art on vibes and marimba has a lot more to do with pure sound than, say, playing a saxophone or guitar. When a player strikes a note in a vibraharp, he may be tempted to stand back and just listen while the tone resonates and finally decays in space, as a yacht disappears over the horizon.

To a degree, Samuels and Friedman seem wrapped up in the sound of their instruments. *Dawn* consists of four long, atmospheric compositions that sometimes seem like sonic experiments. The players give the impression of being fascinated with the timbre of their notes, how the tones swell and fade, and what happens in the space between.

The first cut, *Passage*, is an example. There's a lot of space in the tune, not only between musical statements, but between the instruments as well. It's an openness that combines with calculated dynamic contrasts to create a multi-dimensional effect.

As the stylus hits the track's first grooves, the silence is broken (just barely) by a distant-sounding drone, followed by light, airy bell tones. The mallets come in later, playing a figure that recurs throughout the piece. It's a melodic line that Friedman and Samuels allow to hang in space until its emotional value is exhausted.

The following cut, *Next Event*, is a sketchy, rhythmically complex piece that illuminates Friedman's and Samuels' empathy of sound and style; their duet playing is well meshed and coordinated. Friedman's solo spot on vibes is marked by nice articulation and building intensity.

Sunset Glow is more conventionally structured. After a melodic lead-in, Friedman comps a vamp on vibes while Samuels runs through some energetic marimba lines on top. As the tune builds dynamically, the length of Friedman's tones grows gradually until the spaces between seem to dissolve in drone-like overtones.

Di Pasqua sets the stage for *Crossing* with a march rhythm, and the malleters respond with appropriately bouncy note patterns. Swartz comes in with a witty, fluttering improvisation before the group hikes up the volume and takes it home.

All in all, *Dawn* is a nicely executed disc that should appeal to lovers of mallet instrument sounds. By the same token, it is a remarkably subdued album. The compositions, which are not particularly affecting, are

drawn in quiet pastels of sound; some might call them pallid. Except for Di Pasqua's cymbals, there's an overall softness and monochromaticism to the music that makes it seem emotionally indirect. Listeners seeking an immediate, fiery musical rush should probably look elsewhere. —schneckloth

ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO

LIVE AT MANDEL HALL—Delmark DS 432/3: *Duffvipers; Checkmate; Dautalty; Mata Kimasu (We'll Come Again).*

Personnel: Lester Bowie, trumpet, flugelhorn, percussion; Joseph Jarman, saxophones, flutes, percussion, vocals; Roscoe Mitchell, saxophones, flutes, percussion, vocals; Malachi Favors, bass, percussion, vocals; Don Moye, drums, horns, percussion, vocals.

★ ★ ★

This two record set, recorded live at the University of Chicago's Mandel Hall in January 1972, falls chronologically into place between the last of the AEC's Paris sessions (released as *Phase One* on Prestige 10064) and the first LP released upon their return to the U.S., a live September 1972 performance at the Ann Arbor Jazz and Blues Festival (issued as *Rap-tizum*, Atlantic 1639).

Of course, any recorded documentation of the variegated musical cosmos that is the Art Ensemble loses at least one crucial aspect of their creativity—the visual/theatrical component. For example, their familiar comedic routines and interjections, influenced by Bowie's broad burlesque tendencies and to be heard here on the opening of *Duffvipers*, can come across as coy and condescending when divorced from their visual context. Similarly, their frequent passages of characteristic cacophony occasionally sound like caricature without the gestural immediacy and tension of physical experience.

The confinement of a studio can have positive or negative effects on a group, and the Art Ensemble have created some of their most endearing work in the studio—consider the restrained purity and conceptual completeness of *People In Sorrow* (Nessa N-3) and the atomized abandon of the aforementioned *Phase One*. Nevertheless, for a group like the Art Ensemble, who are for the most part dependent upon an organic continuity of spontaneously conceived structural fluidity, a live performance would be the maximal manner of experiencing their multi-faceted approach.

This recording thus allows us to hear a typical performance, with flaws and glories intact and fairly well recorded. The first side contains a microscopic view of the AEC's absurdist manifestations. After the initial, insistently gruff introduction of bleating horns and hammering drums comes an incongruously apt juxtaposition of delicate marimba chimes against squealing reeds and raucous percussion. A section of "All Aboard" train-type vocal interjections follows, until Malachi Favors' bass instigates a new direction, and the horns pick up the gauntlet, alternating a parodistic wide vibrato "swing" phrasing with a more modern theme of huge intervallic leaps and angular bent. This segues into a section of laconic blues, with Bowie's trumpet smears and conversational phrasing leading the way for the other's subtle percussive shadings which grow increasingly brittle until the sudden end.

The beginning and ending of *Dautalty*, which extends over sides two, three and four, are the most affecting passages. The composition begins with a satisfying melange of per-



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cussion in haunting combinations of dark, somber sonorities. Jarman's flute intrudes with an earthy ostinato riff, and before long Mitchell's flute makes it an intertwining duet. The arrival of Bowie's flugelhorn and martial rhythms by Moye adds a bluesy tint. Mitchell's switch to alto changes the personality of the music once more, and his cagey abstractions of line and design contrast effectively with Jarman's emotionally-tinged legato bassoon until the ensemble density reaches its crescendo in a harsh shouting catharsis of cacophony which spreads out over most of side three. Out of this confluence emerges a thunderstorm of wooden percussion, convincing in its compositional context and quite lovely in the complex subdivisions and ornamentation of Moye's underlying beat. This eases into gentle respite courtesy of Favors' soothing a capella outing and the return of the flutes' pastoral charm, up until the short, funky coda which I take is *Mata Kimsu* (*We'll Come Again*), signaling the end of the concert.

These particular performances stress the joyously ceremonial and celebrational over the strictly cerebral, and in so doing capture only a portion of the potential brilliance of the AEC. In its best moments, this recording sweeps you away within its power and passion; other moments are merely pedestrian—in other words, not an irreplaceable event, but a worthwhile addition to AEC documentation.

—art lange

JAMES WILLIAMS

FLYING COLORS—Zim Records ZMS-2005: *Stretching; Soulful Bill; By Myself; The Song Is You; Flying Colors; 'Round Midnight; 1977 A.D.*

Personnel: James Williams, piano, electric piano, arranger; Sylvester Sample, Fender bass; James Baker, drums; Bill Easley, alto saxophone, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet; Bill Pierce, soprano and tenor saxophone.

★ ★ ★ ½

No cosmic revelations here, just solid straightahead jazz. The playing of James Williams and cohorts reflects the ongoing mainstream tradition in jazz; the *inside* direction that emphasizes changes and swing.

Williams is a bright, harmonically inventive soloist and supportive player. His solos reveal the influence of Herbie Hancock, both in the use of chord voicings and space. As he demonstrates with the quasi-rocking conclusion to *1977 A.D.*, Williams could very well enter the funk derby that Herbie initiated with *Headhunters*. Instead Williams chooses to mine the vein of gold left in the Blue Note vintage Hancock. In his compositions he emphasizes leaping bop lines (*Stretching*), jazz waltzes (*Soulful Bill*), and jumping samba improvisations (*Flying Colors*). The use of electric piano on the title tune is particularly lovely.

Williams and company are more interesting on the pianist's originals than on the standards, which tend to be rote performances (Slide Hampton excepted, on *By Myself*). Bill Easley does, however, make a lovely bass clarinet statement on *'Round Midnight*.

Sylvester Sample hints at an upright bass sound with his booming Fender bass, and drummer James Baker has a quick, light touch. The horns of Easley and Pierce make their most interesting statement on the title tune, while Williams is heard to good advantage on *'Round Midnight*.

For those of you who don't have the taste for avant-garde, "free," and crossover sounds—who wonder where are the young players to play the venerated forms—there is much to enjoy in *Flying Colors*. —stern

30 □ down beat

BENNY GOODMAN

THE KING—Century CRDD 1150: *Lady Be Good; Here's That Rainy Day; Makin' Whoopie; I've Got It Bad; Ain't Misbehavin'; All Of Me; Darn That Dream; Alone Together; Limehouse Blues.*

Personnel: Goodman, clarinet; Jack Sheldon, trumpet; Wayne Andre, trombone; Buddy Tate, tenor sax; Cal Collins, guitar; John Bunch, piano; Major Holley, bass; Connie Kay, drums.

★ ★ ½

Goodman goes state-of-the-art in this handsome, expensive direct-to-disc session recorded last June. Buy it and you'll get a lovely, naturally intimate sound recorded without gimmick or artificial hype. The line-up of pros in the rank and file is impressive and the playing is fine if somewhat constricted. But as a Goodman album, it's a disappointment.

The leader keeps a curiously low profile throughout. He doesn't even solo on four numbers (*Whoopie, Bad, All Of Me, Dream*). *Here's That Rainy Day* gets a typical BG ballad treatment, i.e., play it once through pretty and quit while you're ahead. I can't remember the last time I heard Benny improvise at ballad tempos. He's uncomfortable just running chords (which is usually a poor substitute for a good tune anyway), and he seems to require speed and momentum if his mind is to switch into an inventive mode. On *Misbehavin'* we could have expected more than merely an opening, no-frills chorus. But just when Goodman should be rolling up his sleeves, he puts on his coat and leaves matters to Sheldon and Tate.

And so we are left with three *real* Goodman sides. *Alone* is pleasant middle tempo playing, but lacks a climactic center of gravity. *Lady jogs* along at a relaxed pace powered by the Rolls Royce rhythm team of Collins, Kay and Holley. Goodman himself blossoms into full bloom by his third chorus. Collins' hard swinging acoustic guitar provides momentum and ballast as Benny takes it out. *Limehouse* is a stomping (if predictable) climax piece from Kay's detonating rim shot forward. Goodman and Collins fall into a delightful double exposure a cappella chorus before the shouting 64 bar wrap-up.

There are probably many young *down beat* readers who have heard about Benny Goodman all their lives but have yet to make his acquaintance via serious listening. If you're one of them, skip this. It's not representative of Goodman's still enormous powers, and on the evidence offered here you'll probably end up wondering what all this king-of-swing fuss has been about for 40 years. Try *On Stage* (London) instead.

—mcdonough

JAY McSHANN

TRIBUTE TO FATS WALLER—Sackville 3019: *Honeysuckle Rose; Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now; Then I'll Be Tired Of You; Ain't Misbehavin'; All My Life; I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter; I Ain't Got Nobody; Squeeze Me; Lulu's Back In Town.*

Personnel: McShann, piano.

★ ★ ★ ½

Two good-humored heavyweights of keyboard style go head to head here—Fats in spirit and composition, Jay in homage and performance. McShann has pored over the Waller corpus and chosen, in fact, only four out of nine Waller originals (three with words by Andy Razaf on side one and his 1918 debut with Clarence Williams, *Squeeze Me*) but included five others that Fats afforded his froggy treatments on old Bluebirds in the '30s, including his "platinum" single of Ahlert/Young's *Letter*. McShann, a rollicking stylist

out of the Southwestern tradition, opens *Rose* with neither Fat's tour-de-force cadenzas nor his bumptious stride, but rather a chattering Kansas City boogie break—he lets you know right off where he's coming from.

Where McShann takes these tunes is not back to Fats' elegant Harlem parlors, but to some funky dives in Kansas and Texas. Hard octaves and tremolos abound. Out-of-synch and off-tempo passages stick out here and there, arms akimbo at some back door. Bluesy *appoggiaturas* cluster and roil as on *Mischief*. Despite the precedent set by Fats and Jay's own fast friendship with Tatum, McShann hardly ever indulges in flash runs, but chugs along bumpily, shifting harmonic textures and keeping a limber, dodging left. *All My Life* gets a surprisingly suave introduction that breaks into a warm, easily striding lope, with hot flashes. Eschewing any adherence to Fats' funny formalism, McShann douses his tribute with his own blues-sprawled signature, like the descending licks with which he signs off the last chorus of *Misbehavin'*. Even those phrases that don't come off letter perfect have a lot of grit and amiability to them.

Over all, however, McShann has neither the finesse of Teddy Wilson nor the inventiveness of Earl Hines to long sustain a totally solo endeavor. Like Basie, McShann shines better with a nice tight rhythm section, such as that provided on his *Atlantic Blue Devils* (SD 1400), or shooting it out with his old buddy Tate on tenor sax, on another Sackville release likewise available at Box 87, Station J, Toronto, Ontario, M4J 4X8 Canada.

—fred bouchard

CHARLIE MUSSELWHITE

TIMES GETTIN' TOUGHER THAN TOUGH—Crystal Clear 5005: *Times Gettin' Tougher Than Tough; Help Me; Big Leg Woman; Nightclub; Help Yo'self; Sloppy Drunk.*

Personnel: Musselwhite, vocal, harmonica; John Turk, trumpet; Bobby Forte, tenor saxophone; Pee Wee Ellis, baritone saxophone; Skip Rose, piano; Johnny Heartsman, Eugene Blacknell, guitars; Darrell Broadnax, bass; Big John Evans, drums; Steven B. Jones, drums (cut 3).

★ ★ ★ ½

Crystal Clear is a San Francisco based label specializing in direct-to-disc recordings for the audiophile. Given the heavy amplifier distortion and pronounced over-reverberation associated with the type of music Musselwhite and his fellows perform, it seems a strange choice for direct-to-disc recording. To tell the truth, I can hear very little difference between the sound delivered by this process and that by conventional tape recording technology—at least in respect to this music and this band as they've been recorded here.

The overall sound is so reverberant that it cancels out virtually all the sonic transparency and clarity one associates with the direct-to-disc process. Such gains as one does get—say, the greater power and presence of the horns and drums—are almost completely obscured by the echoing thunder of the amplifier-produced sounds. The piano is all but inaudible most of the time and, to a lesser extent, this is true of the two guitars as well, exceptions being Heartsman's occasional solos. But the chief victim of the sound mix is Musselwhite himself. His vocals have been placed so far back in the mix that one constantly must strain to make out what he is singing; although his harmonica fares a bit better, it too could have been brought more to the fore.

This problem is compounded further by the generally overbusy character of the arrange-

ments. While the idea, I suppose, was to generate as much excitement and energy as possible, I think the producers and/or arrangers have been overzealous. The horns almost never let up, frequently getting in the way of the vocalist and soloists. Apparently no one connected with the project has heard of or subscribes to the theory that less is more, which is unfortunate, for a lot less textural density would have helped most of the performances. Also, Heartsman's solos are often marred by gratuitous excess, rarely suggesting any of the tasteful inventiveness for which he long has been noted in blues circles.

Still, the music is enjoyable, full of high spirits and plenty of vigor. Musselwhite sings convincingly throughout—when he can be heard, that is—and plays with imaginative, controlled power whenever called upon to do so. His spots on the *Mojo*-influenced *Sloppy Drunk*, Mose Allison's *Nightclub* and his own *Help Yo'self* are excellent examples of his mature command of the harmonica, which he plays with fluent, idiomatic assurance. Tenor saxophonist Bobby Forte solos well, too.

Whether or not you'll want to spend \$15.95, the list price, for a recording that, to my way of thinking, doesn't really offer that significant a sonic advance over conventional recordings of this type of music is a matter only you can determine. Bear in mind that the total playing time of the set clocks in at only slightly more than 24 minutes! Which strikes me as woefully short by any standards. *Caveat emptor*, of course, but nowhere on the package does it indicate the playing times of the selections.

—welding

AARON COPLAND/ CHARLES IVES

APPALACHIAN SPRING, THREE PLACES IN NEW ENGLAND—Sound 80 Digital Records DLR-101.

Personnel: The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra; Dennis Russell Davies, conductor.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

This album was recorded using a prototype of 3M's new digital audio mastering system. (A&M and Warner Bros., among other major labels, have since purchased the \$150,000 system while CBS acquired Sony's digital system.) Digital recording abandons the musical waveform used in analog or traditional (since Edison) recording in favor of a digital, on-off pulse code in which sound is numerically encoded. Distortion and noise is eliminated, dynamic range is increased and endless copies can be made of the master tape without signal degradation, tape hiss, etc., making direct-to-disc recording, which escapes this by bypassing the taping process, obsolete. But until home reproduction systems are also digital, we must still deal with the problem of surface noise on analog LPs—which can be extra apparent, as shown here on the Ives, since there is no tape hiss to camouflage it.

Ives' *Three Places*, with its subtle orchestral color (here in what is apparently the first recording of Ives' reduction of his score for chamber orchestra), is ideally suited to the clear sound, the depth and the extreme highs and lows possible with digital recording.

In the first movement, *The St. Gaudens In Boston Common*, the strings float like spectres while the basso ostinato line softly pulsates in the background and the piano shimmers distantly, brightly shining through it all.

One might wish for a little more wildness in Davies' conducting of the second movement,

Putnam's Camp, but every part of this fantastic mix of sounds at a frantic 4th of July church picnic—a child's walk and dream, a crowd's yell, the jarring juxtaposition of different tempi, rhythms and keys as two bands meet—is clearer than ever before on disc.

The sounds of solo instruments—bassoon, horn, flute—swell up from the rippling strings in the third movement, *The Housatonic At Stockbridge*, then float back into the string sound. Thanks to both the excellent conducting and recording, we get the feel of the floating mist, the gentle waters, rustling leaves and a chapel hymn. Then this tranquil vision of nature is suddenly engulfed by the more tumultuous aspects of nature as the strings grow louder and trumpet and trombone enter raucously. Serenity returns for the conclusion.

The music from *Appalachian Spring* is well known in the composer's suite of main themes arranged for full orchestra. Here we have the original arrangement for 13 instruments, although it is not as complete as Copland's own performance done for Columbia some two years ago, which is the only other recording of the original orchestration. But again the textural clarity of the sound is exciting—far better than the over-blended sound of Copland's performance.

Davies, although a trifle less lively than Copland, does a splendid job of capturing the atmosphere of this work, from the tranquil opening with its suggestion of the arrival of spring and love, to the vigorous rhythms reflecting the joys of the new partnership and the revivalist with his flock, the gentle and passionate feelings of the couple and their serenity as they are left alone in their new home.

Davies never drives the tempo too hard, letting Copland's changing rhythms leap in their own ways with the often contrapuntal lines. Yet he never drags; there is still a pulse, albeit a gentle one, at the opening and close. Details often lost in the overly thick textures of the full orchestra are crisply and clearly stated here. Clarinetist Timothy Paradise and flutist Julia Bogorad avoid purely classical tones to capture some of the pensive and spiritedly dancing lines assigned to their instruments.

One can hardly go wrong with this release, which is tops technically and contains damn good performances of two masterpieces.

—de muth

BOB MOVER

BOB MOVER—Vanguard VSD 79408: *Sweet Basil; We'll Be Together Again; Tristeza; Florence's Fantaisie; All Or Nothing At All; Inutil Paisagem; Milestones; You And I*.

Personnel: Mover, alto and soprano saxes; Claudio Roditi, trumpet, flugelhorn; Kenny Barron, piano; Ron McClure, bass; Ben Riley, drums; Rafael Cruz, percussion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Bob Mover is a young man whose horn has lifted the music of Charles Mingus, Chet Baker, Lee Konitz and many others. At 26, he is a veteran of the inner and outer turmoils of the always turbulent jazz scene.

His playing is a quartz-like refraction of deeply felt musical and life experiences. A romantic poet/philosopher, his music rings with a profundity that speaks to both heart and mind. Though Lee Konitz and Sonny Rollins are seminal influences, Mover's voice is his own. At the surface it is assertive. Beneath, it questions—both life and music. It is always intense.

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exuberant trumpeter, Claudio Roditi. It's a good match. For rhythm, there is incisive support from Barron, McClure, Riley and Cruz.

The brash *Sweet Basil* is a celebratory appreciation of the Greenwich Village nitery where Mover's group often plays. *We'll Be Together Again* captures Bob's heart-on-sleeve lyricism. Mover's absorption with Brazilian culture is reflected in *Tristeza*. His fluent soprano traces *Florence's Fantaisie*, a touching tribute for a special person.

Mover's abilities as melodic interpreter shine brightly in *All*. Jobim's *Inutil Paisagem* is a mellow bossa with gently flowing contrapuntal lines. The coiled boppish tensions of *Milestones* spring energized soprano arcs, while *You And I* is an intimate conversation between Mover's alto and Barron's piano.

Though Mover has recorded before, this is the album that should put him on the map. His voice is worth listening to—carefully. —berg

LEE KONITZ

THE LEE KONITZ NONET—Chiaroscuro CR-186: *Fanfare*; *Chi-Chi*; *If You Could See Me Now*; *Sometimes I'm Happy*; *Giant Steps*; *April/April Too*; *Who You*; *Stryker's Dues*; *Fourth Dimension*; *Struttin' With Some Barbeque*; *Hymn Too*.

Personnel: Konitz, alto saxophone; Burt Collins, trumpet, flugelhorn, piccolo trumpet; John Eckert, flugelhorn; Jim Knepper, trombone; Sam Burtis, bass trombone, tuba; Ronnie Cuber, baritone saxophone; Ben Aranov, piano; Knobby Totah, bass; Kenny Washington, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

There is a delightful eccentricity about bands like octets, nonets or tentets. Perhaps it's their quirky harmonic personality, blending tuba, baritone saxophone and bass horn, or the unique space they occupy; they are not full blown big bands and they're some distance from the conventional group format such the quartet or quintet—it is a configuration with lots of little musical alcoves.

This is the second album featuring Lee Konitz' nonet, a unit that is not shy about exploring and sorting out the nonet's varied possibilities. As a musical group it is superb, with excellent soloists, crisp imaginative arrangements, and riding over it all, alto eloquence.

But there are ghosts here—proud, provocative apparitions from bop and Miles Davis' *Birth Of The Cool* band, besides Konitz' mentor, the late Lennie Tristano. The material on the record is a mix of originals and standards from almost every significant transitional period in jazz. The feeling is set immediately with the nonet's interpretation of Charlie Parker's *Chi-Chi* featuring bright compact solos from Collins, Cuber, Knepper and Konitz, who pays tribute to Parker's original solo. Lee's interpretation of Tadd Dameron's *If You Could See Me Now* is the loveliest cut on the album; his alto is smooth and sensitive and the band projects a misty warmth.

Sometimes I'm Happy is exemplary of the fine arrangements provided for this band by Konitz and Sy Johnson; the track is short (a little over three minutes) and the chart lovingly concerned with the familiar melody, dealing with it first via a bowed bass-tuba duet, then through Lee and Collins' interplay.

Among the other tracks that draw on the special character of nonets' combination of instruments are Tristano's *April* (based on the *I Remember April* changes), Knepper's laid-back blues, *Who You*, and the frolicsome, good natured rendering of *Struttin' With Some Barbeque*. There's a touch of everything here, all colored by Konitz' cool nonet sound, without tricks, gimmicks or artistic caution; just a unit using some fine musical minds. —nolan

BLINDFOLD TEST



JOACHIM KUHN

BY LEONARD FEATHER

Joachim Kuhn first came to prominence as a teenaged sideman playing on North German Radio with his elder brother Rolf. A clarinetist, Rolf Kuhn lived in New York from 1956-61; he is now the director of the North German Radio orchestra and a respected composer.

Born in Leipzig, now part of East Germany, in 1944, Joachim was able to emigrate to the West through his participation in a jazz competition organized by the pianist Friedrich Gulda. Classically trained, Kuhn has accumulated credits throughout Europe and the U.S. in the worlds of jazz and rock. He played around Europe with Gato Barbieri, Don Cherry and Philly Joe Jones among others, worked the Newport Festival with Rolf in 1967 and the Berlin Festival three times, and won several Jazz Forum polls as No. 1 pianist.

After appearing more often in this country and making San Francisco his headquarters for a while, Kuhn in December 1977 settled in Los Angeles, which he calls "my favorite place to make records." He assembled his current rock-oriented group for Atlantic records.

For his first Blindfold Test I assembled a set of cuts featuring keyboard/composer figures on a "United Nations" basis, from South Africa, Czechoslovakia, Japan, Great Britain, Poland, Austria and even the U.S. He was given no information about the records played.

1. DOLLAR BRAND. *Honey Bird* (from *The Children Of Africa*, Inner City). Brand, piano, composer; Roy Brooks, drums; Cecil McBee, bass.

I didn't like this track so much, because I thought the piano player on it is very stiff; he has this one motif he kept repeating and it was played very stiff. And the improvisation was not very interesting to keep it up for such a long time. Also the drummer sounded stiff to me. Besides that, the recording sound was not very good either—maybe it's an old recording.

The piano doesn't sound brilliant; it sounds like maybe a baby grand. The bass player didn't shine either—the composition didn't allow him to do much, it wasn't interesting. That's all I have to say about it. One and a half stars.

2. JAN HAMMER. *Peaceful Sundown* (from *Melodies*, Nipper). Hammer, pianos, synthesizers; Tony Smith, lead vocals, drums.

This was the Jan Hammer Group, from the album *Melodies* and, of course, I liked it very much. Jan Hammer I've known for 14 years and I follow his way quite well. He was already a great talent when he was only 16. He was playing in the Bill Evans style, living in Czechoslovakia at the time—he was together with Miroslav Vitous. I was living in Czechoslovakia for a few months and so I ran into him a lot.

Since he moved to the United States, he's trying to reach a wider audience with his new group, which I think is a very good move. The only thing missing on this track—and that's why I think it wasn't really a hit—he missed the hookline or it... if you want to reach a wider audience, you might as well go all the way and make it completely right. On synthesizer, he's one of the best in the world.

I heard his group at the Anaheim Stadium with Jeff Beck maybe a year ago, and it was great. On this, the recording sound is good; what I didn't like too much was the lead vocal. I think that if he's going to have a singer, he should have a real singer, not a musician who sings. It makes a difference. I didn't understand the lyrics the first time. Usually I need a couple of times to understand completely.

I've heard that whole record, and I think it's very

good. I would give it four stars.

3. AKIYOSHI/TABACKIN BIG BAND. *Elegy* (from *Kogun*, RCA). Toshiko Akiyoshi, piano, composer, arranger; Dick Spencer, alto sax, Lew Tabackin, tenor sax.

You've got me with that record. I have no idea who that is. It seems like I know everybody who's playing because it all sounds familiar, but I really cannot come up with any name. Maybe because for a piano player it's not really that interesting to play in a big band because you don't have so much to play. But this was a swinging arrangement.

The piano player in the beginning played some nice lines. Good alto saxophone solo, good tenor solo; the arrangement was good, but this style, for me, was one of the less interesting styles in jazz. Especially since we live in 1979; I'd rather listen to jazz made today. Now, I hope this is not a new record... it sounds like an older record. Also, a little bit laid back, California laid back bebop. Very professional, well played. I give it three stars.

4. PHINEAS NEWBORN. *Little Niles* (from *Please Send Me Someone To Love*, Contemporary). Newborn, piano; Elvin Jones, drums; Ray Brown, bass.

I heard this tune one time before, I just don't know where, and I have no idea who it is right now. The composition is funny, like from the old classical European changes in the middle part.

I didn't care that much for it—it was good, but I felt that the piano and the drummer weren't as tight like a trio should be—I always love to be very close to drummers. I thought they were not tied together like the real trio, say Bill Evans' trio with Scott LaFaro and Paul Motian, that was really very tight. I don't think the piano player, at least on this track, had much technique. Three stars.

LF: That was Phineas Newborn.

JK: Hey, I know he's got incredible technique... but on this track I don't think he played it. I remember him playing very light and very fast and very good and he's one of my favorites, actually.

5. AZIMUTH. *Mayday* (from *The Touchstone*, ECM). John Taylor, piano; Kenny Wheeler, trumpet; Norma Winstone, voice.

Yes, this is very nice, very pretty, very beautiful.

It sounds European; I always can recognize the European harmonies. I think it's John Taylor on the piano, Kenny Wheeler on trumpet and Norma Winstone, the voice. I never heard this record, but I just saw them on TV. On that program they played some very intellectual things which I didn't like so much. But this composition was very beautiful, it had a rhythm. It's very different to play in this context with voice, trumpet and piano; I don't think it's been done before.

It's very well recorded; the piano had an excellent sound, sounds like an ECM recording. And John Taylor, I think he's one of the leading pianists in Europe, probably even more than that. He's from England; they all are. I think Kenny Wheeler was born in Canada, but he was in England a long time. He's a great trumpet player; he has a nice sound, too. Norma was singing the melody at the end, which sounded really nice together with the trumpet; the mixing was good. I would give that four and a half stars.

6. HAMPTON HAWES. *Web* (from *Northern Windows*, Prestige). Hawes, piano; Spider Webb, drums; Carol Kaye, electric bass; David Axelrod, arranger.

I was trying to find something I like on the record, but I really couldn't. First, to play on this one chord thing, I'm so tired of it because it's been done for so many years. Then you have this little funk beat in the back and the big band arrangement on the top... it was just nothing I could really relate to. The drum recording sound was not good. They tried to play something funky, but it wasn't really funky enough, like the Commodores. If I want to hear something like that, I might as well hear the best funk there is—like Grand Central Station, that's really great funk.

The piano player I don't know, but he didn't play anything that I really cared about. The big band arrangement was poor. There were two chords almost for the whole number; it was really boring. Rating that is really hard... one and a half.

7. ADAM MAKOWICZ. *Chopin's Willows* (from *Adam Makowicz*, Columbia).

That was a great piano player, he was definitely influenced by Art Tatum—but then, who isn't? He was the king of the piano players. I guess this pianist is from the older generation... but maybe not. The only guy who plays like that could be Adam Makowicz from Poland.

He had good technique, old fashioned jazz harmonies and the tune was nice. The sound was not fantastic, the recording sound. Not like the John Taylor sound. But it was a very nice track; I'm glad I heard that. I love that style, too. Four stars.

LF: Who do you like that plays in that style?

JK: Art Tatum, of course. And Martial Solal can play in that style; he's one of my great favorites. In fact I played a piano duo with him.

8. WEATHER REPORT. *River People* (from *Mr. Gone*, Columbia). Josef Zawinul, keyboards, ARP and Prophet solo; Jaco Pastorius, drums, voice, timpani, bass; Wayne Shorter, soprano sax.

This was Weather Report—I love all the Weather Report albums. Joe Zawinul is definitely one of the greatest keyboard players today. I really dig him. And the whole group, over the years with all the changes they're going through, every record's really different. That's what I really like about them. The compositions are all good.

This one was good, too, maybe not the very best, but still very good. Jaco Pastorius is a fantastic bass player. They always had good drummers, and Wayne Shorter I think is a genius. What can I say, that's a five star record.

LF: When did you first meet Joe Zawinul?

JK: I heard him first with Cannonball. I met him once in Vienna at a music competition in 1966—that's when I came from East to West Germany. Then later on, I heard very old records he did with Fatty George. Since he was with Cannonball, he really sounded great to me. But he really made it with Weather Report; it's his own music. I think that's one of the greatest bands today. They have a beautiful sound—live or on record.

PROFILE



WILLIAM R. EASTABROOK

ABRAHAM LABORIEL

BY LEE UNDERWOOD

"Some people have told me that I'll never make it, because I'm different, because I don't do what people expect a bass player to do, and that I should talk with those who are well established and ask them how it's done.

"I come to the session and start doing what I do, and people say, 'No, that's not right. It doesn't sound like anything we've heard.' I constantly take chances. And I constantly get hurt. But it's for the sake of making myself feel something. Unless I feel there is something going on, then it doesn't mean anything.

"Sometimes it's painful for those who are observing, because they feel you're indulgent, or you're imposing on their time. All the time

you're searching for a good feeling, for the right feeling, as opposed to going with what everybody else is doing, going with whatever is 'correct.' I don't have that discipline to play whatever is 'impeccable,' like George Mraz or Dave Holland.

"That causes me a lot of pain—to not know what they mean when they say, 'Do it like what I've heard before,' to not know what they mean when they say, 'Be normal.'

"That hurts me, because I really want to satisfy these people, to be a 'normal' bass player. That doesn't happen, and the people say right to my face, 'You are not someone we can feel comfortable with. We don't know what to expect. But the show must go on, so play.'

"Then, afterwards, they listen to what I've done. They realize something happened that kept the music alive. And then they know what I've done, and they like me."

Keeping the music alive is one of Abraham Laboriel's fortes. One of his dreams is to play with McCoy Tyner—and he just might make

it. He's been playing bass (electric) only eight years, and, since moving to Los Angeles two years ago, he has already stacked up a rather impressive list of credits.

He recorded with Al Jarreau on the Grammy winning live album, *Look To The Rainbow*; with Lee Ritenour on *Captain Fingers* and two Japanese direct-to-disc albums, *Sugarloaf Express* and *Lee Ritenour And Friendship*; with John Klemmer on *Arabesque*, and on John's present album in progress, *Brazilia*; with Lalo Schiffrin on *Gypsies*; with Joe Sample on Joe's second solo album in progress; and on numerous TV, film, and jingle sessions.

Raised in Mexico City, where he was born 31 years ago on July 17, 1947, Abraham lost the tip of his left index finger at age four when the washing machine motor-fan cut it off.

"My father, an actor/musician/composer/guitar teacher, tried to teach me classical guitar, avoiding the use of that finger as much as he could. Soon that became too difficult, and I stopped playing for two years."

But music was in his blood. His older brother, John, received top 40 and jazz records from American publishing houses. John translated the songs into Spanish and recorded them. Abraham listened to the records "and played the chord changes on the guitar along with them. That's how I began playing again, totally by ear, all different styles of music—Motown, Elvis, Little Richard, Buck Owens.

"Then one day came *Take The A Train*, sung by Lambert, Hendricks and Ross. That was it. I loved jazz. From then on I listened to people like the Hi-Los, Quincy Jones, Henry Mancini, Oscar Peterson, falling in love with thick chords and complicated progressions."

His parents did not want Abraham to become a professional musician "so I studied aeronautical engineering at Mexico City's Polytechnical Institute for two years. Then I begged my parents to let me try music, and that's when I came to the Berklee School of Music in Boston.

"The first two years there, I did no outside work. I didn't speak English when I arrived, so I had to learn. I also wanted to apply myself for my parents.

"After the first two years, however, I discovered the bass and became very active. I played my first professional job on bass with Al Silvestri, a guitarist and film composer, and it was obvious that I was destined to become an electric bass player, not a guitarist. I graduated from Berklee in 1972 with a degree in composition.

"Because most electric basses are designed to fit the hands of upright bass players, I have had trouble. Therefore, I play an Italian-made bass with a small neck, a Goya bass, with a guitar-shaped neck.

"Besides going to Berklee, the first major thrill in my life was joining Gary Burton's group and recording *The New Quartet* album on ECM. I also worked with him for a year, a great learning experience for me.

"After graduating in 1972, I played the show *Hair* in Boston. I played with the Count Basie band, backing Johnny Mathis, and then toured with Mathis for two years, meeting Lalo Schiffrin, Henry Mancini, and Michel Legrand, playing with all of them. In 1975, Henry called me in Cleveland and asked me to come to L.A. and record *Symphonic Soul*. He gave me two solos on it.

"Over the last two years in Los Angeles, my career has gone very, very well. I do what I

think everybody wants, but they think it's very special. It's taken me a long time to accept that.

"To be a leader of my own group now would be premature. At this point, I'm observing. I play whatever I'm called upon to play, and I study two things: what makes it work if it works, and what is lacking if it doesn't work. I am concerned with what makes a piece of music come alive.

"Everything can be transformed into something that is good, provided there is enough love contained within it. People are starving for that in music. I very much want to deny the jaded attitude that music is only a way to make money.

"One of the main things to learn is the courage to be quiet. Musicians forget the meaning of silence, the meaning of *not* playing when music is taking place. Sometimes letting people improvise on top of nothing is better than always 'keeping the groove.' You learn by doing it.

"That gets you into trouble sometimes. People say, 'Don't you realize that if the bass player stops, the whole house falls down?' But if you do it right, people will come to realize that even though it doesn't sound as they think it's supposed to, it is still good.

"Another thing to learn is what to emphasize. Many musicians feel that they have to have every condition perfect before they can play beautiful music. I say, no. If people are going to hear what you have to say, they will hear it regardless of what the surface sound of it is. It is the content that is of primary importance. If you place too much emphasis on the perfection of details, the content will disappear.

"It is also difficult to handle criticism. It always hurts when people say, 'Aww, man, that did not say anything to anybody. You were totally self-indulgent and egotistical. As far as I'm concerned, it was a waste of time to come and hear you.'

"Instead of trying to figure out what will please others, I have a great deal of respect for intention. If I intend to say something genuine, then that's what I'm trying to do. If somebody gets hurt or offended by that, there will always be time to explain my intention. If they were being hurt, it was not by what I intended, but by something else, maybe something in them. The trick is to be who you are. If people focus on that, instead of on what has happened to them in the past, then they will feel what you do, and they will not have wasted their time."

db



ERNIE WATTS

BY SAM Y. BRADLEY

After nearly a decade as one of Hollywood's most in-demand studio musicians, Ernie Watts has reached a turning point in his career. Watts' recognition as a brilliant multi-reed player is well known both to artists and to composers with whom he has recorded. Despite his busy schedule his tenor is often heard at local jazz clubs with both big bands and ensembles.

Along with reedmen Pete Christlieb, Don Menza and Tom Scott, Ernie occupies a unique spot in this town's highly competitive music scene. With a new album in the works and touring plans ahead, Ernie's future con-

tinues to expand; justifiably so, for hard work and perseverance are the cornerstones of his career.

"I was at the point where I was doing three or four sessions a day, every day. I've been involved in some beautiful projects but by the end of the day I'd be too tired to work on a composition I wanted to write or play on a piece of music I felt like playing on. I finally had to say, 'What about me? Am I going to spend the rest of my life simply enhancing someone else's music?' I really felt the need to move on to the next phase."

The 'next phase' is Friendship, a band co-led by Lee Ritenour (guitar); Alex Acuna (drummer and former member of Weather Report); Abraham Laboriel (bass); Dave Grusin (keyboards); and Steve Forman (percussion).

Each member contributed to the band's repertoire, a fact Ernie believes "makes the group as strong as it is. Everyone is able to

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contribute totally to the flow and direction we're moving towards."

The group began playing Tuesday nights at a small L.A. nightspot called The Baked Potato. "The intimacy of the room allowed us the freedom to stretch out and explore new musical ideas. It was there that we developed the rapport and interplay so essential in performing improvised music.

"The most vital aspect in any band is to keep generating new material and new ways of expressing things we've played before. We're playing and improvising and taking chances. Yet the music still remains accessible to people who may not have a broad musical background. Our rhythmic base is very strong. Our bassist is a former flamenco guitarist, and

Alex, from Peru, is naturally very much involved in Brazilian and South American rhythms. Our percussionist has many interesting and exotic instruments and sounds to contribute.

"An audience is initially drawn to the music's pulse. That means that we can introduce subtle changes in tonal colors and sophisticated harmonic changes and bring them right along. Good jazz can both sell albums and be artistically successful. Musicians like George Benson, Herbie Hancock, Joe Zawinul and Wayne Shorter have finally proved that jazz is a viable art form for the public at large.

"The record companies have also come around, and that's being reflected through airplay on radio. When I was growing up in Bos-

ton there was only one station that played jazz. That hasn't improved in most cities until just recently. I really believe that as people are given the opportunity to hear improvised music they'll recognize its value."

Behind Ernie's decision to devote more energy to composition and performance is this notion: "Music is a reflection of life, especially improvised music, especially jazz music. A person who leads a full life is going to have more to give to his music than a person who leads a shallow life. Your musical expression has a direct relationship with what you do, how you live and think, and how you respond to people. My change in priorities was to become more in balance with myself. To continue to grow musically and spiritually meant doing a little less studio work and spending more time with my wife and my two sons."

The reward for Ernie is "playing music for people and to see them enjoying themselves. To get up on the stand and have fun playing music with guys you like and respect and to see that connect with an audience is really what it's all about."

Ernie has worked to come to grips with the business end of the music.

"Making sure that the economics of a band are functioning properly is essential in keeping your music intact. As things begin to grow and the band starts to move the guys in the band are evolving to deal with those areas interrelated with becoming successful, because that's half of it.

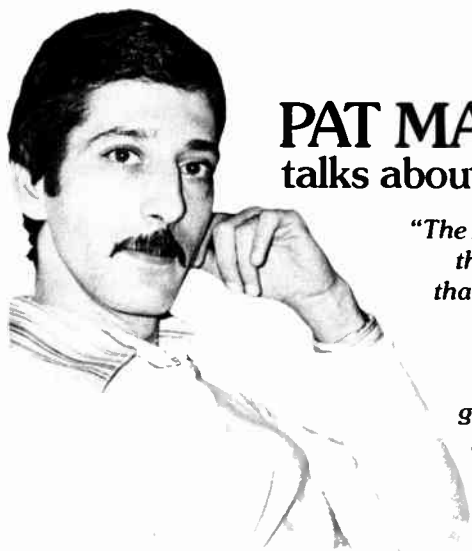
"One reason we record for J.V.C. Records is the quality of their product. All their records are pressed on virgin vinyl. Many of the records pressed here in the United States are pressed on a lower grade of vinyl. People wonder why their records pop and crackle after they're played several times; it's due to the quality of vinyl. Virgin vinyl records are closer to the direct-to-disc sound, with full fidelity in both the low and high frequencies."

While in high school, the young musician fell under the magic of John Coltrane. "It was more than his mastery and technical fluency, it was the way in which he used the instrument to sing. He communicated on a very spiritual level. I think he would have obtained the same level of communication had he played trumpet or guitar. The depth of his expression affected me much more than his physical ability to play, although I got into that too. It's what he chose to do with the tremendous ability he had. I always felt his heart and soul in whatever he played."

During his second year of study at the Berklee School of Music, at age 19, Ernie was asked to join Buddy Rich's big band. He remembers, "I really wanted to get out and do some serious fulltime playing. At Berklee I was doing club dates around the Boston area at night, doing my homework on the breaks, and waking at seven each morning to go to class. So when Buddy asked me to go out with the band I was ready."

"Looking back, I sometimes feel that I should have finished out my studies and gotten my harmony and writing skills more together. Now that I'm writing more I have to go back and fill in some of the blank spots. It's always that way though. Things are never exactly right. If I had stayed in school and not gone out with Buddy I might never have come to L.A. and done the things I've done."

"In time, everything comes to balance out."



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CAUGHT!

LESTER BOWIE'S SHO' NUFF ORCHESTRA

SYMPHONY SPACE
NEW YORK CITY

The premiere of Lester Bowie's 59 piece Sho' Nuff Orchestra showcased both the trumpeter-composer's remarkable talents and those of the participating musicians. Arthur Blythe, Oliver Lake, James Newton, George Lewis, Joseph Bowie, Frank Wright, and a multitude of others who have been active in this decade's musical experiments all made valuable contributions to the evening's two concerts. They produced a unified and striking sound, avoiding the chaos that could occur with a group of this size.

As in Bowie's small group performances, the music delighted, amused, provoked, and most of all, stimulated the listener's emotions and intellect. Textural and timbral variety abounded. A super-charged *I Got Rhythm* was preceded by a spatially-conceived exchange between the saxophones, trumpets, and trombones. The three instrumental groups—placed in various locations in the theater's balcony—first played soft, almost chorale-like harmonies. Soon, however, sharp blasts darted back and forth among them, as the players conversed with one another.

There was also a rocking, earthy solo by John Stubblefield, during which all of the brass and reed musicians (except the tenor saxophonist and Bowie) walked around the theater, playing a joyous cacophony of riffs, screams, shouts, etc. David Murray and Frank Lowe even paraded down the center aisle on their knees in rhythm and blues influenced fashion. (Lowe later played an absorbing solo, blending contemporary popping sounds with references to the past saxophone masters.) There was also a skillful exchange by the five trap drummers and two percussionists, show-

casing the musicians' individual talents as well as creating many fascinating multi-layered rhythms.

In addition to conducting the score-less group through his own compositions and arrangements, Bowie played several sparkling solos. The trumpeter's range of expression, imagination and technique were all masterfully blended into an absorbing and invigorating delight. Exploring an eclectic palette of styles and textures, he molded complementary and/or contrasting sounds into a satisfying musical experience. A Spanish-tinged passage—a mood that the trumpeter has been frequently exploring as of late—was extraordinarily beautiful, for both its melodic content and sensitive phrasing.

Lester Bowie's Sho' Nuff Orchestra—like Sun Ra and His Solar Arkestra, the Globe Unity Orchestra, and other bands—demonstrates the viability of large ensembles in contemporary improvised music. The group also provides a continuity with the big bands of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s that added much to jazz's heritage. One eagerly awaits future performances by this dynamic and extraordinary ensemble.

—clifford jay safane

SAL NISTICO QUARTET

JAZZ LOFT
NEW YORK CITY

Personnel: Nistico, tenor sax; Mike Abene, piano; Michael Moore, bass; Joe La Barbera, drums.

Nistico is best remembered for his years as a prime soloist in Woody Herman's band. In the early '60s, he was a member of the Jazz Brothers, a group led by two youngsters named Chuck and Gap Mangione. While his career has never really gotten off the ground like the Mangiones', Nistico is still a player to reckon with, as witnessed at an intimate Manhattan loft called Jazz Loft.

Nistico loves bebop, and thus Parker's *Air Conditioning* served as the opener. Although a mike wasn't set up for him until the next tune, Nistico's thick tenor sound filled the room

anyway. His solo offered no tricks or concessions to more modern stylings; it was just well-conceived, knowledgeably formed bop, sincerely and fervently played. Abene, Moore and La Barbera also amply displayed their facility for Bird's music. On *Softly As In A Morning Sunrise*, Nistico did inject mild Coltrane-sounding tonal nuances into his playing, and they added an extra spice to an attention-demanding performance. Abene and Moore were exceptional here, Abene in a stabbing, variegated solo, and Moore in weaving duet with Nistico during a soothing lay-out by piano and drums. Musicians have an affinity with certain tunes, and Nistico has one for *You Stepped Out Of A Dream*. His solo was surging and full-bodied at a feverish pace, never letting up and moving continually into new areas of exploration. Abene was inspired too, in a toying, tangential way, leaping in and out of the tune's harmonic pathway surely and effectively. Surprisingly, the weakest Nistico occurred on *My Old Flame*. Sal recorded a mature, distinctive version in 1961 at the age of 22 (a date with Nat Adderley and Barry Harris called *Heavyweights*), but at Jazz Loft, he just skimmed the surface, occasionally trying to open up but usually reaching a dead end or searching in vain for a resolving phrase. It was a solo that had an interesting outline but no constructive details, like an unfocused picture.

Lester Leaps In was superlative, however. Nistico's solo was flawless, swinging, Lester-guided tenor, harmonically rich and rhythmically loose, a string of inventive, winding choruses in logical succession. Abene's solo was characteristically eccentric and unpredictable, and a bit diffuse, but somehow concluded sensibly and gracefully. La Barbera's lengthy drum solo was a firm holding of polished technique and raw emotion, a pulsating barrage of subtly mixed rhythms.

I regretted not being able to stay later to hear singer Anita Gravine (Michael Moore's wife) join the quartet for a set. A usually reliable source described hers to be a voice of high quality, and called Abene's arrangements substantial and very original.

As for Nistico, after spending some time in Europe he is back on the scene in top form, ready to make a few waves.

—scott albin

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HOW TO

WARM UP A CHOIR

PART I

BY DR. WILLIAM L. FOWLER

In a competition for the shortest warmups of all time, the crown well might go to Paderewski, that Polish Patriarch of Pianists, whose only pause enroute to the concert grand was to warm his hands in water. But then he didn't have to tune the instrument or regulate its keyboard action. . . .

In a contest for the longest single warmup, though, the prize likely would go to Lilli Lehmann, that German Matriarch of Wagnerian Divas, who once regulated her laryngitis-stricken voice box, tuned out its croak, by vocalizing throughout an entire day.

No cold germ or flu bug ever detuned a piano or hindered its action. Yet the human voice, that delicate flesh-and-blood instrument, responds not only to illness in its owner, but also to many other physical conditions, be they negative, like fatigue and tension, or be they positive, like vigor and calmness. A prime purpose of the vocal warmup, therefore, is to ease the former and instill the latter. And while no warmup ever actually cured the common cold, a thorough one often helps mollify its discomforts through increased circulation and reduced stress.

Important as they may be to vocal soloists, warmups prove more important to vocal groups, where ensemble quality depends largely on coordination of pitch and tone and articulation among individual members.

So that everyone concerned with singing—students and teachers, soloists and coaches, choir-members and directors—might gain some specific physical and musical warmup routines, down beat sought information from two directors of the University of Miami Chamber Singers, whose success in every choral style, from madrigal to oratorio to jazz to avant-garde, attests to the benefits of its consistent warmup procedures and proves the prowess of its leaders.

Dr. Lee Kjelson, the eclectic prime-mover in Miami's vast and varied choral activities, furnished comprehensive physical and musical warmups suitable for any type of choral group. Larry Lapin, the U. of Miami's jazz choir specialist (right now on leave from Miami to lend his own touch of vocal magicianship to the U. of Colo. at Denver's *New Singers*), furnished specific jazz-choir warmups.

From Dr. Kjelson:

CONDITIONING EXERCISES

1. Stretch body gently in every direction—above head, front, right, back, left, and all diagonals.
2. Bounce from the waist—first to the front, then right, back, and left. Begin with five bounces in each direction, then four, then three, then two, then one. Then twist upper torso gently all the way around.
 - (a) Hands on waist.
 - (b) Arms extended in the same direction the body is turned.
3. Push right arm and upper torso out to the right. Then push left arm and torso to the left. Repeat to each side. Then push both arms out to their sides. Relax and repeat.
4. Raise shoulders up. Continue raising through upper arm and elbow. Drop. Repeat.
5. Roll shoulders frontwards and backwards. Bring both shoulders to the front, collapsing chest. Push shoulders back, expanding chest.
6. With arms straight out to sides, start with small arm circles, then gradually make them larger.
7. Kick legs diagonally. Start with the right leg—knee up, down, kick. Repeat eight times. Do same exercise with left leg. Keep arms out to sides.
8. Lunge to each side: Bounce, trying to push the back heel down to the floor.
9. Run in place four paces. Follow with two full knee bends. Repeat four times.
10. Pick partner of similar height and weight. Face each other, holding hands:
 - (a) Raise right leg slowly out to the right side. Hold. Swing leg around to the back, raising it gently. Bring leg through to the front with knee bent. Open the knee out to the right side. Slowly straighten leg. Hold. Drop leg slowly to the ground. Repeat exercise with left leg.
 - (b) Keeping the back straight, one person drops down slowly to the count of ten, holding occasionally on the way down. Then the same person drops back, again slowly, pushing knees to the ground and head to the floor with the back now arched. The same person then returns to the stooping position, back straight, then rises up slowly, again stopping along the way. Partner repeats exercise.
11. With feet far apart and arms out to the sides, bend knees, keeping a straight back. Bend over to the front. Straighten legs. Bend legs. Straighten back to upright position. Stand up.
12. With feet slightly apart and arms above the head, twist to the right, touch right ankle, toe, heel and floor between legs. Stand up, then repeat exercise on the left side.
13. Neck stretches:
 - (a) Drop head to the front, chin to chest and shoulders back.
 - (b) Push right ear to right shoulder, then gently pull left shoulder down.
 - (c) Let head drop to the back, mouth open and shoulders up.
 - (d) Push left ear to left shoulder, then gently pull right shoulder down.
 - (e) Circle head around slowly in each direction.
 - (f) Nod a big YES with the head.

- (g) Shake a big NO with the head.
14. Make faces and stretch mouth while shaking arms and hands.

RELAXATION EXERCISES

- For breathing and for ease through register changes:
At *andante* tempo and without exhaling between breaths, breathe in on the *and* of each beat for eight counts. Hold breath for one count, then glissando from highest note in individual's range to lowest, expelling air gradually. Vary by changing vowels in the glissando. Use a slower tempo to demand a deeper impulsion of air.
- Form a line and massage the neck and shoulders of the person directly in front. About face and repeat.

INDIVIDUAL WARMUPS DONE COLLECTIVELY (Individuals drop out when out of their ranges)

- For focus: Using *myime* with forward placement and exaggerating the vowel, y, (to loosen the jaw), sing an arpeggio, repeating the word on each note, but opening to *myah* on the top note.
- Upon the following, use vowels preceded by a plosive consonant, such as *bee* or *poh*:



- Vary the following, using different vowels and articulations or combinations of articulations, like *bee* vowel, staccato for the eighth-note triplets and legato for the quarter-note triplets, and vice versa. Move the exercise up or down by half steps and incorporate the harmonic minor scale:



- Vary the following, using different vowels, articulations, major and minor scales, starting pitches, and dynamic intensities:



- Vary the following, using different vowels, articulations, major and minor tonalities, starting pitches, and dynamic intensities:



- Individual singers use different exercises as they warm up simultaneously.

ART ENSEMBLE

sonic joss house, often fuming with aromatic incense.

Their music is as exotic and variegated as their appearance. Bowing their heads in prayer, the Art Ensemble commences with an extended clattering of little instruments, setting the tone and drawing the audience into their world. From there they embark on an unbroken series of structured episodes (not "free jazz"), including tightly charted passages, long stretches of group and solo improvisation, and a great many interludes of half-notated, half-impromptu interplay. They span the emotional spectrum, expressing rage, joy, melancholy, humor, tenderness, sarcasm, exultation. Sound and silence are weighted equally—furious outpourings alternate with periods of quiet reflection, players leap passionately into the fray, then lay out and observe. Recordings hardly do them justice—how does one tape a pantomime routine?

Their musical sources are equally eclectic. The entire "jazz" tradition is central, but gospel, blues, African, Oriental, Mid Eastern, and even classical influences abound, although Jarman specifically disavowed the latter in a recent interview. They have recorded examples of dixieland, r&b, rock, bebop, gos-

pel, baroque, waltz, and even march music, sometimes in seriousness, often in lampoon form.

Their treatment of rock on the hilarious *Rock Out*, from *Message To Our Folks*, is particularly devastating. An electric guitar squawks out a trivial little vamp with tedious monotony, punctuated by the irreverent tweakings of a bike horn, until at length the musicians abandon the effort and begin to blow for real, as though this music were beneath even parody. Some jokes do not survive on wax. At one concert the ensemble concluded a passage on a somber and dignified note; then, with great unction, Joseph and Roscoe harnessed themselves to a pair of huge bass saxophones and paused portentously. The mood of hushed expectation was rudely shattered as a great flatulent raspberry issued from the twin behemoths, much to the disconcertion of the audience.

The currents of African and Eastern spiritualism figure heavily in the group's world outlook. The African attitude that music is inseparable from life and nature is evident in the mimicry of environmental sounds—bird calls, insects, forest sounds, train whistles—which infuses their music. The

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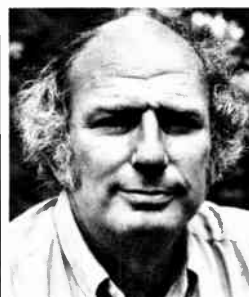
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continued on page 40

African derivation of music from vocal effects is manifest in the many spoken, shouted, or chanted interjections, as well as in the vocalized inflections of the horns. The percussive sense is pervasive through drums, horns and bass alike. The Eastern conception of the mystical unity of all being is reflected in the organic unity with which the group integrates its disparate influences, in the ebb and flow of their seamless programs, and more directly in their thrushlike flutings, clacking wood-blocks, and sonorous gongs. The total effect is hypnotic, ethereal—one is lifted out of mundane reality onto a higher plane.

Evidently their name reflects prestige on company rosters, for despite their uncompromisingly anti-commercial stance, the Art Ensemble has been well represented on vinyl, with a score of group sessions and as many individual albums to their credit. Beginning with such independent Chicago outfits as Delmark and Nessa, they have been featured on American and European labels both large and small, including Atlantic, Prestige, Arista, and now ECM (*Nice Guys* promises to be a radical departure from producer Manfred Eicher's impressionistic "Euro-jazz" sound). Delmark recently issued a tour de force, *Live At Mandel Hall* (University of Chicago), recorded at a triumphant concert appearance in 1972.

Still more recently, the Art Ensemble has released the debut package of their own AECO line, including solo albums by each member and a live ensemble recording at the 1974 Montreux Jazz Festival with featured

guest Muhai Richard Abrams. Although they have no plans to abandon other outlets, the group is allowed under the AECO label unprecedented freedom in the presentation, promotion, and packaging of their own product.

It was with some trepidation that I approached the Art Ensemble for an interview. At the AACM's tenth anniversary celebration, Jarman had acknowledged the intimidating effect the group seems to have on onlookers. Ultra-hip trappings aside, the musicians have an adamant aversion to being categorized, defined or pinned down. Like that other "devout musician," Charlie Parker, they are apt to turn questions aside with other questions or witticisms. When I mentioned some comments by AACM violinist Leroy Jenkins in a British publication, they responded that "everyone is entitled to his own opinion," and that such "gossip questions" were of no interest to them. Nor were they eager to discuss the meager houses they have drawn at recent Chicago appearances, dismissing the issue as "political."

Another "political" question concerned the predominantly white audiences for an art form associated from its inception with black nationalist causes. "America is predominantly white," replied Lester, "and in any audience we've ever had, the proportions are about the same as those of the population in that particular location."

"If you play at Harlem University, you get a black audience," added Moye, "and if you play at NYU, most of the people will be white."

The group was more inclined to talk about

the AECO label and their current recording activity.

"It's nothing new for us to be putting out our own label," said Moye. "Actually, the label has been in existence for about six years, at least on paper. We've been compiling and cataloguing our music ever since we've been together, but it's only now that we've been able to pull together all the necessary factors, the economic factor, the time element, etc. It's nothing really new—other people are doing it, too. It's a reaction to the situation, to the climate out there in the business world. But we're not trying to compete with the larger companies—we're just working toward getting our music out to a wider audience. Part of that is having a working relationship with the larger companies, and at the same time producing our own things without any kind of pressure."

"People are beginning to deal with this music more. All the major labels are checking out the music and making little plays. Columbia signed Arthur Blythe; people like Braxton, Oliver Lake, Henry Threadgill all have contracts of one form or another with various companies. It's all part of the growing trend for the music to get wider acceptance by the business establishment. For us to be with ECM is just a reflection of that, and it's going to continue in the years to come."

"ECM is trying to expand its market, its whole product line," said Jarman. "Manfred has produced quite a few records and he's just bored. He wants to get into different things."

Added Moye: "One of the advantages of maintaining your position over a period of time is that gradually it becomes apparent that you are the people who are occupying that position. Now we are the people who are in that position, because we have held on in the face of obstacles. It's hard to keep a group together—everybody knows what that's about—so as time goes by people begin to realize and appreciate what our music is really about."

"We aren't concerned with what's selling in the market," Lester went on. "They can sell tomatoes in the market; they can sell meat in the market; they can sell all kinds of things in the market. But we have our product, we have the music that we make, and what they sell is their business. We've learned, through all of these years, that we can survive doing what we're doing, and we don't have to care. We don't have to change our music, put a disco beat behind it to sell. What we do is what we're going to be doing, whether or not disco is in this year, or zipscro, or flipsky. We'll live—pretty well, too—and we'll have a lot of fun. But we don't mean to say that we do what we do and we shut off everything else. We feed off of life—that's why we have to work in a situation where we can live and grow."

"We've got our basic structure to the point where it continues on and people still have time to develop their own individual careers and realize some of their personal projects," said Don. "That's one of the necessary elements of a functional cooperative, to allow everyone room for personal development and expansion. But we've got a steady thing happening that continues. Each member of the group represents a wide spectrum of influences and we each do our individual things, but the music goes on. That's really what's happening."

"The idea is to continue to survive, to try to remain innovative, to be serious with our mu-

continued on page 42

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sic," Lester affirmed. "It should be evident to everyone by now that we're going to continue as a group. We've been continuing for about 15 years, so we figure that we're an institution. We are going to be around for a long time."

"It's a reflection on maturity," offered Joseph. "A person can sit around and think that the world is eternally against him and never see the sunlight, never be able to smile. By the same token, a person can see some beauty in the world and not be concerned with the petty paraphernalia of the environment. You can choose to be happy or sad—you don't have to be drug with everybody just because you're not where you think you should be."

Queried about their music and its sources, the group demurred. "Rather than say that we listen to these other musics," suggested Joseph, "it might be closer to the mark to say that we *are* these other musics and that we don't limit ourselves to a particular form. We talk about form and content and approaches to the form and to the fulfillment of the content."

"We think the music should speak for itself," added Don. "It should be pretty evident what's happening."

Lester concurred: "Music is as you hear it. It's up to the people, like you, to perceive it. Music is standardized—all music has to be rehearsed, put together, things improvised, things written, cues, dynamics, all that stuff. Standard musicianship is involved, just like any other music. Any professional musicians can do what we're doing . . . well, almost. But they could if they tried. If they just relaxed

and realized what it really was, they could deal with it."

As to the visual aspect of their performance, the members responded: "Everybody has their show. It's visual because you can see it. People have always wanted to see musicians. They've always wanted to see what Miles Davis was wearing. They wanted to see Duke Ellington, James Brown. They wanted to see the minstrel show."

Of the critics, they opined: "There has been something in the air to the effect that critics have to approach the music from some other angles. In fact, there's been a feeling that musicians are going to start rating critics, having a Musician's Poll of the critics, just to see where the critics are at. That's one of our projects."

Jarman summed it up. "We enjoy music and we enjoy playing it. We find it difficult to just play our greatest hits and be happy ever after. We get bored if we play the same composition two nights in a row."

"We try to keep the music up to date," Don elaborated. "New arrangements, changing it around, making it fresh. If you do the same arrangement over and over again, the same notes, same changes, same breaks, it's reflected in the music—you can hear it. It might be tight, but the cats just won't be into it. So we try to inject that freshness into the music. That's why we don't play a composition in its entirety—we might play different segments of it. You have to be continually changing things around."

"It's the life cycle," concluded Joseph. "Everything is continuously moving, evolving, developing and growing." db

ment. The audience is becoming hardcore and is gradually increasing its size. There is no money to take out ads or to call attention to a particular show. Perhaps if we had a publicity budget that was larger than our current budget—we have just over \$150,000 now, *total*—that would help because out of this publicity budget we might be able to do an awareness campaign. And here is where a corporation could jump in and really do themselves, the community, and the music a service. By giving \$400,000 so you can do shows and then giving \$800,000 so that they [America] know the shows are coming on and that they can't pass up this show because it's extra special. That would help tremendously."

Additional funding would also help Owens meet another goal. "I think musicians are terribly underpaid. We terribly underpay them . . . it's a token but it's the best we can do at this point. We all know that they should be paid more and we are working to pay them more. I think budget increases have to come in that area and in the area of concert production so that it's an NPR concert, so that we have a little bit more control and creativity over the concert at hand. This is the direction we have to go if we want to maintain high quality programming."

Owens wants to reach out in other directions as well. "In every community in this country there are hundreds of jazz players who are good and never left home—even beyond Tal Farlow and Cal Collins and people like that. Somehow we have to tap that resource and bring some people out who may not want to leave their community but at the same time deserve to be heard. That's where we can be of service—by becoming a springboard for jazz artists, because they are not going to get that break from the record companies. But they can get that break from us."

Owens knows for certain (and for now) that one more staff assistant is on the way. The impact will be to improve the quality of the current format. "The format will pretty much stay as is, that is, with the addition of one direction," Owens stated. "We want to do the usual kind of jazz concerts but with a deeper biographical treatment of a particular artist. In the spring we will be doing a show on Charles Mingus. The idea is to create a sound portrait, a moving portrait of Mingus' life and music. There will be similar features on Irene Kral and Larry Young. We can only do this when we have time to work on the shows. That's one reason for bringing on another person. The other is the creation of more specials."

If things were as they should be, *Jazz Alive!* would be on the air every night. It's a damn special program for a sometimes popular art that is becoming an endangered species. The diversity and quality of the music now being made certainly justifies a throwback to the days when radio helped make jazz a national music. If you don't believe what I say, find out when your local NPR affiliate broadcasts *Jazz Alive!* and take the time to check out the spring season. You won't be disappointed.

[See *News*, db 4/19/79, for *Jazz Alive!*'s spring schedule. Because NPR makes tapes of the shows available for two-week periods, it is necessary to check with your local NPR station to determine exactly when a show will be aired.] db

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"Can you imagine George Benson accepting the Grammy with his producer? On that tune you need a producer? There's nothing there, so where does the producer get off with the credit?

"I can understand a producer who's made a Norman Connors, 'cause Norman Connors has nothing going for him *but* the producer. *That's* a producer, someone who takes nothing and makes something out of it.

"Right now we don't have too many youngsters who really want to deal with jazz. It's very difficult for them. Record companies are not buying it. Black people are just out of it completely—they don't even have a chance to do anything creative. A black artist, playing r&b or whatever, has to have a hit record first before he can cut an album. With a white artist a record company will invest money in the whole album first, then they pick out the hit record. That's the difference.

"I find more young white kids listening to jazz. Black people didn't do it in their schools. We have a lot of black colleges that we have never perpetuated jazz in. We perpetuated Bach, Beethoven and the Gospel. And then the kids went home and listened to their radios.

"There are about 100 black colleges in the country. I can't get into Howard, Fisk or Morehouse. But I can get into Dartmouth and

Harvard. I did four days of workshops at Harvard with Dizzy. I can get into Goddard College, the University of Massachusetts, Brown, Northwestern University. I can get into those colleges, but I can't get into the black colleges and the black colleges don't want to know from nothin'. I have been preaching it for a long time and the only way I can deal with it is to tell them point blank that they *are not taking care of business.*

"Everywhere I've worked in the past three years it's been to 90% white audiences. Jazz can no longer depend on black people for support. In the '50s all we had was black people and we worked for *them.*

"I'm going to tell you something else that had a strange effect on black people which turned them off: free jazz. Nobody admits that. But free jazz and the late years of Coltrane turned black people away from the music. They did not absorb it. They cannot relate to free, non-rhythmic music.

"The environment for white people is a little easier because of the classics. Modern classical music is more atonal, more dissonant. Bartok and Stravinsky wrote some great stuff in 1890, 1900, and white people have been listening to it for years.

"Black people are used to rhythm, African rhythm. Rhythms. Tempo. Beat. The moment the music got free you gathered more whites and lost blacks, who went to organ players. That was the last resort for jazz—Groove Holmes, Jimmy McGriff. All those organ players came into existence in the '60s, remember that? They had tenor players and a beat going, something they could deal with.

That's when 'soul' became a thing.

"Then, to defend their free thing, black artists called their music 'Black Music.' Now 'Black Music' encompasses a whole lot of black music. It's got to be jazz, gospel, blues. But we put down the word 'jazz.' We wasted so much time messing with the word that we didn't do anything with the music.

"All of a sudden everybody was a genius. Everybody created something. Everybody was a 'leader.' He was the first one who did this. He was the beginning of that.

"And at this time, all the white critics jumped on Ornette Coleman and said, 'You are the beginning of something.' In the '40s, when Charlie Parker came on the scene they said, 'Oh no, this ain't so hip.' But they weren't going to take any chances this time. They thought Ornette Coleman had it.

"But rhythmically, I can't put the value on it, because he has not gone the root route. You've got to take it to the people you're dealing with—black people. Let them give a stamp first before you turn it over. That's where I got my training. Black people taught me everything in the '50s."

Through her music, a joyful reaffirmation of those roots, Betty Carter wins the battles which have kept the vital jazz tradition alive. Perhaps she discloses the secret to the timelessness of her personal art, and the secret which keeps her music fresh for an ever growing audience when she says, "If you're sitting in that audience ready to fight me from the very beginning, I'm going to have a hard time getting to you. But if you've got a heart at all, I'm going to get to it." db

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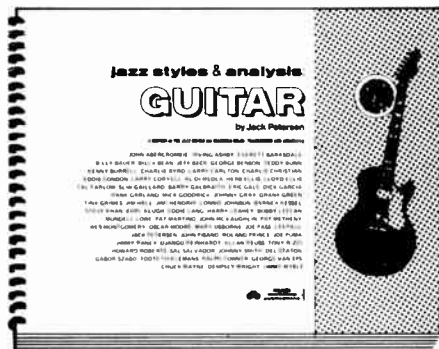


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db AWARDS

continued from page 20

soloists in the top groups were very good, mature, swinging—very professional. When the flute player [Nelson Rangell] from Denver develops his own sound, watch out! If you paid money to hear any of the winners in a club, you wouldn't be disappointed."

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Chuck's Steak House (La Jolla): Zzaj (Fri.-Sun.); Dance of the Universe Orchestra (Mon.-Thurs.); call 454-5325.
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KFSD (94.1 FM): Jazz (Sat., 10 pm).
KSDS (88.3 FM): All jazz.

LAS VEGAS

Sahara Tahoe: George Benson (4/20-22); call 588-6211.
Tender Trap: Gus Mancuso/Frank Collette; call 361-6905.
Tony Baltimore's: Pat Sherrod & Friends; call 876-4134.
Sands: Mills Brothers (5/16-29); Bob Sims Trio/Charlie Shaffer Trio with Carol Stevens (lounge); call 735-9111.
Tropicana: Bonnie Graham (Sun.); Chris Fio Rito (Mon.-Sat.); call 736-2022.
The Improvisation: Budd Friedman (Mon.); jazz call 737-0805.
Firestone Inn: Hoyt Henry (Fri.-Sat.); call 647-1666.
Landmark: Frank Filia Trio w/Jan Silvers Sherrod (lounge); call 734-9110.
Jody's Lounge: Jazz jam (Sun., 4 pm); call 451-9971.
KORK (920 AM): "Jazz Album Countdown/Orlando Bonner Show" (Sun., midnight).
KDWN (720 AM): "Jim Flint jazz show" (6 pm).
Musicians Union: Big Bands (Thurs. & Fri., 10 pm); call 739-9369.
Las Vegas Jazz Society: 734-8556

KANSAS CITY

Century II (Wichita): 8th Annual Wichita Jazz Festival (4/20-22) featuring Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan, Dexter Gordon, Roland Hanna, Clark Terry, Carl Fontana and more; write 1737 S. Mission Rd., Wichita, Kansas 67207 or call (316) 683-2284 for further information.

Pogo's: Pat Metheny (4/16, 8 pm).
Signboard (Crown Center): John Lyman Quartet jazz jams (Fri. & Mon., 4:30-7:30 pm).
Nick's: Frank Smith Trio (Mon.-Sat., 9 pm-1 am); jazz jam featuring Claude "Fiddler" Williams (Sun., 5-9 pm).
Mark IV: Jimmy McConnell Quintet (Mon.-Sat., 7:30-11:30 pm).
Buttonwood Tree: Roy Searcy (Tue.-Sat., 7:30-11:30 pm).
Paul Gray's Jazz Place (Lawrence): Occ. name acts; Paul Gray's Gaslight Gang (Fri. & Sat.).
Alameda Plaza Roof: John Elliott Trio (Mon. & Tue.); Steve Miller Trio w/Julie Turner (Wed.-Sat.).
Ramada Inn Central: Pete Eye Trio featuring Milt Abel (Mon.-Sat.).
Ernie's Catfish Hollow (Topeka): Ernie Douglas Trio (Fri. & Sat.); open jazz jam (Wed.); occ. name acts.
U.M.K.C. (Pierson Hall): U.M.K.C. Jazz Band featuring Scott Robinson (4/29, 7:30 pm).

DENVER

Clyde's Pub: Name jazz featured; call 425-1093.
Blue Note (Boulder): Name jazz featured; call 443-0523.
Executive Tower Inn: Ralph Sutton (Tue.-Sat.); call 571-0300.
KADZ (105.1 FM): Jazz 24 hours; call 755-1213.
KCFR (90.1 FM): Denver public radio features NPR's "Jazz Alive"; call 753-3437.

CLEVELAND

Palace Theatre (Playhouse Square): Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson, Paul Smith Trio (5/8-13).
Northeast Ohio Jazz Society: Membership and information available; call 429-1513 during business hours.

DETROIT

Dummy George's: Charles Green Quartet (4/20 & 21); Ronnie McNeil and Instant Groove (Wed.); jam session (Tue.); name jazz policy starts in late April with Hank Crawford, Gloria Lynne, Jimmy Smith, Lorez Alexander being scheduled; call 341-2700.
Baker's Keyboard Lounge: Horace Silver Quintet (4/17-4/22); Mose Allison Trio (4/24-4/29); Eddie Jefferson with the Richie Cole Quintet (5/8-5/13); Joe Pass, solo guitar (5/15-5/20); call 864-1200.
Cobb's Corner: Lyman Woodard (Fri. & Sat.); Prismatic Band (Wed.); Marcus Belgrave and the New Detroit Jazz Ensemble (Sun. through 4/29); call 832-7223.
Downstairs Pub: Joe Chila and Friends (Fri. & Sat. through 4/28); Prismatic Band (5/4 & 5/5; 5/11 & 5/12); call 961-6108.
Punch & Judy Theatre (Grosse Pointe): Pat Metheny (4/19); Eddie Harris (4/25); Don Pullen/Charlie Haden (5/3); Stephane Grappelli (5/20); call 343-0484.
Orchestra Hall/Paradise Theatre: Illinois Jacquet, Arnett Cobb (4/15, tentative); Sam Sanders and Visions; Oakland University Jazz Ensemble (4/27); call 871-3644.
Music Hall: Cleo Laine/John Dankworth (4/24-29); call 963-6943.
Alger Theatre: Stan Kenton (4/21); Buddy Rich (5/5); call 884-6500.
Center Stage (Canton): Maynard Ferguson (4/28); call 455-3010.
Delta Lady (Ferndale): Joe Loduca and Friends (4/20-21); Prismatic Band (4/27-28); Tres Vida (5/4-5); All Directions (5/11-12); jam session every Sunday with Wendell Harrison, Harold McKinney; call 545-5483.
Quarterback Lounge (Brownstown): Sheila Landis Quartet (Mon.); 782-4575.
The Gnome: Charles Boles (Wed. & Thurs.); local jazz groups (Fri. & Sat.); call 833-0120.
Soup Kitchen: Local jazz and blues weekends;

call 259-1374.
Bob & Rob's (Madison Heights): Lenore Paxton (Tue.-Sat.); call 541-9213.
db's Club (Hyatt Regency, Dearborn): Oscar Peterson with Joe Pass, Nils-Henning Orsted-Pederson (4/16-21); name popular acts; call 593-1234.
Ann Arbor Inn (Ann Arbor): Ron Brooks Trio (The Pub, Fri. & Sat., The Sandalwood Lounge, Sun.); call 769-9500.
The Earle (Ann Arbor): Ron Brooks Trio (Tue. & Wed.); Stuart Cunningham, solo piano (Mon. & Thurs.); call 995-0217.
Lido on the Lakes (St. Clair Shores): Dixieland with Dixie Belle, Chet Bogan and the Wolverine Jazz Band (Tue.).
Blind Pig (Ann Arbor): Local blues and jazz groups (Fri. & Sat.); Boogie Woogie Red (Mon.); call 994-4780.
Showcase Jazz (Michigan State University, East

Lansing): Detroit Jazz Artists Tour (4/13 & 14); Oliver Lake and Ntozake Shange (4/20 & 21, tentative); John McLaughlin (5/3); Earl Klugh (5/12, tentative); call (517) 355-7675.
Mr. Flood's (Ann Arbor): Local jazz and blues; call 994-5940.
Del Rio (Ann Arbor): Local jazz Sunday afternoons.
WJZZ (105.9 FM): Jazz 24 hours daily.

LOS ANGELES

Concerts By The Sea (Redondo Beach) (open Thurs.-Sun. only): Cal Tjader (4/17-22); Milt Jackson, (5/3-6); L.A. Four (5/10-13); Willie Bobo (5/17-20); 379-4998.
Jimmy Smith's Supper Club: Jimmy Smith (Thurs.-Sun.); 760-1444.

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