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# down beat

For Contemporary Musicians

\*\*\*\*\*

**Stanley Turrentine**

*Life In The Sax Track*

**Bobby McFerrin**

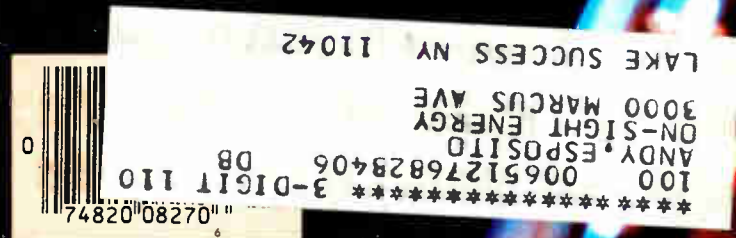
*Amazing Voice*

**Emily Remler**

*Uncompromising Guitarist*

**Paul Wertico**

*Drum Obsession*





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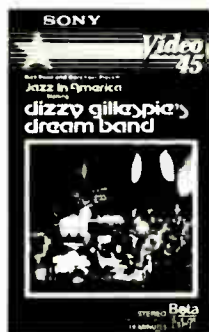




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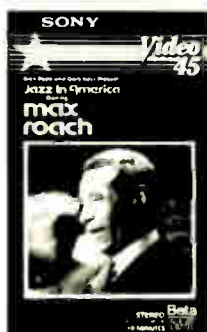
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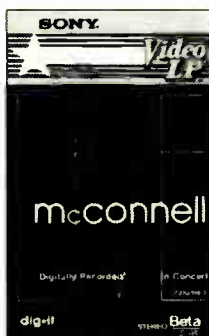
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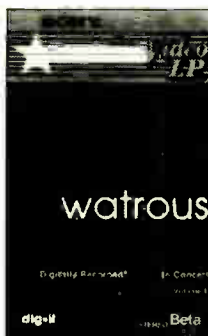
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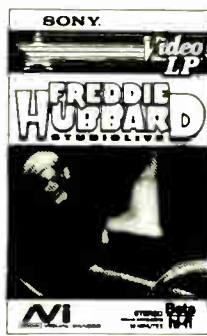
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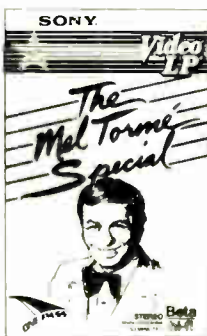
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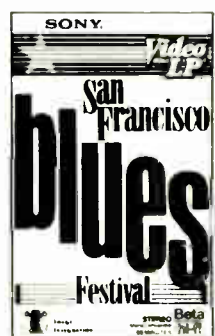
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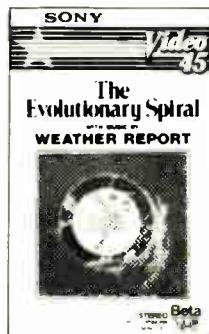
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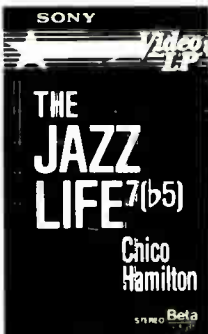
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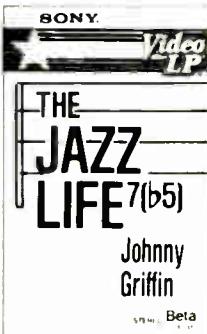
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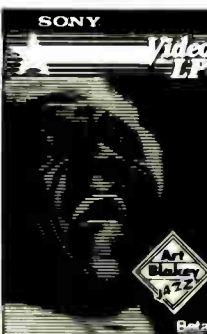
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### 20 **BOBBY McFERRIN: THE VOICE**

Not *just* a voice, that is—but *the* voice, a voice like no other; the voice destined to break through to audiences on all sides of the musical fence. Michael Bourne confronts The Voice.

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Most young jazz guitarists stand in the shadow of Wes Montgomery, and acknowledge his influence on their playing. Unwilling to remain a disciple, though, Remler is looking to branch out and find her own style, as she tells Julie Coryell.

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*Cover photo of Stanley Turrentine by Mitchell Seidel.*

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Bobby McFerrin



Emily Remler



Paul Wertico



Larry Novak

**down beat**  
For Contemporary Musicians

MAY 1985  
VOLUME 52 NO. 5

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DB/MAY

Most **db** readers have probably seen a number of those fabulously successful and popular Lite Beer commercials on television. The formula should be familiar by now: take a well-known ex-athlete—Dick Butkus, Bubba Smith, Billy Martin, John Madden, Bert Jones, L. C. Greenwood, and so on—or an amusing unrecognizable one—Marv Thronberry, pool shooter Steve Mizerak, champion surfers, female body builders, and the like—and gently nudge their idiosyncrasies with a playful elbow in their ribs while selling beer. While some of the commercials have been genuinely humorous, a few could conceivably be considered demeaning—especially in the Butkus/Smith “dumb jock” category.

The latest addition to these commercials features—will miracles never cease?—a jazz musician instead of an athlete. This is no actor pretending to be a musician; it's saxophonist/tubaist Howard Johnson, in this case wielding a hefty baritone sax and belling up to the bar to order the sponsor's brew. Nothing wrong with that—in fact, it could be a

great step forward in mass-market advertising, proving that non-rock musicians have been accorded the same stature as athletes in terms of audience visibility and potential selling power. One wonders, though, if the ad couldn't have been re-designed to show the musician in a less-stereotyped, more favorable light.

The gist of the commercial has Johnson rapping in a slangy dialect of apparent “jazzese” which needs a (white) bartender to translate for the general public. While it's true that the different sexes, different ethnic groups, and even different types of work have their own, private, particular jargon—does anyone who doesn't own a computer understand *any* of that computer lingo, for example; I don't—and it's further true that “hip” talk has been a jazz tradition almost since the music's inception, it's possible that such a depiction reinforces some damaging stereotypes of the music and the musicians who play it.

What is suggested is that jazz musicians speak a language unintelligible to the man on the street, and thus are in

some basic way *different* from you and I. This leads to the implication that the *music* the jazz musician plays is also unintelligible to the average listener—in other words, a difficult, complex accumulation of sounds that need to be explained instead of just felt and enjoyed, or that one needs to be an insider, with a private understanding of this secret language. Such a false belief sets up musical barriers instead of knocking them down, and works to keep jazz in its misunderstood, mis-labeled role of a minority-favored music.

The commercial may have been intended as a spoof on musical *and* racial caricatures. Perhaps. Nevertheless, the choice of Johnson—a fine, learned musician and an articulate man (see **db**, Jan. '83)—to portray this outsider is puzzling. Despite his talent, Johnson is not a “name” musician outside of the New York music scene, and wouldn't be recognized by most tv watchers across America. Did other, more well-known, musicians turn down the role? If so, might this be the reason why? **db**

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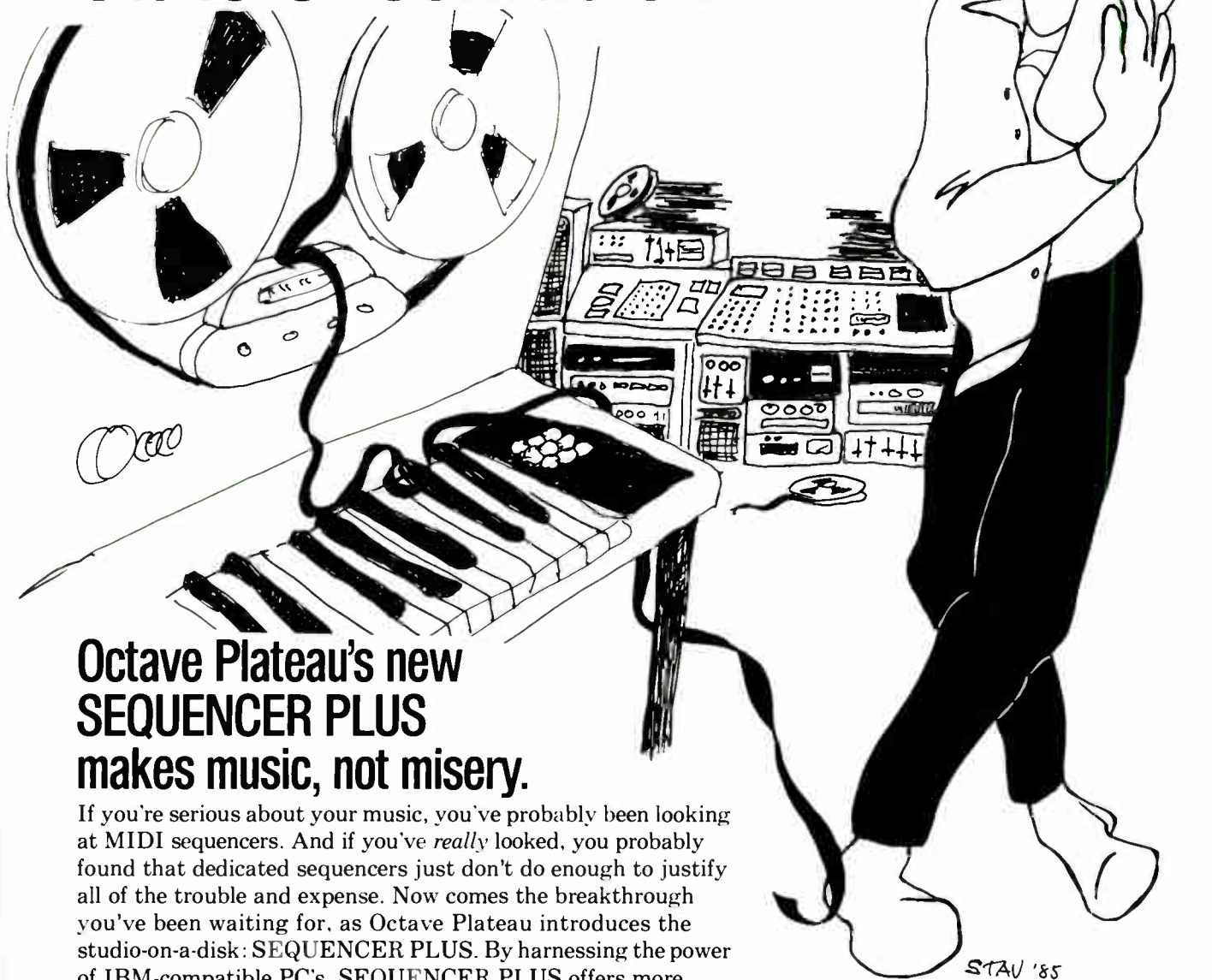
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# CHORDS & DISCORDS

## DeJohnette deja vu

I enjoyed Howard Mandel's article about the world's greatest drummer (Jack DeJohnette, *db*, Feb. '85). In that article, Mandel quotes DeJohnette as saying that he wrote *New Orleans Strut* for *Album Album* on purpose. Well, in June 1975 a tune *New Orleans Strut* (also composed by DeJohnette) was recorded for what turned out to be Cannonball Adderley's last album, *Lovers* (Fantasy 9505), and it sounds very similar to, and just as good as, the *Album Album* version. Remember now, fellas?

Greg Turner

Cincinnati

## Ars longa, speed brevis

What a complete surprise to see John McLaughlin on the cover of your March issue (*db*, Mar. '85). With the treatment that he gets from music critics in general, in this throw-away society that glorifies an artist one year and puts him out on the street the next, [your coverage] is indeed welcome. A lot of criticism has been dished out (i.e. same old stuff, nothing new) rather unfairly. Granted, there are similarities in McLaughlin's approach and theme (stylistic), but what he has

done in the last few years has not been stagnant. In my opinion, it is more refined, more complex, and just as soulful. It is not all fast, uptempo material, and isn't all flash—besides, speed can be exciting, you know. Religious aspirations seem to have hurt various musicians' popularity (Bob Dylan, for example). I can only hope that people put these biases aside and appreciate all gifted musicians for their work and not their beliefs.

Vilnis Gredzens

Minneapolis

## Brotherly love

Thanks for the informative and illuminating article on the Neville Brothers (*db*, Mar. '85). I first heard them in New Orleans during the 1984 Jazz and Heritage Festival, at a midnight show on a riverboat, along with Fats Domino and Dr. John. I went to hear my idol, the Fat Man, and lost my heart to the Nevilles. The music had a sense of another place and time, unaffected by trends and commercial considerations. It made a lasting impression on me.

I saw them again in the fall of '84 in Palo Alto, CA. They gave an electrifying

performance that left me exhilarated, exhausted, and renewed. It was overwhelming, too much! The new album is dynamite!

Melvin Hodges

San Francisco

## Celluloid heroes

I just received the Mar. '85 issue of *db*, and noticed in the Potpourri section that Anita O'Day's bio is going to be filmed. That's really super; however it seems that a year or so ago it was also reported that Richard Pryor was going to star in *The Charlie Parker Story*. Wouldn't it be wonderful if it were released this year, which marks 30 years of Bird's physical departure (his spirit is very much alive)?

Robert Gonzalez

Houston

## Fela update

Thanks for Bill Milkowski's review of the latest Fela Kuti LP *Live In Amsterdam* (*db*, Feb. '85). Too often Fela's work is overlooked because it doesn't fit easily into any established category. Thanks too for having an open-enough mind not to judge the music against jazz standards, for despite his obvious jazz influences, Fela is not playing jazz.

While I'm praising you, I'd like to correct one error. Milkowski states that the two studio LPs recently re-released by Capitol, *Black President* and *Original Sufferhead*, both date from 1977. This is incorrect. Except for side two of *Black President*, which probably does date from '77, all material dates from about '81, the year of their original European release. The recordings are not well documented, but having a fairly complete collection of Fela LPs—about 20—dating from the early '70s to the present, I can tell solely with my ears that it's all '80s material. The quieter percussion dynamics, the intensive integration of the female chorus into the arrangements, the use of a separate rhythm piano, and Fela's more fluid sax playing (since lost when his hand was broken by his keepers in a recent prison stay) are all clues. And Fela's son, Femi, is listed on alto, and he has only been playing with his father about four or five years. Finally, the classic *I.T.T.* from *Black President* was performed during Fela's late '81 European tour, and he is known for playing only new material in concert.

It is unfortunate that we will not be able to expect much new music from Fela in the near future. As you may know, he is serving a five-year prison sentence in Nigeria for some rather minor and questionable currency violations.

Sean M. Kelly

Cleveland

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### **Axe and you'll receive**

Enjoyed your profile on Simon & Bard (db, Feb. '85). Can anyone tell me the name—and where I can purchase—the reed instrument that Michael Bard is playing in the photo on page 45? Thanks. Marty Howe Fairfield, IA

*Bard's blowing a Lyricon, but unless Tom Scott's pawned his it'll be tough to find one; the company went out of business some time back.*

—Ed.

### **Simply perfect**

I began listening to jazz the same year I discovered about girls, an incredible 34 years ago, and the flame still burns. I took two summer holidays in New York City, in 1957 and '58, and followed the Miles Davis Quintet, first with Rollins, then with Coltrane. The change divided the town into two camps, with the pro-Rollins in majority at first. It was possible to get through a night at the Café Bohemia from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. on two daiquiries at \$1.25 each.

Within walking distance the Vanguard offered Bill Evans, 26-years-old, playing to himself in a tweed jacket. Next time I heard Bill was in Stockholm in 1963, his teeth falling out, and speaking to nobody. He played like a man possessed by beauty, though. I always liked him best with no-nonsense rhythm sections like the one he took to Sweden, Chuck Israels/Larry Bunker. What can you say? Perfection is so rare, and it sounds so simple. Bill Evans was a teacher to all musicians.

I have read **down beat** since the '50s, and I am glad to see that the purists are still in charge. The tape recorder revolutionized interviews, and I especially enjoy these. They confirm what is evident in the music: jazz musicians are often warm, intelligent people, and they express themselves well in **down beat**.

Jan Dahlstedt Santa Cruz, Brazil

### **Help wanted**

In the movie *Moscow On The Hudson*, there was a scene at a night club when a fine tenor saxist played for about a minute. I didn't catch his name as he was introduced to the character played by Robin Williams.

I would not only like to know his name, but also if he has recorded any albums. Bill Caron Sedona, AZ

*We didn't catch it either. Can any readers help?* —Ed.

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**BENSON BOPS BENEFIT:** Ethiopian famine relief efforts recently got a helping hand from guitarist George Benson (right) and his group during some weekend afternoon benefit performances at the Blue Note in New York's Greenwich Village. Pianist Chick Corea (left), the club's featured performer that week, stopped by with drummer Lenny White to jam with Benson.

## FEST SCENE

### Fests warm up

The largest and oldest educational jazz fest in the States turns 24, as the **Reno International Jazz Festival** takes over the Reno-Sparks Convention Center 4/18-20. Over 130 bands and 30 vocal ensembles from elementary to high school level join featured artists Pieces Of A Dream, Janis Siegel, and Richie Cole for performances and workshops; info from Youth Music Foundation at (704) 786-5409.

Big bands climax the **Atlanta Arts Festival** on Piedmont Park's Premier Stage 5/19 with Grover Mitchell's Big Band, the Jazz Ambassadors of the U.S. Army Field Band, the U. of GA Jazz Band w/ Willie Thomas, the GA State Jazz Ensemble w/ Ernie Watts, the DeKalb Community College Jazz Band, and the Clark College Jazz Ensemble. Local groups will play the fest 5/11-19. Details from Susan Rosmarin at (404) 885-1125.

The **Pensacola (FL) Jazz Fest** runs 5/3-5 this year, with guests Laurindo Almeida, Buddy DeFranco, Johnny Gimple, and Frank Wess among the participants; (904) 433-8382 for the lowdown.

A few days later enjoy the fifth annual **Sarasota Jazz Festival** as it pays tribute to bassist Milt Hinton



LAUREN DEUTSCH

w/ guests Bud Freeman (above), Ralph Sutton, Peanuts Hucko, Warren Vache, Al Grey, Herb Ellis and others; dates are 5/8-10 at Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, (813) 366-1552 for further word.

Trad fans can find their fill at the 12th **Sacramento (CA) Dixieland Jazz Jubilee**. Over 70 bands from the U.S., Japan, Australia, Europe, and behind the Iron Curtain will entertain 5/24-27; (916) 372-5277 deals you the ducats.

The **Spoletto Festival USA** offers its eighth year of opera, dance, theater, and musical events 5/24-6/9; jazz proceedings include Sarah Vaughan and Sir Roland Hanna at Gaillard Municipal Auditorium 5/29; Jazz At Magnolia Gardens, a restored plantation outside Charleston with the Dirty Dozen Brass Band and Gerry Mulligan 6/1; Jaki Byard at the Garden Theatre 6/3; Abbey Lincoln at the Garden Theatre 6/5; and Oscar Peterson at Gaillard Auditorium 6/7; (803) 722-2764 for complete fest info.

## Satellite funding for jazz series

**BOSTON**—The Jazz Coalition here recently received a grant from the Satellite Program Development Fund to restore and reproduce tapes of a landmark jazz radio show co-hosted and produced by Gunther Schuller and Nat Hentoff in 1957-61.

The series, entitled *The Sound Of Jazz*, originally aired live on WBAL-FM in New York City and recently re-aired locally in the Boston area over WMBR-FM (MIT's campus station where Schuller's son George was jazz director), contains interviews and discussions between the hosts and groundbreaking artists like Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry, George Russell, Quincy Jones, and Jimmy Giuffre, as well as seminal record producers like Columbia's John Hammond and Blue Note's Alfred Lion, and knowledgeable critics like Stanley Dance and Whitney Balliett.

The 63 hour-long tapes, still in the possession of Schuller, have become brittle and fragile with age and need restoration, says

spokesperson Carolyn Kelley of the Coalition. "They need immediate preparation and transfer to save them," says Kelley, "and then they'll be produced as a new series by Sally Placksin."

Placksin, an independent radio producer whose series *American Women In Jazz* is based on her book of the same name, will choose and edit the best 25 of the tapes. Another plus will be a quarter-century reassessment in panel discussion form involving principals Schuller, Hentoff, Placksin, and guests.

Certain of the tapes will be chosen for satellite transmission free-of-charge to affiliates of National Public Radio which have satellite dishes. Arrangements for copies of the tapes may be made for other radio stations by contacting C. J. Kelley, Boston Jazz Coalition, POB 1498, Cambridge, MA 02238, or by calling (617) 547-3118. It is expected that the tapes will be ready for airing and distribution by November 1985.

—fred bouchard



STEVE KAGAN

**TWO DECADES OF INNOVATION:** Founders and freeboppers will reunite for three weekends in early May to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Association For The Advancement Of Creative Musicians. Since its founding in 1965 on Chicago's South Side, the AACM has reached out into the world's musical consciousness, yet kept in touch with the community through the AACM school and local concerts. Internationally acclaimed artists Muhal Richard Abrams, Claudine Amina Myers, Leo Smith, Joseph Jarman, Fred Anderson, and Steve McCall (pictured), will join Chicago-chapter stalwarts Kahil El Zabar, Douglas Ewart, and Ed Wilkerson, among others, for concerts and exhibits at various locations including Chicago Filmmakers Gallery. Concurrent with the final weekend, May 16-18, the University of Illinois at Chicago's fourth annual Jazz Festival will host Larry Coryell (with Stanley Cowell, Buster Williams, and Billy Hart), an afternoon workshop with Toshiko Akiyoshi fronting Dick Wang's UIC Jazz Band, Akiyoshi and her own New York Big Band in concert, and, in conjunction with the AACM, the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Call (312) 752-2212 for AACM and (312) 996-4500 for UIC info.





KEITH MAJOR

"... AND BE SURE TO SMILE, MILES:" Director Anthony J. Barboza (left) runs over some last-minute cues with Miles Davis as the trumpeter prepares to star in a commercial for Van Liqueur (a new alcoholic beverage), slated to run on Japanese tv. Barboza is a well-known photographer with a book, *Black Orders*, and Miles' upcoming album cover to his credit.



HYOU VIELZ

**BEATIN' DOWN THE HAUS:** Italian solo drummer Andrea Centazzo (pictured), playing against pre-recorded tape music, was one of the highlights of the seventh annual Kölner Jazz Haus Festival which attracted nearly 3,000 for three days in Köln recently. Other hits included the German group Drümmele Maa (built around percussionist Christoph Haberer) and violinist Billy Bang + Forbidden Planet. Over its seven years Jazz Haus has grown from a modest affair to an international event. Unique among fests in that it is totally organized and programmed by musicians themselves. Jazz Haus enjoyed a high level of popularity and publicity this season (all concerts recorded by WDR and Deutschlandfunk radio and tv) while other German fests complained of decreasing audiences, citing "festival fatigue."



W. A. BROWER

**IN THE BRIG:** Saxophonist Nick Brignola performs with the U.S. Navy Band "Commodores" jazz ensemble at the grand finale of the eighth International Saxophone Symposium held in Washington DC recently. Over 1000 saxists attended the two-day classical and jazz event.

## POTPOURRI

How blue can you get? **Willie Dixon**, legendary composer of thousands of classic blues songs filed a complaint with a U.S. District Court against the now-defunct rock group **Led Zeppelin** charging copyright infringement; it seems Zep's *Whole Lotta Love* resembles Dixon's *You Need Love* a tad too closely for Willie's taste. Dixon plans to donate a major portion of any money awarded to Blues Heaven Foundation, a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation recently formed to help protect the rights of blues artists and further the artform. . . . on a happier note: 15 of the largest record companies and such top pop artists as **Hall & Oates**, **Cyndi Lauper**, **Tina Turner**, **Pat Benetar**, and the **Police** have rallied together to produce an album and video cassette entitled *MTV's Rock 'N Roll To Go*; all profits of which will go to AMC Cancer Research. . . . speaking of music vids: **Odyssey**, the recently debuted 24-hour all-music cable-tv channel, seeks video alternatives to standard rock fare; vids by reggae, jazz, latin, and other artists are being sought by programming director Tom Shaw; ring him at (305) 632-1000. . . . on the big screen: win, place, and show in the *Los Angeles Times* poll for all-time best music film: the Beatles' *Hard Day's Night*, Bob Dylan's *Don't Look Back*, and Jimmy Cliff's Jamaican reggae classic, *The Harder They Come*. . . . ra-

diowaves: **WBEE-AM** the Harvey, IL daytime-only, low-watter, dented the Arbitron ratings with a .8, their best showing ever (they rarely even show); general manager Charles Sherrell credits the recent format switch to a contemporary jazz sound. . . . and in the Apple: the Harlem YMCA recently inducted the 10 debut members (five living, five deceased) into its **Jazz Hall of Fame**—Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Mary Lou Williams, Ella Fitzgerald, Miles Davis, Roy Eldridge, Dizzy Gillespie, and Art Blakey. . . . o'er the Atlantic: the **National Jazz Centre**—which includes performance space, practice rooms, bar/restaurant, library/archive, educational facilities, shopping, and the like—officially opens 5/8 at 9/10 Floral St. in jolly ole Londontown. . . . back in the states, the well-established **Institute of Jazz Studies** (Bradley Hall, Rutgers U., Newark, NJ 07102) received an \$80,000 challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities; however the IJS needs to raise \$240,000 to unleash the dough in the 3:1 match arrangement; tax-deductible help will be greatly appreciated. . . . across the Hudson: the **Manna House** has announced its sixth season of community jazz concerts/workshops; still up are Gloria DeNard & the Fostina Dixon Quartet (5/19), the Jimmy Owens Big Band salute


to Monk (6/9), and the Manna House Student Concert with guest Big Nick Nicholas (6/30); details on sites, etc., from (212) 722-8223. . . . KC bound: the **Count Basie Orchestra** has returned to Kansas City for good; Aaron Woodward, adopted son of the late band-leader, said Basie always considered "by John Hammond, to be his second home, although the 17-piece aggregation will be on the road some 40 weeks a year under the guidance of recently named director **Thad Jones**, they will annually convene in KC for rehearsals, etc. . . . cash on the barrelhead: **Philly Joe Jones**, **Ella Fitzgerald**, and **Gil Evans** have been given \$20,000 Jazz Masters Awards by the National Arts Council; past recipients include Dizzy Gillespie, Max Roach, Sonny Rollins, Roy Eldridge, Count Basie, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk (posthumously), and Sun Ra. . . . and the **U. of Northern Colorado Jazz Studies Program** has been awarded \$12,900 in grants by the National Endowment for the Arts, to be divided up between the UNC/Greeley Jazz Festival, the UNC Faculty Jazz Quintet, and faculty members Dave Hanson, Steve Owen, and Paul Rinzler. . . . still in school: former Blues Brother, Blood, Sweat & Tear'er, and Saturday Night Live'r **Lou Marini** will wield his sax with the East Stroudsburg (PA) High School Jazz Ensemble on 5/2. . . . on the way up?: word from Naw'lins is that teenage trumpeter **Leroy Jones** may be follow-

ing in the footsteps of Wynton Marsalis, Terence Blanchard, Wallace Roney, et al; Jones recently flew to New York to audition for Blue Note/Manhattan prez Bruce Lundvall. . . . *Message From The Maestro*, **Horace Silver's** tribute to Duke Ellington, was recently performed at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles; augmenting Silver's trio was full orchestra, a mini-chorus of singers, and narrator William Marshall. On the same bill was Silver's *In Tribute*, honoring W. C. Handy and Scott Joplin among others. Silver's also gotten in on the education biz, teaching a course entitled *The Art of Small Combo Jazz Playing, Composing, and Arranging* at El Camino College in L.A. . . . already a composer/performer? **New Music America '86** is looking for "the most innovative and provocative trends in contemporary music and sound . . . works ranging from avant garde jazz to electronic and computer-generated music, sound installations, and performance art" to be offered at the Apr. '86 fest in Houston. Proposals are due 6/1/85; call (713) 521-9036 for the scoop. . . . and finally, **Dr. Demento**, the man who first loosed Devo and "Weird Al" Yankovic on an unsuspecting public via his nationally syndicated radio show (which reaches over a million listeners in 150 cities), has signed with Rhino Records to compile four volumes of "Dr. Demento Presents The Greatest Novelty Records Of All Time." (Does *Johnny Hodges Meets Lawrence Welk* qualify?) . . .

# THE HENNESSY JAZZ SEARCH 85

Picture yourself stepping into the spotlight to perform at one of the world's most famous jazz festivals. The world's most civilized spirit, Hennessy, would like to make this dream a reality for some talented jazz group. We're proud to announce The Hennessy Jazz Search 1985. A competition designed to showcase some of America's finest, yet undiscovered, jazz musicians.

The grand prize-winning group in The Hennessy Jazz Search will be invited to share the stage with some of the biggest names in jazz today. The event: the renowned Playboy Jazz Festival held on Sunday, June 16th. The place: The Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles.

So, if you play in a jazz group, fill out an entry form and send in a cassette (see contest rules for complete details). This could be the big break you've been waiting for. A chance to play L.A. the civilized way.  PLAYBOY JAZZ FESTIVAL



**CONTEST RULES.** 1. All members of the group must be 21 years of age as of May 1, 1985. 2. Size of group must be between 1 and 5 members. Non-playing vocalist(s) must be counted in group number. 3. If any member of the group is a party to a recording contract as of May 1, 1985, the entire group is ineligible to participate in this contest. 4. Entries must be submitted in cassette form only and must not exceed 20 minutes in length. Tapes should be labeled clearly with the leader's name and address. The same members on the tape must appear with the group should they place in the semi-finals or finals. 5. A panel of experts will judge all entries on the basis of creative jazz playing and/or singing, technique, sense of harmony, and overall sound. The decision of the judges will be final. 6. Hennessy will use the tapes solely for this contest. The tapes will not be reproduced for any purpose. Tapes will be returned only if a self-addressed stamped envelope is provided by the contestant. 7. In each of three cities, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, three semi-finalists will be chosen. Contestants must indicate which preliminary contest they wish to enter. Semi-finalists will be notified no later than May 15, 1985. Semi-finalists must be able to appear for judges and invited guests on Tuesday, May 28. No fees or expenses will be paid for appearance at the semi-finals. One finalist in each city will be chosen to compete in the finals on Thursday, June 13, in Los Angeles. 8. Entries must be received no later than Wednesday, May 1, 1985, and must be accompanied by an official entry blank or reasonable facsimile signed by the leader of the group. 9. Employees (and their immediate families) of Festival Productions Inc., Schieffelin & Co., Rogers & Cowan, Inc., Lord, Geller, Federico, Einstein, Inc., Playboy Enterprises Inc., wholesalers and retailers of alcoholic beverages, or any divisions or subsidiaries of the above are not eligible. 10. Void where prohibited by law. Contest coordinated by Festival Productions West.

**PRIZES.** Grand Prize: Appearance at the world-famous Playboy Jazz Festival on Sunday, June 16, 1985. 3 First Prizes: Coach airfare for regional semi-final winners to Los Angeles to compete in finals\* Hotel for 5 nights \$1,000 prize money for expenses. Tickets to the Playboy Jazz Festival.

\*If winner of Los Angeles semi-finals is based in Los Angeles area, limousine service will be provided in place of airfare.

## the civilized way to play L.A.

### HENNESSY JAZZ SEARCH ENTRY FORM

Leader's name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

I/We wish to enter the preliminary contest in (check one).

New York ☐

Chicago ☐

Los Angeles ☐

I have read the rules above and affirm that this entry is in compliance with them.

Signature of Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Mail To: The Hennessy Jazz Search, Suite C, 2801B Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405

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## Lonnie Mack

**AUSTIN**—When Lonnie Mack's *Memphis*, a barrelling locomotive of a guitar instrumental, hit the radio airwaves in 1963 it introduced a distinctive sound that was totally of Mack's making. He filtered the cross-cultural influences of his native Ohio River valley through a battered amp and an immense Gibson Flying V, mixing country, blues, gospel, and funk in equal portions. The resultant sound was gritty but gripping, combining a perpetual rhythmic propulsion with intense bursts of biting solos. It was a formidable attack and it served Mack well for several years, but then the slick and sophisticated sound of British rock virtually forced it out of the national consciousness. Psychedelic rock only worsened the situation and Mack's basic, if electrified, rural blues were, despite their quality, increasingly out of the American musical mainstream.

Mack worked with Elektra Records as an a&r man and even recorded with the Doors, but his down-to-earth demeanor just didn't seem cut out for the '60s high-flying California music business. When his last Elektra album came out in 1969 he took its title literally and packed up and went home to *The Hills Of Indiana*. For almost eight years Mack stayed out of the limelight, working on new songs and generally unwinding from his California experiences. He was still playing music, however, and says of the sabbatical that "I didn't want to get out of music, I just wanted to get out of the music business." In 1977 an "accidental" album of demo material, *Home At Last*, was released on Capitol, but a series of follow-up musical endeavors, including the formation of a



ANDREW W. LONG

**TWO FOR TEXAS:** Lonnie Mack (left) and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

country/rock supergroup, never managed to come together.

In early 1984 Mack moved to Austin, saying that "everybody down there plays the kind of music I like." The relocation put him in the middle of the city's thriving blues scene, but it also reunited him with a former protege, Stevie Ray Vaughan. Mack and Vaughan were old friends and had previously planned a record project together back in the mid-'70s. Last December they finally got their schedules synchronized and entered the studios in Austin to record the new Alligator

Records album *Strike Like Lightning*. Mack's big, burly guitar tone romps through a variety of material with sympathetic support from several of his old Ohio River valley pals. Not too surprisingly, it also features an abundance of sizzling Stevie Ray Vaughan licks, as well as more than a few moments of inspired interplay. Mack's vocals, a considerable but little-known strength, are also prominently displayed on the album. Mack is waiting to gauge the reaction to the album before making any major career plans, but he says he's "ready if they're willing." —*michael point*



**C&W SOUL:** Chet Atkins grins while George Benson (right) picks.

## Chet Atkins

**NASHVILLE**—"Chet Atkins just might have a new career," said smiling keyboardist Clayton Ivey. Ivey and the rest of an all-star roster (Larry Carlton, Earl Klugh, George Benson, David Hungate, Mark O'Connor, Brent Mason, Terry McMillan, Larrie Londin) were there to help launch Atkins, if not into a new career, at least in a different direction. The occasion was a party for Atkins' new CBS record, *Stay Tuned*. Having changed record labels (to Columbia from RCA), and having given up almost all of his producing duties, the premier country picker is playing and recording jazz-influenced instrumentals. And in

typical Atkins style he is attracting the attention of a loyal guitar-playing audience.

The musician credits for the album read like a Who's Who in the guitar world—in addition to Carlton, Klugh, and Benson, Dire Strait's Mark Knopfler and Toto's Steve Luthaker duet with Chet—and to a man it seemed that the players had rehearsed their expressions of respect for Chet Atkins as much as they had rehearsed the tunes. Said Earl Klugh, "He's the absolute best. I've been listening to him since I was 13. He made me want to play the guitar." Larry Carlton added, "I knew he was a gentleman before I ever met him. You can hear it in his music. I respect him as much for that as for the incredible things he's

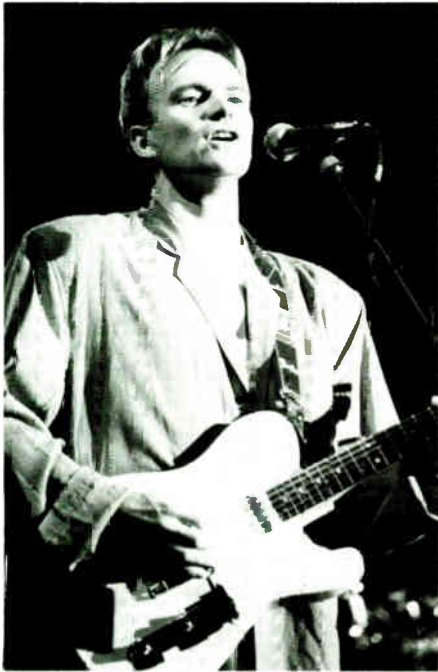
done on the guitar." And former Dixie Dregs fiddler Mark O'Connor was overwhelmed by "... the feel of it all. He just makes the whole band feel the music."

The performance at the party was a celebration, structured like a parade, with Atkins calling Brent Mason, Klugh, Carlton, and finally George Benson, one at a time to the stage. Using the songs from the album as a loose format, each guitarist offered a "thank you for the influence" performance that emphasized (perhaps more than the album does) the tremendous impact Chet Atkins has had on guitar music.

David Hungate (of Toto fame) shared production with Atkins on the album, and you get the feeling that he brought a lot of L.A. production technique with him: when he showed up in Music City. What manages to emerge through the strong rhythm tracks and the very full background is Atkins' determination to define the melody of a song. Hungate faced an admittedly difficult task in finding ways to showcase the mountain of guitar talent on the album, and at the same time produce a coherent vehicle for Atkins' unique melodic technique. Jazz fans will decide if he was successful or not, but whatever the verdict, it's exciting to know that Chet Atkins is out of the office and back on the stage.

—*phil doss and phil town*





MICHAEL PUTLAND/RETNA

## Sting

**NEW YORK**—No, Sting has not "gone jazz" on us.

Yes, those *were* fer-real jazz musicians backing him recently at the Ritz in Manhattan (Kenny Kirkland at the keyboards, Branford Marsalis on saxes, Miles' bassist Darryl Jones holding down the bottom, and Weather Report's Omar Hakim on drums). But this was no jazz gig: just some harmless wish fulfillment by the charismatic frontman of the Police. And when you're a mega-star on the order of Mr. Sting, your fondest fantasies are easily realized.

It's called "I Want To Get Down And Get Funky." This syndrome generally afflicts British rock stars who yearn to rise above their repressed, portentous tendencies and pursue a "blacker sound" than their Anglo bandmates can provide. This experiment paid off for Phil Collins, who broke away from the ponderous, Medieval suites of the art-rock band Genesis for a brief excursion into funk with the Earth, Wind & Fire horn section. "I guess I'm a little blacker than the Genesis boys," he told *db* last year, "so left to my own devices I'll bring in the horns." His resulting LP from that first foray into funk, *Face Value*, plus the following duet with E, W&F vocalist Phillip Bailey, *Easy Lover*, not only sold incredibly well, but ultimately influenced the overall sound of Genesis when Collins returned to the mothership.

Such could be in store for Sting, who on guitar and vocals showed a natural affinity for James Brown-styled E7 chord vamps. The kid's got good rhythm, and he exercises subtle phrasing with his piercing hornlike voice, singing slightly behind the beat or over the bar. Sure, he's got talent, he's theatrically inclined, he moves well, and he's got a neat suit.

Of course, though his material's not exactly as

tough as *Giant Steps*, two- and three-chord vamps are cool. Just lay it down, lock it in, get the jazz guys to blow on top of it, and there you have it— instant depth. The Stones called upon the services of Sonny Rollins and Ernie Watts to juice up their vamps. Joni Mitchell frequently uses Wayne Shorter's haunting soprano sax to lend more mystery to her sessions. The Brecker brothers and David Sanborn are regularly called on by rock stars to add spice to a two-chord stew. And so it is with Branford Marsalis, here playing the foil to Sting.

Branford did get to express himself quite freely at the Ritz, given the harmonic confines he was forced to play within. Few in the audience of Police fans appreciated it, but the cat was blowing. While Jones and Hakim anchored the groove and Kirkland supplied the textures, Marsalis echoed and commented on Sting's eerie vocals with soprano unison lines, call-and-response patterns, and blending reed colors.

This band was tight, adept, and funky, breathing new life into familiar Police fare from *Zenyatta Mondatta*, *Ghost In The Machine*, and *Synchronicity*. Further enhanced by the soulful background vocals of Jeanette McDonald and Janis Pendarviss, Sting's funkified version of Policework was not unlike Collins' "blacker" take on Genesis. Singing, dancing, and mugging while cutting chords on his Telecaster, he often resembled Talking Heads frontman David Byrne.

Sting and his accomplished sidemen also premiered a few original pieces from his upcoming solo debut album to be released sometime this month by A&M. That, and the Police covers, were fine, but when Sting decided to tackle a Freddie King shuffle—*Been Down So Long It Don't Bother Me*—and a slow bluesy clone of Percy Mayfield's *Please Send Me Someone To Love*, the amiable Brit was treading thin ice. He may have a certain affinity for funk, but B. B. King he ain't.

—bill milkowski

## John Abercrombie

**NEW YORK**—Though he's far from being a shrinking violet, John Abercrombie has lately involved himself in more musical ventures than any guitarist on the Big Apple scene. Among others he's been working with two of his favorite fellow guitar players, Ralph Towner and John Scofield. "I played a mini-tour with Ralph. It's the same thing we've been doing for quite a while— like our ECM records together—but we have a lot of new material and it's feeling fresh. The thing with Ralph is it's not just guitars. Ralph is a travelling little orchestra I play with. On the other hand, there's not many electric players I like to play with, but Sco and I just seemed to gravitate toward each other. Our styles work well together. We're similar enough and different enough. The basic root is the same and we think a lot alike."

Abercrombie and Scofield recorded an album last year (*Solar*) for Palo Alto but there's no plans yet for another Abercrombie/Towner record. Abercrombie's recent *Night* LP is selling, and ECM is interested in recording again in the fall. "I don't know what I'll record, but it will probably include Marc Johnson (on bass) and Peter Erskine (at the drums). We've been trying to keep a little trio happening when schedules permit and when there's work. I'm hoping a tour of Brazil comes through in the spring. It's either Brazil or Chicago."

Trumpeter Randy Brecker often turns the trio into a quartet. "We're playing soon at the Vanguard with Randy. I don't know how we'll bill it. That band's becoming on-going. Then I was asked to put together something for a benefit for Ethiopia, and I ended up putting together Jack DeJohnette's old New Directions band. I called Jack and Eddie Gomez and Lester Bowie and everybody was into it. That could be *really* interesting."

—michael bourne



VERLY OAKLAND

**ABERCROMBIE'S ITCH:** John Abercrombie plays more guitar per mile.



# The Blue Notes Of Mr. T



Sooner or later the river always wends its way back to the sea, and sooner or later tenor saxophonist Stanley Turrentine was bound to find his way back home.

Turrentine has lived in the same big house in the suburbs of northern New Jersey for 18 years, but only now, on his 25th anniversary as a recording artist, has he truly brought his *music* back home to the straightahead, soul-tinged sound he debuted in 1960 with organist Jimmy Smith on *Midnight Special*. Downstairs in his music/rec room, the lanky, angular tenorman strides over to the window and peeks through the shades at his backyard swimming pool. It's a sunny, unseasonably mild day. Inside the rec room, richly paneled in shades of brown, the fireplace has been shut down and the only heat emanates from the warm glow of a tenor saxophone, the wispy chords of an organ, the resonant thump of an acoustic bass, and the gentle plinks of an electric guitar and hi-hat.

Turrentine's new album, his first since he was dropped by Elektra Records three years ago, is flowing through the speakers. The tenorman returns to his leather armchair, his left hand holding a cigarette, the fingers of his right hand caressing the keys of an imaginary saxophone. Though Turrentine doesn't come out and say it, his new album, for in-the-pocket acoustic purists if not for him, represents a cleansing, a baptism of sorts. He says only that he is "very, very proud." He stretches his long legs and explains his musical reorientation during the recording hiatus. "I decided, hey, let me go out and start *playing* again, just play some straightahead music that I *feel*."

The album is aptly titled *Straight Ahead* and Turrentine, who has made several dozen albums over the years, has returned to where his recording career began—Blue Note Records, newly resuscitated by Bruce Lundvall. "I wanted to sit back and regroup," the 50-year-old musician says of his layoff from the recording studio. "I was doing a lot of recording with big orchestras and strings and a lot of things. I mean, I think the [Elektra] records were good. But I wanted to get back to really *playing*, instead of thinking about the contemporary, commercial type of music."

Turrentine's albums for Elektra, an extension of his successful crossover sound with CTI and Fantasy Records in the '70s, were anchored in the shoals of pop and disco, employing as bait pop singers, synthesizers, and computerized rhythms. Whereas Turrentine's bluesy saxophone reference points in the '60s included Gene (Jug) Ammons, Eddie (Lockjaw) Davis, and Willis (Gator) Jackson, in the mid-'70s he navigated a course charted by the likes of David Sanborn and Grover Washington, Jr. In retrospect, Turrentine doesn't place his Elektra records among his career favorites, but he doesn't disavow them either. "I had complete control," he states flatly. "There wasn't any pressure. I was in the frame of mind of thinking about selling records. I took the suggestions of producers, managers, and so forth about 'what's happening,' and 'This is what could be sold today,' but I made the decisions. I can't blame it on anyone but me. I've stopped listening to the other producers."

And if the tenorman, whose '60s sound could be likened to freshly churned butter, needed further affirmation that a change of direction was in order, his longtime listeners provided it. "People would hear me playing with all the orchestras and strings," he admits. "I'd usually just state the melody, play a little light solo, then take it out. With the orchestras there were months and months of planning and overdubbing and re-doing things. A lot of people were saying, 'When are you

gonna start playing some of the old type of things you used to play?'"

So when Lundvall invited him back home to Blue Note, Turrentine "jumped at the opportunity." Within weeks of signing, he entered the studio for a four-tune session with a core group of guitarist George Benson, bassist Ron Carter, organist Smith, and drummer Jimmy Madison; two additional tunes were cut with guitarist Jimmy Ponder, electric bassist Peter Brown, keyboardist Les McCann, and drummer Gerryck King. "There was no pretense, no real planning," says Turrentine, pointing out that there were no overdubs and that most of the tunes were nailed on the first take, the notable exception being McCann's *The Longer You Wait*, which features subtle shifts of tempo and mood. Continues Turrentine, "We didn't sit down and say, 'We're gonna play this for a particular reason.' We just wanted to play what we *feel*. No egos were involved. There was no plan to commercialize this album. There were no electronics, no gimmicks," he declares, adding, "and, as producer, I brought in it *on time* and within budget."

Throughout the album, Turrentine's tone is warm and luminous, yet also slightly brittle, vulnerable. "The album has a variety of different moods and sounds," says Turrentine, adjusting the top of his blue turtleneck sweater, "and," he emphasizes with a chuckle, "what else is there?" The tenorman takes a deep pull on his cigarette as *Otherside Of Time*, a minor blues in which Turrentine goes for the Jug-ular, wafts through the rec room. "Welcome home," his guest intones. Turrentine exhales a stream of smoke and rises from his armchair.

"To me," he explains, "music is a cycle, never ending. It's always going back. It might be a little different, but it always comes back in a cycle. That's why I love it so much. I can express myself musically where I can't express myself verbally." He leads his guest to a small wooden plaque on the wall. He reads aloud the opening words of Allan C. Inman's *I Am Music*:

*I am music, most ancient of the arts. I am more than ancient, I am eternal. Even before life commenced upon this earth, I was here in the winds and the waves.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Every wave begins with one drop of water, and music for Stanley Turrentine begins with one note. Asked about the origins of his phraseology—the way he bends, shapes, and twists notes into fluid solos—he recalls the lessons of his father, Thomas Turrentine, a tenor and clarinet player during the '30s with the Savoy Sultans. "My lesson from my father, believe it or not," he remembers, "was to stand in the corner. I'd have to play each note, one note, from the B flat all the way up to the high F, and just hold that note. He used to ask me, 'Did you *hear* that note?' I'd say, 'Of course I heard it!' For a while I didn't understand what he meant. He was saying how to attack the note, how to breathe from the diaphragm, how much air to put into the horn—warm air or cold air—how to get different sounds and vibrato, how to control *one* note. If you can hear that one note, and *control* that note, then you have a better chance of having an even sound."

"My father is the one who put the horn in my mouth. I used to get frustrated because I couldn't play like the records I heard of Don Byas or Lester Young. My father would say, 'Now listen, I have yet to hear a musician who could play *everything*.' He said, 'If you can play it the way you hear it, in *your* sound, that should be sufficient. But, always try to improve on that.' And that laid with me all the years. I try to approach it in my way, the only way I can play."

Music was the primary entertainment in the Turrentine household in Pittsburgh. "We didn't have very much money,"





MITCHELL SEIDEL

he recalls. "We'd sit around the radio and listen to different bands and programs. And we'd all play." Besides his tenor-playing father, his mother played piano and his brother Tommy blew the trumpet. Stanley began on the cello, but once he picked up the tenor saxophone at age 11, he vowed he would never work a job without it. Against the wishes of his parents, Turrentine quit high school at 16 and took to the road and the rhythm & blues circuit with Lowell Fulson's band. And how did Turrentine's father react? "I made sure he wasn't home when I left," he quips.

"Your life, literally, was in danger just because you wanted to play down south in the early '50s," he recalls. "I saw people hanging in trees, I saw a lot of things as we went from town to town to play. Musicians then had to have more camaraderie in order to survive. Sometimes I didn't get paid on jobs. There were times I hardly ate for days; then you'd get on the bandstand and play like you'd had a seven-course meal." After leaving Fulson's band, Turrentine joined Tadd Dameron for a year before hooking up with Earl Bostic's big band, replacing John Coltrane. The Army occupied Turrentine's time for the next three years, and then in 1959 he teamed up with his brother Tommy in Max Roach's group. The next year, while he was living in Philadelphia, the tenorman received a portentous phone call from Jimmy Smith.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Hey, man," Smith said over the wire. "I got a record date. You want to do a record date?"

"Sure," came the reply.

Smith and Turrentine drove to Rudy Van Gelder's recording studio, not far from the tenorist's current residence. Once there, they set up their instruments and were ready to wait when an announcement was made: "Let's play the blues!" The 1960 tune turned out to be *Midnight Special*, one of the biggest hits of Smith's career.

During the '50s and early '60s, the "blowing date" reigned supreme for the top independent jazz labels. Musicians would enter the studio with little or no rehearsal—perhaps a few stock arrangements or heads—the microphones would be turned on, and the musicians would blow. Turrentine remembers it this way: "Blowing dates were a way to keep costs down and spontaneity up. It was very much a learning experience,

because you never knew from one moment to the next what was going to be. So you kept blowing. I've gone into the studio for Blue Note with [former label chief and producer] Alfred Lion, and we did a *complete* album in less than four hours. Sometimes I'd go into the studio without knowing *who* was on the date. I wouldn't know who was playing bass, drums, or whatever. No music, no nothing—we'd go right into the studio and create. And some of those albums, man, were some of the best I've made."

By the latter part of the decade, especially for Turrentine's recordings with strings (such as *The Look Of Love* and the recently reissued *Joyride*, arranged and conducted by Oliver Nelson), rehearsals became common, according to the tenorist, who spent 11 years with Blue Note. Turrentine reminisces fondly about his early blowing dates. Yet, amid this uncertainty in the studio, he was asked, didn't someone have to play traffic cop? "Actually," he answers, "Alfred Lion was always a traffic cop. He didn't know anything about music per se, but he knew what he wanted to *hear* and he knew the individuals. He knew what my style was and he knew which musicians would be compatible."

A quarter-century, a bushel of albums, and several record



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BACKSTAGE: Drummer Jack DeJohnette (left) raps with Mr. T.

label changes after his first recording session, Turrentine is back with Blue Note. Despite commercial and artistic ups and downs, Turrentine has prospered during those 25 years. Nonetheless, he avers that he remains guided by the principles of compatibility and, more important, humility. "I tell [young musicians], 'If you don't love it, forget it.' There's so much adversity in this business that if you don't have any love for it, you'll soon find out that you won't be here long. I keep referring to my father, God rest his soul, but he said: 'Once you feel you can't learn anything off this instrument, I would suggest that you take it to the nearest river, throw it in—and follow it!'"

\* \* \* \* \*

**"H**ey, man, I got a record date. You want to do a record date?"

"Sure," came the reply.

This time, however, it was Turrentine who invited Smith, returning the favor 25 years later. Knowing the session would be released on Blue Note, the two old friends had to detect a curious *déjà vu*. The two probably anticipated a blowing date, but they scarcely expected it to start in the leader's living room. Turrentine delights in the irony. "Jimmy was staying at my house, and as soon as he put his bags down, he went right to the piano in my living room," exults Turrentine, pointing out the 80-year-old Steinway that occupies a central position upstairs. "I was coming from my bedroom into the kitchen, I started playing, and *Otherside Of Time* came out. I don't consider myself a writer per se. But Jimmy said, 'Yeah, let's start doin' it.'"

Turrentine's other original composition, the title track, harkens back to *Midnight Special* in approach if not in substance. In the studio the leader simply called out, "Let's play a C-minor blues in 6/8 time." The consistency between the new *Straight Ahead* album and his earlier Blue Note offerings isn't lost on Turrentine: "The similarity is the way we constructed the album. We went in with no definite plan other than that we would play some jazz that was melodic and moving. It reminded me of the *Midnight Special* album I made with Jimmy." Moreover, in the true Blue Note spirit, Turrentine selected the musicians for his new album before he selected the material. The latter, he reasoned, would spring from the former. What's more, Turrentine upholds the Blue Note tradition by getting the maximum out of his sidemen. Benson, McCann, and Carter chip in a tune apiece, and solo space is apportioned in direct proportion to the assembled talent. Benson, in particular, is a standout, attacking each note with ferocious confidence. Listening to a Benson solo on the playback, Turrentine shakes his head in wonderment; "Little Georgie Benson," the youngster he watched play the ukulele on the streets of Pittsburgh, has come a long way. Terming *Straight Ahead* a group effort, Turrentine notes, "It's my record, but listen to all that talent. You'd subdue that talent?" he asks rhetorically. "You'd have to be mad!"

Turrentine moves over to the piano and starts tinkling the keys, which he points out are genuine ivory. A sheaf of sheet music, *The Compositions Of Jimmy Heath*, is perched on a stand. On the wall to Turrentine's left hangs a large framed photograph. A silhouetted figure stands on the shoreline, his head bowed, his back turned to the raging waves pounding the rocks. Looking up at himself in the photograph, Turrentine remarks: "There's always something to learn. A *lifetime*, to me, isn't enough time to learn all about the music. I try to keep an open mind. I try to listen to all kinds of music. You look at my record collection and you'll see all kinds of music. I love country & western. There's no such thing, to me, as a wrong chord. It depends on how you approach it and the way you hear it."

The lanky tenorman plunks one note on the piano, rises, and bids his guest good afternoon. One senses that having reclaimed his roots, having found the direction back home, Turrentine will pick up his horn—and follow it. **db**



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## STANLEY TURRENTINE'S EQUIPMENT

"I have no problem with horns," Stanley Turrentine says, matter-of-factly. "I hear guys say, 'This is my special horn, and I have to have it or else I won't be able to play.' As long as the horn is in working order, I can usually play my own stuff."

Turrentine's preferred tenor is a seven-year-old Selmer Mark VI, which he has had silver-plated. He uses a No. 8 Otto Link mouthpiece and a 3½ Rico Royal reed. "That seems to be the best hookup for me." Though never much of a doubler, he recently began practicing on a Selmer soprano saxophone. But, he quickly adds with a chuckle, "I find I can't seem to play it in tune. So I really won't bring it out in public until I get the feel and sound I want. Those are the things I dwell on; mainly it's the sound."

"I have no problems with horns," he repeats. "Would you believe it? I left home rushing last week to go to Caracas, Venezuela." He pauses. His voice drops an octave. "And I forgot to bring my horn!" He grimaces, then laughs heartily. "I'm going to work and I forget my horn! I've never done that in my entire life." Upon arrival, he found a replacement horn and made the gig.

## STANLEY TURRENTINE SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

### as a leader

*STRAIGHT AHEAD*—Blue Note 85105  
*TURRENTINE AGAIN*—Elektra 60201  
*TENDER TOGETHERNESS!*—Elektra 534  
*INFLATION*—Elektra 269  
*BETCHA*—Elektra 217  
*USE THE STAIRS*—Fantasy 9604  
*WHAT ABOUT YOU!*—Fantasy 9563  
*WEST SIDE HIGHWAY*—Fantasy 9548  
*NIGHT WINGS*—Fantasy 9534  
*THE MAN WITH THE SAD FACE*—Fantasy 9519  
*EVERYBODY COME ON OUT*—Fantasy 9508  
*HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE RAIN?*—Fantasy 9493  
*IN THE POCKET*—Fantasy 9478  
*PIECES OF DREAMS*—Fantasy 9465  
*SALT SONG*—CTI 6010  
*CHERRY*—CTI 6017  
*DON'T MESS WITH MR. T*—CTI 6030  
*THE SUGAR MAN*—CTI 6052  
*SUGAR*—CTI 6005  
*ANOTHER STORY*—Blue Note 84336  
*COMMON TOUCH*—Blue Note 84315  
*ALWAYS SOMETHING THERE*—Blue Note 84298  
*EASY WALKER*—Blue Note 84268

*THE SPOILER*—Blue Note 84256  
*ROUGH 'N TUMBLE*—Blue Note 84240  
*JOYRIDE*—Blue Note 84201  
*HUSTLIN'*—Blue Note 84162  
*A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK*—Blue Note 84150  
*NEVER LET ME GO*—Blue Note 84129  
*JUBILEE SHOUTS*—Blue Note LA883-J2  
*THAT'S WHERE IT'S AT*—Blue Note 84096  
*DEARLY BELOVED*—Blue Note 4081  
*UP AT MINTON'S, VOL. 1 & 2*—Blue Note 4069/4070  
*BLUE HOUR*—Blue Note 84057  
*AIN'T NO WAY*—Blue Note LT-1095  
*MR. NATURAL*—Blue Note LT-1075  
*IN MEMORY OF*—Blue Note LT-1037  
*NEW TIME SHUFFLE*—Blue Note LT-993

### with Shirley Scott

*THE SOUL IS WILLING*—Prestige 7845  
*FOR BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE*—Prestige 7773  
*THE BEST OF SHIRLEY SCOTT*—Prestige 7707  
*BLUE FLAMES*—Prestige 7338  
*SOUL SHOUTIN'*—Prestige 7312

### with Jimmy Smith

*OFF THE TOP*—Elektra Musician 60175  
*MIDNIGHT SPECIAL*—Blue Note 84078



**B**obby McFerrin was singing at the Blue Note in New York. He'd performed several numbers with a trio (John Scofield on guitar, Will Lee on bass, Kenwood Dennard at the drums), but now he sang alone on the stage—just a microphone and his voice. It wasn't the usual scat, not so much singing syllables, not oo-bop-sha-bam and such. It wasn't exactly vocalese. When he sang *Night In Tunisia* he wasn't just imitating Dizzy's trumpet or Bird's sax or a horn at all. He played his voice sometimes like a guitar, bending or twisting notes; sometimes like a bass, more of a pulse than a melody—or something weirder, like a jew's harp on acid. Sometimes he sounded unlike an instrument at all. "Sometimes it's like a dog," he said, "or a crying baby."

McFerrin breathes, as all singers do, but he sings as much when he inhales as when he exhales. He even gasps in tune. "When I started doing this experiment with the intervallic thing," he said, "I was doing a piece that sounded a little like Bach. This thing kept repeating over and over. It disturbed me that I had to stop and take a breath. I had to figure out a way to keep the notes going on while I was breathing, and the only thing I could think of was singing, intoning, while I was inhaling. Even though the sound changes, it's less disruptive than if I stopped everything entirely just to gasp for a breath. And from that I discovered that breathing plays as much a part as the rhythm and melody, that a singer should breathe musically."

He even drums on his voice, keeping the beat with his hand on his chest. Just as a conga player changes the sound of the drum with his fingers, so McFerrin plays on the very sound of his voice. "I like to feel the rhythm," he said, "and sometimes it helps the articulation, to hear notes a little better with that percussive thump to it. I used to not do that, but it felt like something was missing. I discovered that not only does it help with the rhythm from within coming out, but that it was good to feel the rhythm actually on my body."

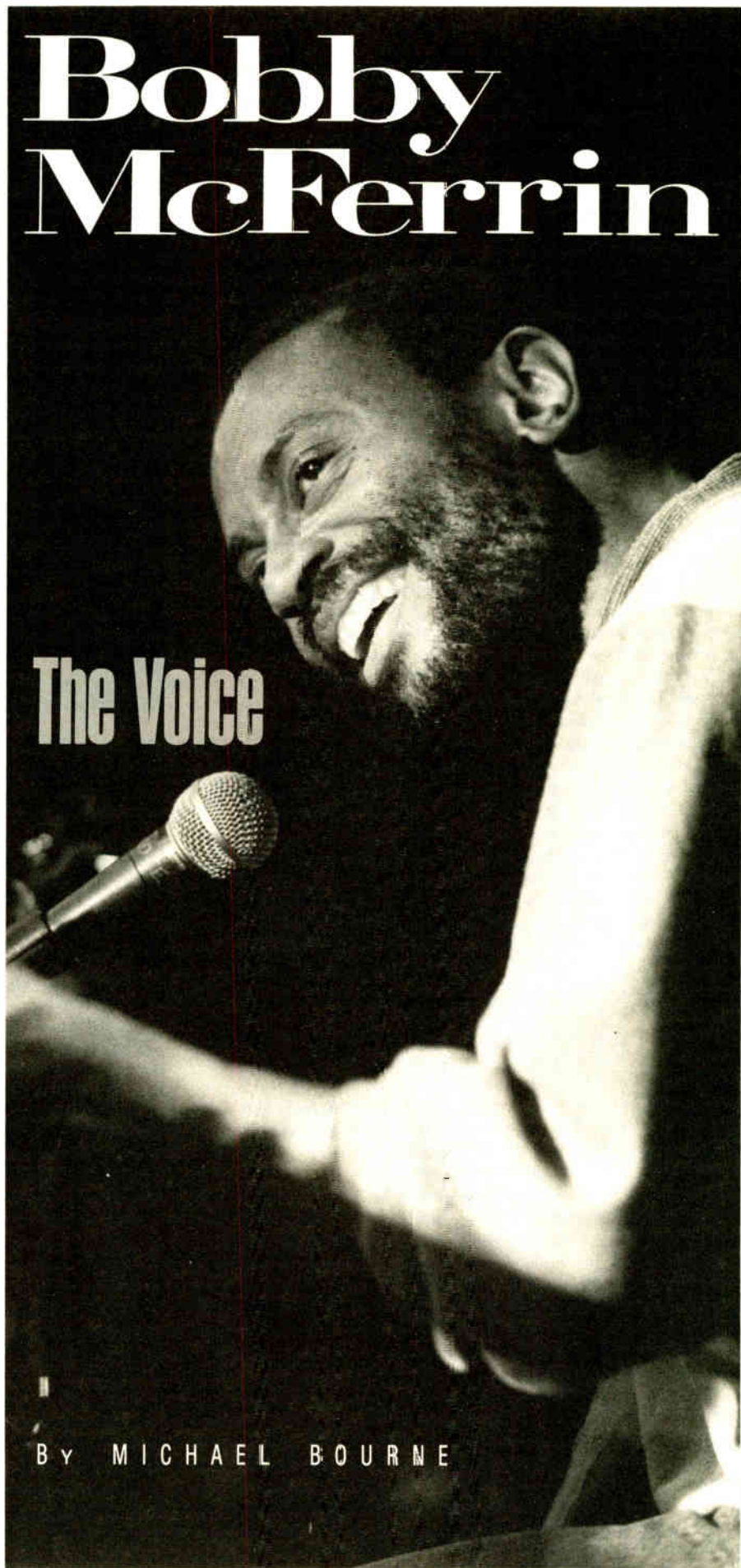
It's standard in a **down beat** interview to talk about a musician's equipment, but McFerrin's equipment, his instrument, is himself. "I like to think of my voice as being my body," he said. "That's my equipment, and I'm pretty much aware of what I do with it, which isn't always the best thing. But I try to exercise, I'm conscious of what I eat, and I try to maintain a healthy mental attitude. A singer should use everything that's available, especially if you're singing solo. I have to, since I'm primarily a soloist."

McFerrin's "everything" becomes kaleidoscopic in performance. With every twist of his voice, new colors and shapes and feelings resound. It's baffled some critics to categorize McFerrin as a singer. "I did a gig in D.C. and an interesting

# Bobby McFerrin

## The Voice

BY MICHAEL BOURNE



MITCHELL SEIDEL



word came up to describe what I do," he said. "People are always asking me to describe what I do and to me it's just singing, but one of the reviews called it . . . McFerrining."

\* \* \*  
**W**hen he first became a professional musician, McFerrin didn't "McFerrin" at all. He played piano. He didn't sing. But it was almost inevitable that he become a vocalist. His father, Robert McFerrin, is an opera singer who performed at New York's Metropolitan Opera in the '50s. His mother, Sara McFerrin, is a classical soprano, now the chairperson of the voice department at Fullerton College in California.

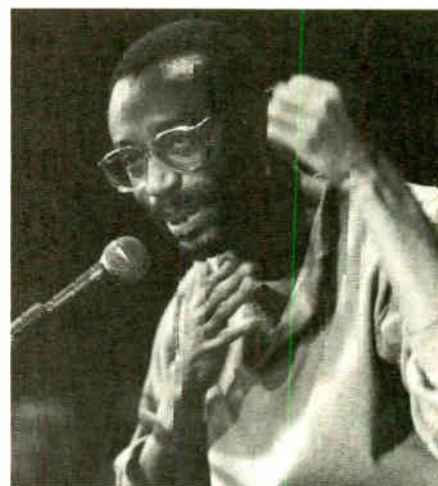
Bobby was born March 11, 1950 in New York, and first studied music at age six. His family moved to Los Angeles in 1958 where his father dubbed the singing voice of Sidney Poitier for the film *Porgy And Bess*.

Was the fact that his parents were singers something that might have held Bobby back from singing himself? "I've always denied it," he said, "but I'm beginning to wonder if that might have had something to do with it. Both my parents were singers, and I heard so much music that I didn't pay that much attention to it. I didn't decide on music as a career until I was a senior in high school and the counselor wanted to know what I wanted to do with my life, and I said music. It was the one thing I knew best. Prior to that, I didn't know what I wanted to do."

McFerrin attended Sacramento State

and Cerritos College in California, and soon he was on the road, for a while playing piano for the Ice Follies, often with lounge bands. Then one day, while working with a dance troupe in Salt Lake City, he heard a voice. "It's the same voice everyone has," he said, "that still small voice we all strive to listen to but many of us don't. I was in a quiet moment when a simple thought just came into my head: 'Why don't you sing?' It was as simple as that, but it must have had some force behind it because I acted on it immediately. I wasted no time. That very day I called up the Salt Lake Hilton and made an appointment for an audition. I auditioned the next day, and I got it."

McFerrin worked for a while as a pianist/vocalist, but then, in 1978 with his wife Debbie, he settled in New Orleans. He sang with Astral Project, his first real gig as a singer with a band. Later, they moved to San Francisco where he worked with a trio at Cadell Place and where he was discovered by Jon Hendricks. McFerrin joined Hendricks for a gig at Sweet Basil in New York, and they still enjoy singing together, especially impromptu duets. Bill Cosby heard McFerrin and arranged for him to sing in Las Vegas and at the Playboy Jazz Festival in Los Angeles. He was a sensation at the Kool Jazz Festival in New York, joining some of the greats for a tribute to the art of jazz singing. Later, he toured the Kool circuit with George Benson and an all-star band, and since then he's toured or recorded with the likes of



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Chico Freeman, Grover Washington Jr., and Herbie Hancock's VSOP. One highlight was in 1983, singing with his father at the Berlin Jazz Festival.

What do his parents think of Bobby's singing? "They think it's very musical," he said. "They taught me that I can listen to any kind of music if it feels musical. If there's something that comes through the music. It's not what you play, but what's behind it."

His debut album, *Bobby McFerrin*, a cornucopia of music recorded for Elektra Musician in 1982, offers everything from bop (Bud Powell's *Hallucinations* and Horace Silver's *Peace*) to r&b (Smokey Robinson's *You Really Got A Hold On Me*), some backed by a band, some by himself. McFerrin's music on his second



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**THREE YOUNG LIONS:** From left, McFerrin, Avery Sharpe, and Wynton Marsalis rehearse for the '82 Kool/New York Jazz Festival.



KEN SARGENT

### BOBBY McFERRIN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

THE VOICE—Elektra Musician 60366  
BOBBY McFERRIN—Elektra Musician 60023  
VOCAL SUMMIT—Moers Music 2004  
THE YOUNG LIONS—Elektra Musician 60196  
with Chico Freeman  
TANGENTS—Elektra Musician 9-60341 1E  
with Pharoah Sanders  
JOURNEY TO THE ONE—Theresa 104/4  
with Bob Dorough  
THAT'S THE WAY I FEEL NOW—A&M 6600

LP, *The Voice*, was all a capella, highlights from solo concerts he recorded in Germany in the spring of 1984.

He'd considered singing solo for some time, and when he felt the time was right he showed up on the European festival circuit in the summer of 1983 without the trio the promoters expected. He flabbergasted audiences immediately, and sang 50-some solo concerts before he recorded *The Voice*.

\* \* \*  
McFerrin's first inspiration to sing sans accompaniment was Keith Jarrett. "I owe a lot of my image of being a solo singer to Jarrett," he said. "The first time I heard him play was with Miles, and he blew me away. I didn't know who he was at first, but I loved the way he played and danced and moved. It just made sense to me. I was playing the piano at the time and was very influenced by his pianism. Then when I decided to sing and leave the piano behind, I still had the image of him in my mind as a soloist. I loved *Facing You*. I loved his attitude toward the piano, just sitting down and playing, just to see what would come out. Whether it worked or didn't work wasn't the point. It was simply doing it. So I started getting these images of being a solo vocalist and started tossing out everything else, being a balladeer, working in front of an orchestra, being Johnny Hartman, Tom Jones, whatever. This image of being a solo singer kept coming back, so I decided to explore it."

Whatever he's doing, McFerrin wants to be spontaneous. "I like being an improviser, expecting the unexpected," he said. "Even when something is rehearsed, I want it to be spontaneous." At the Blue Note, not much was rehearsed. He sang a la Miles on *What It Is*, then improvised some Slim Gaillard-ish jive. He wandered through the audience, conducting a singalong of a children's song, *Don't Worry, Be Happy*, then turned quiet with Jobim's *Meditation*—with trills Joan Sutherland might envy. He whistled the *Colonel Bogey March* as a prelude to everyone singing favorite TV themes, then rocked the house with a Sly Stone number. Later, he sang *Foggy Day* with Scofield's guitar backing, conducted a scatalong of *Freedom Jazz Dance*, and the whole audience became his choir for the spiritual *The Victory Shall Be Mine*. Even his "good night" became a song.

It's obvious McFerrin loves to work for and with and even among an audience. "I like being off center stage," he said. "Many times I just get in the audience and sit down and sing from there, even when I'm doing a solo concert."

He enjoys working with a band, but working solo is a whole other experience. "When I'm working with a band, I have a sideman attitude," he said. "I feel somehow that my solos are sidebars to the tunes rather than my solos *being* the tunes. I feel more connected with music and *with* myself when I'm singing *by* myself. For one thing, it's softer and my technique is a lot more fluid. The louder the music gets the more I have to push, and the more I have to push the less ideas actually come out."

When he sings solo, not only what one listens to changes, but the way one listens changes. "I worked in a wonderful hall in Atlanta, a church, and I didn't have to use amplification," he said. "The acoustics were so live that I could walk around and sing from anywhere, use the room as a microphone. Once you start shifting space, hearing is different. You'll hear with your right ear or your left ear, from above or below you. Also, when I'm working solo, I want people to listen to silence, not give the audience a clue that the piece might be over. That's one thing about singing solo, and especially acoustically. It offers you so many possibilities."

\* \* \*  
Among other musical possibilities for McFerrin is classical music. "I've been listening to Bach's *Goldberg Variations*," he said. "When I first listened to them I couldn't really hear what Bach was doing with the aria and the 30 variations. But I purposely kept listening to it. There was an inner drive in me to explore these pieces. Nadia Boulanger said the *Goldberg Variations* were her Bible. Philip Glass said everything he's doing now he learned from Bach. I thought Bach would be a good starting place."

He's been invited to sing the *Magnificat*

at the Bach Festival in Toronto. "They want me to learn it note-for-note the way it's written out," he said, "and then they want me to improvise on the themes. In fact, I've been getting a lot more requests from classical festivals," he said. "It's very exciting. It'll help me to expand. I don't think of myself as a jazz musician. I think of myself as a musician, a singer who's been influenced by many different types of music and who just loves to sing, particularly solo."

Is he interested in the electronic possibilities of altering his voice? "I don't think so," he said. "I think it would be less special. It would be easy to fall back on electronics if, in the course of an improvisation, I got stuck, but I'd rather wait it out." And anyway, there isn't much a machine can do with his voice that McFerrin can't do by himself.

"There aren't really many people using technology effectively," he said. "The only one I can think of who's doing an absolutely phenomenal job is Joe Zawinul. The sounds he comes up with seem to be so natural, they're like nothing I've ever heard before. I just did some stuff on the new Weather Report album, improvisational stuff on a couple of tunes and a couple with Carl Anderson and two women."

Along with all his other new projects, he's dreaming of a gig with Keith Jarrett. "I'd love to do some double-billed solo concerts with Jarrett," he said. "I'd do a solo section, he'd do a solo section, and if we could work something out we'd do something together. That would be wonderful."

What else? "I love to do visual things," he said. "I'd love to do some dance. There's a possibility of working with Alvin Ailey. I'm doing an arrangement of *Night In Tunisia* with Cheryl Bentine for Manhattan Transfer's new album. I haven't done any vocal arranging in quite some time, so that's been challenging. I'm interested in weird configurations, maybe another singer and a percussionist, or just voice with horns."

It's obvious that McFerrin believes very much in himself and in what he's doing. "People should explore themselves," he said, "really figure out what it is they want to do and then explore it to the hilt."

And what is it that McFerrin wants to explore now? "An artist is someone seeing something in himself that no one else sees," he said, "and I think it's a little chunk of eternity. What that eternity is I'm not sure, but I think a vast part of it must be peace—which brings me to the first line of Saint Francis' prayer, 'Lord, make me an instrument of peace.' Being a singer, being an instrument, anyone's role, my role, if I can help the world be a little more peaceful, that's all I want to do."

Make the world peaceful and sing your brains out? "And have fun doing it," said Bobby McFerrin. "Exactly!" **db**



# EMILY REMLER:

## *Life After Wes*

By Julie Coryell

When Emily Remler appeared at the Concord Jazz Festival in 1978, her career was launched. She immediately established herself as a musician with a new outlook on the electric guitar, as well as a healthy respect for past jazz pioneers. A graduate of Berklee College of Music, she continued to evolve in the years that followed as a member of the New Orleans musical community, where she "played every type of music. I believe God was putting me in these positions to make me learn these things because I learn best under pressure. I've always been put, not by my own choice, but by fate, in these situations to make me learn this style of music. I worked like a dog."

A three-year stint with vocalist Astrid Gilberto followed, as did frequent appearances with guitar greats like Herb Ellis, Barney Kessel, and Tal Farlow, who says "She has a great feel—she's *so* accomplished." These, plus solo concerts as well as teaching clinics, have provided Emily with steady work and the opportunity for continued growth as a player.

Future plans include records with guitarists Martin Taylor and Larry Coryell. A summer tour of Europe with Coryell is now in the making. At 27, Emily Remler has arrived.

**Julie Coryell:** Since your last *down beat* article (May '82), you have continued to grow in popularity with both the critics and fans. Has this resulted in your feeling pressured to live up to the expectations imposed by the media or your audience?

**Emily Remler:** Not at all, because I don't live up to any public expectation of me. I live up to the fact that Wes Montgomery and John Coltrane played the way they did. That's the absolute truth. Serious. I'm trying to live up to my own expectations, which were that at 21 I should be like John Coltrane—and I'm not. So I've got to give myself to 31 now.

**JC:** In what respect are you modeling yourself after John Coltrane? What qualities of his would you like to realize in your playing?

**ER:** To have a totally unique voice like Coltrane had. You hear two notes and you know that it's him. I want a totally unique voice, which I don't have now. People tell me they can recognize me, but I'm derivative. Of course, I have to be. I was not around in '52. I want to have my own voice, which means going through a personal maturity to be able to do that.

**JC:** You're talking about life maturity?

**ER:** Yeah. I think that is what you have to go through—that, plus a spiritual maturity like Coltrane did. I want to be innovative. I've written some things and I think that they are different. I think that they sound unique. Of course I'd love to make a contribution—the contribution that John Coltrane made was tremendous. I'd like to make a contribution like that to jazz guitar.

**JC:** Do you still feel that you are a disciple of Wes [Montgomery]? Do you still feel he's speaking through you?

**ER:** No, I don't feel like that any more. I think that I got out of that crazy stage. I used to keep a picture of Wes. I never met him but I feel like I know him through the music. But



something happened. When I was 15 I discovered Larry Coryell and John McLaughlin, among other people. And I was also studying Indian music. I didn't like things that were always 32 bars. Of course I couldn't play in 4/4. I couldn't play the guitar very well at all. But I could listen to it and sing along with it. At first, I was headed in that direction—to play unique, you know, avant garde-type music. I went to Berklee College of Music where mainstream was stressed at the time. So I got into that, and I fell in love with Wes. But what really happened was I met Herb Ellis. I got invited to the Concord Jazz Festival with Tal Farlow, Barney Kessel, and it seemed that my future would be secure in that realm. So, I went back to New Orleans and learned real quick how to play that style of music. And this is the truth. I didn't really play it that well before. I couldn't play like Wes. I went back and I figured "Hey, if I'm going to play this type of music from the '50s and early '60s, who do I want to copy?" And the answer was Wes and Coltrane. So I learned real quick how to play that way.

**JC:** How did you do that?

**ER:** I have a method of learning which works for me, which is some transcription—very little. A few bars, things like that. And transcribing melodies that Wes would play that were the essence of what he was doing—a few of his melodies that he would repeat that would sound like him, plus his octaves, of course, which I worked very hard on. Things that were the essence of Wes.

**JC:** You mean his personal vocabulary?

**ER:** His personal vocabulary in the most descriptive way—in a four-bar way, if it can be done. I copied that. I'd write it in music, I'd learn it on the guitar, and it would become a part of my vocabulary. And because I have somewhat of an imagination, I would vary it. Because I believe that my brain is like a computer. You put some data in and you get 500 variations.

But then there are some people who don't have the imagination who will just play Pat Martino lick number this and that. But I start with a Pat Martino lick and then I end up with my own ending to it. So, I copied Pat Martino and Wes Montgomery in that way, and that got me better. Plus playing along with records. Plus working with a metronome. That is the biggest thing—rhythm and time. I don't care how many notes you can play. I don't care if you can play John Coltrane licks note for note. If you are not swinging, I don't care what realm it is. Fusion whatever. If it does not groove, if you cannot move your neck to it no matter if it's an 11/8. I've got a tune in 11/8. I move my neck very well. So, I discovered that about moving a part of my body to get my time better. I was 17 years old. The teacher told me that I had bad time. I rushed like a madman, like most guitarists rush. It's a problem because it's a technical problem. Anyway, I rushed. So, I went home crying. Crying, but I bought a metronome. I worked with the metronome on two and four. This is really important. It's the accent of the high hat in that type of mainstream swing music. And I learned—I practiced with that thing and nothing else behind me. I laid down my own rhythm tracks. Still, when I lay down my own tracks, I use the metronome to make sure that I'm correct. So, what happens is that your time gets so much better, you get so much more sensitive to the waves of time that you can feel rushing and dragging. And it also builds up your confidence that you have the right time. You're in the band and you can say "Here's where it is." I *know* where it is. Don't tell me where it is—I *know* where it is. And especially in my case, being a woman, I've got to mention this, that I've had a few situations—let's say with drummers who didn't exactly trust right off the bat that my time would have good conviction to it. So, my time had to be really important so that they could trust me so that they could throw all their stuff at me, and not handle me with kid gloves, like they were scared.

**JC:** As a woman, did you have to work harder to be accepted?

**ER:** I still do. I didn't conquer it. Are you kidding? Now they know that I can play. But I still have to prove myself every single time. The only thing is that I'm not intimidated anymore. There was a time when I came fresh out of Berklee with the competitive frame of mind. I would ask to sit in. "Oh please, can I just play one tune? I won't screw things up." I'll go up there and burn their asses off. That's how I felt then. Now I realize that if you're thinking of that stuff you're not thinking of creativity and all these other things that I'm supposed to be doing in my solos. So I had to can that. I have to rise above it by playing good. You don't get angry, you don't get bitter, you don't get feminist about the thing. You don't try to make a statement for women. You just get so damn good that they'll forget about all that crap.

**JC:** Are you still transcribing guitarists?

**ER:** I'm trying to get myself to transcribe horn players. It took me about an hour to do this Michael Brecker lick (from *Some Skunk Funk*) and I still didn't get it. And I called him up and I left a message on his answering machine that I'm working on your thing and it's killing me. Because he can make it a little flat. He can make his horn a little flat and I can't find the triad.

**JC:** Do you still feel that your main connection, musically speaking, is to mainstream bebop, or do you feel that you're moving in a direction that will now encompass more kinds of music?

**ER:** This is so hard. I just talked about this with Tal [Farlow] last night. I said, "I have a real problem." I listen to Wes and Coltrane—well, early Coltrane, and I love it. But I also love these tunes that I just wrote on my record *Cat Walk*. This is the best thing that I've ever done. And that is not mainstream—it's got Indian influence, African influences. I love Brazilian music—I mean, I get chills from it. I played with Astrid Gilberto for three years. Man, I had a great time. I love the rhythms. I tried to get the essence of that rhythm; they're hard to feel. There's not a whole lot of Americans really playing Brazilian rhythms. You can play the dum-dum-dum-da-da, the Cuban, or something like that. But to really get into how



JULIE CORVELL

### EMILY REMLER'S EQUIPMENT

Emily Remler has been playing a Gibson ES 330 hollow body electric guitar for 10 years. She recently added a Borys hollow body—"For my two musical personalities: the modern me, and the bebop me." She strings both with D'Addarios and uses Fender extra-heavy 1.21 mm. picks ("I used to have a piece of wood, then tupperware"). She owns Musicman and Polytone amps, though also likes and has used a Waiter Woods, a Fender Twin, and a Roland Chorus. "I buy amps that I can pick up, 'cause otherwise I have to get strange men from the street to help me take it out of the car."

### EMILY REMLER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader	with the Clayton Brothers
CAT WALK—Concord Jazz 265	IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY—Concord Jazz 138
TRANSITIONS—Concord Jazz 236	
TAKE TWO—Concord Jazz 195	with Ray Brown
FIREFLY—Concord Jazz 162	SOULAR ENERGY—Concord Jazz 265

they do it, to their culture and their frame of mind, where they are coming from, is amazing. I love the Brazilian—the way they do not do a 32-bar format. A lot of them seem to be more free about that. Especially Egberto Gismonti. I love Egberto. Romantic. The language of Portuguese is romantic. Because music is relative to speech, the language lends itself to beautiful phrasing. It's romantic music. It's happy music. It makes you move.

**JC:** Do you feel that you may be incorporating more classical influences into your music?

**ER:** I use my fingers a lot. Everyone thinks I have classical training, which I don't. I took one classical lesson at Berklee, and we spent the whole time deciding how I was supposed to sit. That was too much authority for me. I do listen to a lot of Debussy and I hope some of it will sink in.

**JC:** In terms of how you taught yourself to become a better player, do you feel that the work that you did on your own was more significant than what you got out of Berklee?

**ER:** Berklee is instrumental because I was a total beginner. I came out not playing that great, but with a lot of knowledge of chords and theory. I would say that Berklee was good for me in theory and harmony and ear training. It was excellent. Then I had to take it from there, because no one can play your guitar for you. I partied a lot at Berklee. There were 50 men to every woman. You bring out a cigarette and you get 10 lights. You're in the lunchroom—you pick up a piece of food and it drops off your fork, you look up and there are 10 guys looking at you. It was incredible. It was fun. So, I didn't concentrate that hard. I was a child. I went to Berklee at 16.

**JC:** You teach clinics and privately. What's your approach?

**ER:** I'm a great believer in too much will not sink in. For instance, four bars of someone's solo will sink in, but two whole choruses will not. I'm sort of proud of my teaching abilities



because people come to me from other teachers who have given them enough material for their whole life, and they can't play the blues. So I work on blues first. I work on the little things. Four bars, 16 bars, the time. That's how I absorbed things so that's how I think that other people must absorb them.

**JC:** Do you use specific books?

**ER:** Never used a book in my life, as a teacher. I feel like I have the ability to discern what that person needs to work on the most first, and we go on from there. If their rhythm is bad, we work on their rhythm. If the rhythm is good then we'll start on theory. And I use theory from Berklee—what I remember, and what I've discovered myself in these years of playing. Little tricks. I want to see my students be able to get better. Psychiatrists keep people in their office sick for years. I want to see my students go out and play. I want to feel good about that.

**JC:** In Pat Metheny's recent interview for *db* (Jan. '85), he talks about the new technology and that he's been using the Synclavier and it's unlimited in the sense that it's up to your imagination as to what you can get out of it. He also says that a whole new breed of musicians will emerge using new technology. What is your response to that?

**ER:** Let me tell you first that in my aptitude test in high school I scored 98 and 99 in verbal usage and spelling, 35 in technical reading. Mechanical reasoning—I'm a moron. I plug the guitar into the amp and it's a big deal. When I get one of those pedals—chorus, flanger, digital delay—I fool with it all night long. For me, maybe one day I will learn how to use that. I respect and envy Pat because he took the time to learn that stuff, and how can you compete with the beautiful sounds that you can get out of those machines? I mean, sounds like the sun coming up, for God's sake. Can I get the sun coming up with one note? That is the question. In a way, I guess I have to also respect the fact that the earlier players who I do love didn't use that and still got their own voice. I think there is too much emphasis in some of the schools on some of that technology, without the foundation and expression of natural humor.

**JC:** What do you mean by natural humor? You said Wes had humor.

**ER:** He cracks me up. I was listening to Wes with my parents, laughing hysterically. Because I can hear him quoting things. That's obvious humor. When someone quotes a little song, you laugh. But other things; just the way he did an ingenious turnaround. Came around the bend like that. Raised up to a climax—just like life. Joe Pass gets himself into hairy situations. He takes risks and then gets himself out of it. And I have to laugh about that. People's ease. Oscar Peterson's ease. His touch is so tickle-y it makes me laugh. There's a lot of humor missing, I think, from some of the younger players today. It's very serious stuff. And at the same time I love Pat Martino, who's somber and dark. But I guess that I like both things. I like some kind of emotion. Whether it be somber and dark and morose, or humorous and light and funny and clever. I'm laughing at Wes' cleverness. If I go to see somebody play and they play a 15-minute solo, I think to myself "Wow." They must have been great because he played that long and he didn't quote the usual clichés and this and that. But I didn't feel a damn thing. He didn't take me anywhere. I started thinking about the check, or something. I want to be taken someplace. Bill Evans made me cry. I want to feel some emotion. Maybe that is old fashioned, I don't know.

**JC:** Larry Coryell said in a *db* interview (May '84), "Until I was willing to take risks and make mistakes, I wasn't going to make any progress and it was hard to shed my perfectionist tendencies." Would you classify yourself as a perfectionist?

**ER:** First of all, he's older than me, so maybe it's something that I'll get to. I know that if I expect perfection out of every solo, out of every record, I'm going to get very disappointed. I quit art because of that. I was an artist. I did sculpting and drawings. It was a choice of whether I could go to Berklee College of Music or Rhode Island School of Design. I had to make that choice. I was so frustrated with art. I couldn't get it

the way that I wanted it. Music, at least you get more chances and a little more time and have the companionship of the other musicians. Other musicians make me play better.

**JC:** If you had to define what the elements or the components of a great solo were, what would you say?

**ER:** This is something that I'm working on. You know how things in life build up tension and release? Okay. Now I think that I can do tension-and-release on a small scale, let's say in a four-bar phrase. But to think on a longer scale, like from the beginning of my solo to the end to make a thematic statement, to develop it, to come to a climax and come to a natural downfall—that's a good solo. With those elements of happiness, sadness, moroseness.

**JC:** How do you compose?

**ER:** I come up with a fragment of something, out of nowhere. On a gig. It might be playing, usually with friends. "Wow, listen to that." And I get very dedicated. That's what Steve Swallow says. The exact words. "I'm dedicated to my fragments." And I know what he means. They eventually become songs. It's almost like I wake up with the rest of the song.

You know what my dream is? My dream is to write for movies, like John Williams. That is the ultimate, because he is making millions of people feel a certain way at the exact second that he wants them to. Now, it's not manipulation that I want. It's the joy of being able to do it. It's ingenious. My hero of all time is Leonard Bernstein. More than Wes, more than Coltrane.

**JC:** Why?

**ER:** Because if it wasn't for *West Side Story*, I wouldn't be playing music. The music drove me crazy. I sang all the background parts. Besides that, another piece he wrote, *The Age Of Anxiety*, was very instrumental in me getting to love Leonard Bernstein the way that I do. I respect everything that he does. I saw him on television teaching a class in the most ingenious way. If I could switch with somebody right now, just for a couple of days, it would be Leonard.

**JC:** Let's talk about your last record, *Cat Walk*.

**ER:** First of all, I became, I guess, more of a leader in the way that this record has the guitar much more prominent than the *Transitions* record with the same group. It's more guitar-oriented. I got a better sound on the guitar. I don't sound so muffled and introverted. I sound out. I'm out there. People would come to see me in concert and say that I sound nothing like my records. So, on this record I finally got to express five years' worth of my own tunes, and I love Carl Jefferson for it, because he trusted me, he likes my songs. They are not exactly mainstream. I don't know what the categories are. The Concord label gave me a total free hand with this. I'm very satisfied with that company because of that.

On *Transitions* there is no piano, which means that I'm in control of all the harmony, which I like very much—the sparseness, to play over the chord changes of something as difficult as *Transitions*, which goes through three different time signatures, with no chords to push me to anything. But I had Eddie Gomez and Bob Moses. And I would say things to Bob, "Maybe I should get a piano player," or "Maybe I should get another guitar player." And Bob said, "We'll comp for you." He did. But on *Cat Walk* I have these tunes that I wanted some pushing behind me. And I didn't trust anybody to be able to do it the way that I wanted it done, so I double-tracked, because I had to improvise a few times over a written track that was already recorded so I couldn't get interplay within the group. Therefore, what I did was memorize the rhythm tracks as well, and it's rising and falling down and I went with it. It turned out very well. It was my first experience with overdubbing, which is a big thing for me, with all the studio stuff and electronics going on.

We should call it *This Is Me, Emily, Cat Walk* because the other ones were: *This Is How Much I Love Wes*, that was the first one. The second one was *This Is How Much I Love Don Thompson And Terry Clarke*. The third one was *Half Me And Half This Is How Much I Love Wes*. Now, this is Me. **db**

# Paul Wertico's Drum Obsession



MARTIN COHEN

By Bill Milkowski

**H**e can't explain it. He really has no idea where it came from. Certainly not from his parents, whose interest in music never went beyond the local easy-listening station on their car radio.

Wherever it came from, Paul Wertico was deeply in touch with his muse from the time he picked up drums at age 12. It was 1966. Kids his age from his background—middle American family living simply in Carv, Illinois—were attuned to the sounds of the times: Beatles, Beach Boys, Stones. A year later it would be Cream, Hendrix, the Who.

Wertico heard these sounds on the radio and at parties. He was somewhat interested, particularly in Mitch Mitchell's drumming with the Jimi Hendrix Experience. But when it came time to partake in that great adolescent rite—buying one's first album—young Wertico didn't choose the Beatles' *Revolver*, the Beach Boy's *Pet Sounds*, the Rolling Stones' *Aftermath*, or the Who's *My Generation*. His unorthodox tastes told him to pick Charles Lloyd's *Love In* album.

"I don't know why," he recalls. "I just

had this fascination with playing over the bar rhythms, even though I probably didn't understand technically what it was all about. Still, I had this instinctive feel for it. That's just the way I heard things. I was hearing the drums as this free voice while everybody else my age was still playing *Wipeout*."

At around the same time, tucked away in the rural solitude of Lee's Summit, Missouri, a young guitarist named Pat Metheny was eschewing the Beatles, the Beach Boys, and their ilk for the headier music of Ornette Coleman. It was fated that these two free spirits be brought together.

"Pat actually called me around '77-78 to do some gigs at Amazingrace in Chicago, but I couldn't do them. I was playing at the Jazz Showcase with (saxophonist) Joe Daley and (pianist) Muhal Richard Abrams at the time. I had been playing with Joe for about two years so I felt a loyalty thing there. I knew who Pat was and I really wanted to play with him, but I felt I had to stay with Joe. But Pat knew who I was from that point."

Wertico was on the road with the Simon & Bard group when he finally met up with Metheny. "It was in Portland in November of '83," he recalls. "We were playing in town the same night Pat's band was. Pat's bass player, Steve Rodby (formerly of the Simon & Bard group) brought Pat down after their concert to check out the band. Pat heard me and I guess he liked what he heard."

As Metheny told *db* (Jan. '85), "I have to say I've never been around any musician who has improved more dramatically than this guy in a short period of time. He went from being real good to being one of the best drummers I've ever played with, which is saying something since I've played with many great drummers. He can truly play in the variety of styles that we need, but he always sounds like himself, he always plays from the inside out. He puts *everything* he's got into it."

Versatility was Paul's strongpoint all through his years of gigging around Chicago before hooking up with Metheny. When he wasn't swinging with big bands



or bashing with rock groups, he was taking it all the way out in adventurous improvised settings. Consequently, his record collection is eclectic and his influences numerous—"Everybody from Baby Dodds to Milford Graves and everybody in-between."

Among the rock drummers who made an impression on him were Michael Giles of early King Crimson, Robert Wyatt from Soft Machine, and Ginger Baker from Cream. But the single drummer he points to as a towering influence is Roy Haynes. "When I first heard him play, it epitomized the kind of thing that I wanted to do. For one thing, he's a really happy sounding drummer and I dig that. And he's crisp. He gets his message across in a clear way and makes the music

sound good all the time. That's what I want to do as a drummer. My attitude is, when I play music I want to make the other musicians feel as comfortable with themselves as I can."

That collective approach fits into the Pat Metheny Group in particular. A hard-driven perfectionist, Metheny knows precisely what he wants in a group sound and he expects the band members to be good team players. Wertico was tailor-made for this band. "What Pat is looking for in a drummer, besides versatility, is somebody who's going to be on all the time. When he goes out to play—man! I've never seen a night, even when he's sick, that he didn't go out there with the killer instinct. When he plays he's so serious about playing that it's all there is. And I think that's what he demands of the rest of the band."

\* \*

Wertico fills the bill. His relationship with drums borders on the obsessive. During his pre-Metheny years he'd gig in Chicago until 3 a.m., drive to his home on the outskirts of town, put on headphones and practice until sunrise (much to the dismay of his next-door neighbor). "I was just so into playing that I couldn't get enough. I just didn't think about any reality. It's always been like that for me. The music has always been so important that everything else just kind of gets pushed aside, including some logic."

Metheny tells a story that best illustrates Wertico's devotion to the music: "When that tv movie *The Day After* was on and the big question was, 'What would you do if the rockets were launched and you had 10 minutes left before the bombs came back from the other side?' Paul said, 'I know what I'd do. I'd practice.' And I knew right then that this was the guy I wanted to be playing with."

One of the many side projects that Wertico cherishes is his ongoing relationship with the free music collective Ear Wax Control, with Jeff Czech on bass and Gordon James on keyboards. This improvising trio came together in 1972 and the telepathy has been there ever since. They've built up a loyal following of listeners over the years who have come to expect the unexpected.

"We just try to stay in touch with the raw essence of what we're doing," says Wertico. "It's not all processed and figured out. A lot of it sounds like subversive music, but there's a tongue-in-cheek aspect to it. Musicians in town love us. We only do a handful of gigs and a lot of them come up to me afterwards and say, 'Man, I only wish I had the balls to do this live—just to sit there and express yourself collectively rather than having a tune to fall back on, or a light show, or something.' We literally go out with a blank tablet, and the stuff that comes out is a

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## PAUL WERTICO'S EQUIPMENT

Paul Wertico uses and endorses Yamaha drums and hardware: rack toms are 8×12 and 9×13; floor toms are 14×14, 16×16, and another 16×16 with a pedal; roto toms are 8-inch and 10-inch; snare is a metal 5½×14. He also uses and endorses Paiste cymbals, which he says are vital for the Pat Metheny sound. "The light, airy-type cymbals go really well with the textures of the music. These cymbals stay out of the overtone range of the guitar and let Pat's sound be heard. Whereas, clangier cymbals tend to mush the sound up." He employs several Paistes: 14-inch high hat, Sound Creation dark; 16-, 17-, and 18-inch crash cymbals from the 2002 series; 17-inch paper-thin crash from the 602 series; a 22-inch flat ride from the 2002 series; 11-inch splash from the 602 series; 8-inch splash from the 2002 series; 22-inch Novo (Chinese) from the 2002 series; 20-inch Color Sound (red) ride; 18-inch Color Sound (red) crash; a set of cup chimes from the 2002 series.

After much trial-and-error he has settled on Pro Mark 808 golden oak wood tip drum sticks, "because they have the best overall overtone and undertone range for the ride cymbal—not too thin, yet crisp at the same time." His various accessories include Latin Percussion cowbells and congas, a Chevy hubcap, and a pressure cooker (really!). On-stage he uses an Electro-Harmonix DeLuxe Memory Man for occasional berserk effects during his solos. He has Remo Ambassador heads, Gauger rims, and a Drum Workshop double bass drum pedal. Apart from the Metheny Group he uses talking drum, slit drum, various gongs, and chimes. At home he experiments with a Tama practice set hooked up to a Dynachord head and a Drumulator, though he says of his playful excursions into electronics: "It's fun. It's a neat thing to do. But I tell you, the real drums to me—there's nothing like it. The overtones that you get are so interesting—you could never create them with a machine."

## PAUL WERTICO SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

with Pat Metheny Group  
THE FALCON AND THE SNOWMAN—EMI SV-17150  
FIRST CIRCLE—ECM 25008-1

with Paul Berliner and Kudu  
THE SUN RISES LATE HERE—Flying Fish 092

with Ear Wax Control  
EAR WAX CONTROL—Depot 005

with Spontaneous Composition  
SPONTANEOUS COMPOSITION—Spoco 12101

with Simon & Bard  
TEAR IT UP—Flying Fish 262

with Ellen McIlwaine  
EVERYBODY NEEDS IT—Blind Pig 1081

with Ken Nordine  
TRIPLE TALK—Snail Records 1002



PHOTOS BY MARGARET MAXWELL





## DUKE ELLINGTON

**FEATURING PAUL GONSAIVES**—Fantasy 9636: *C JAM BLUES*; *TAKE THE "A" TRAIN*; *HAPPY-GO-LUCKY LOCAL*; *JAM WITH SAM*; *CARAVAN*; *JUST A-SITTIN' AND A-ROCKIN'*; *PARIS BLUES*; *READY, GO*.

**Personnel:** Ellington, piano; Gonsalves, tenor saxophone; Roy Burrowes, Cat Anderson, Bill Berry, Ray Nance, trumpet; Lawrence Brown, Leon Cox, Chuck Connors, trombone; Russell Procope, Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone; Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet, tenor saxophone; Harry Carney, baritone saxophone; Aaron Bell, bass; Sam Woodyard, drums.

★★★★★

**CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT**—Musicraft 2004: *JAM-A-DITTY*; *MAGENTA HAZE*; *HAPPY-GO-LUCKY LOCAL*, PARTS 1 & 2; *GOLDEN FEATHER*; *IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A DREAM*; *FLIPPANT FLURRY*; *DIMINUENDO IN BLUE*; *THE BEAUTIFUL INDIANS*, PART 1 (*HIAWATHA*), PART 2 (*MINNEHAHA*); *SULTRY SUNSET*; *TULIP OR TURNIP*; *OVERTURE TO A JAM SESSION*, PARTS 1 & 2; *BLUE SKIES* (*TRUMPET NO END*).

**Personnel:** Ellington, piano; Cootie Williams, Taft Jordan, Harold Baker, Cat Anderson, Shelton Hemphill, trumpet; Ray Nance, trumpet, violin, vocal; Lawrence Brown, Claude Jones, Wilbur DeParis, trombone; Russell Procope, Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone; Al Sears, tenor saxophone; Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet, tenor saxophone; Harry Carney, baritone saxophone, clarinet; Freddy Guy, guitar; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Sonny Greer, drums; Kay Davis, Al Hibbler, vocals.

★★★★★

Recorded May 1, 1962, the previously unreleased performances from Fantasy depart radically from Ellington's customary concept of album programming in that they are all designed to feature one performer at length, in this case Paul Gonsalves. This was a signal honor for the tenorman, since not even his more deeply entrenched and more widely venerated sectionmates, Hodges and Carney, had ever had, under the Ducal banner, an entire album placed at their disposal. In typical fashion, Duke did not let Gonsalves know of his plans beforehand; he simply called out some long-familiar arrangements and instructed the tenorman to play through all of the solos formerly given to others. The result is a set of documents that rank among the most perfectly realized of any in Paul's wide-ranging canon.

He was in remarkably good form that day, with his deep, rich tone, though somewhat less flamboyant than Ben Webster's, nevertheless with the same readiness as that of his idol.

Perhaps it is precisely because his sound did carry less weight than Webster's that he was able to deploy his enviable technique to swifter ends.

There is a nice balance of tempos throughout, but surprisingly, there are no out-and-out ballads; this is particularly regrettable because Paul was so skilled in this medium. However, there are ample opportunities otherwise to savor the lush fullness of his lower register, especially on such relaxed medium-tempoed numbers as *Happy-Go-Lucky Local*, *Caravan*, and *Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'*. By 1962, already world famous for his endurance and consistency, Paul achieves his tour-de-force here on *Ready, Go*, a bright blues upon which he plays 19 successive choruses and a long unaccompanied coda. Needless to say, though the intensity builds at an even rate throughout, there is never once a flagging of ideas or integrity.

The Musicraft album represents something far different from the Fantasy LP. First of all, it is a reissue of a group of very familiar 78s recorded for the original Musicraft label between October 23 and December 11, 1946; second, this same material was released a few years back in the Prestige two-fer *The Golden Duke* (P-24029), as well as having appeared on no fewer than 14 other labels during the '50s; third, the title of the album is flagrantly misleading, for not only were various selections recorded at five separate sessions between the dates indicated (not in concert), but this fact is clearly spelled out in the liner notes.

Musically, of course, there is nothing to complain about. These are all, if not genuine classics, then at least very respectable performances by one of Duke's better post-War bands. Most of the selections are designed as showcases for one or more soloists, with Hodges quite understandably receiving the lion's (or should I say "rabbit's") share of the spotlight. The other featured artists are Hamilton (*Flippant Flurry* and Part 1 of the *Overture*), Carney (*Golden Feather*), Nance (*Overture*, Part 2 and *Tulip Or Turnip*), and the entire section on *Trumpet No End*. *Jam-A-Ditty* is especially interesting for its band-within-a-band voicing for Jordan, Brown, Hamilton, and Carney.

—jack sohmer

## ARVO PÄRT

**TABULA RASA**—ECM 1275: *FRATRES* (FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO); *CANTUS IN MEMORY OF BENJAMIN BRITTEN*; *FRATRES* (FOR 12 CELLOS); *TABULA RASA*.

**Personnel:** Gidon Kremer, violin (cut 1); Keith Jarrett, piano (1); Staatsorchester Stuttgart, Dennis Russell Davies, conductor (2); 12 cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (3); Tatjana Grindenko, violin (4); Alfred Schnittke, prepared piano (4); Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, Saulus Sondeckis, conductor (4).

★★

There is a story that Anton Bruckner, the great 19th century symphonist, was seen one day at the organ of an empty church. He pulled out all of the stops and played the C-major triad—

C-E-G—sustaining the chord for several minutes as he shouted into the vacant room, "How beautiful it is!" The incident is typical of Bruckner, who is celebrated for the straightforward purity of his music. But, of course, he never relied on variations of a single simple chord to build a symphony. No matter how appealing its purity, Bruckner recognized the beauty of that C-major chord as a musical element rather than music itself.

Arvo Pärt, born in Estonia, USSR, in 1935 and now living in West Berlin, is enamored of a similar purity and simplicity of expression, what Erik Satie called a "*musique pauvre*," basic and spare both of ornament and invention. I suppose achieving such a music is an admirable goal, especially to those of a puritanical or, in the case of Pärt, Russian Orthodox turn of mind. In the hands of a very few composers—Bruckner, Brahms, Anton Webern, and John Cage among them—such musical "poverty" can be even more universally inspiring, a successful realization of what the architect Mies van der Rohe called the principle of "less is more." In less gifted hands, however, the elements of simplicity and purity, while often impressive in the momentary effects they yield, fail to cohere into music. They remain elements.

*Frates* (1977) is played on this album in two versions, one for violin and piano and one for 12 cellos. Simple, close harmonies built on the string family's natural interval—the fifth—structure this piece, which is written in what Pärt calls his "tintinnabuli" style. It is elemental and tonal, motivic rather than melodic, and executed—on violin or cellos—without vibrato. Open strings and harmonics, sometimes soaring, sometimes curiously cramped and rustic in the manner of early John Cage, abound. Indeed, in both versions, the piece recalls Cage and Alan Hovhaness: the chaste, grainy, and pastoral quality of Cage's ineffable *String Quartet In Four Parts* (1950) and the pentatonic hollow harmonies that glide through many of Hovhaness' symphonic works. Like Cage, too, Pärt seems especially—even perversely—concerned with the tension between music, a temporal art form, and art itself, an aspiration to timelessness. His music attempts to express stasis. The result is about what one would expect when a medium tied to movement and change is forced to evoke motionlessness and permanence. Boring.

This is not to say that it lacks impressive, even affecting gestures. The *Cantus In Memory Of Benjamin Britten* (1976) is a chromatic work that employs an entire string choir in one long crescendo built upon a droning pedal point—a great welling-up and a final sigh. Yet it, too, leaves the impression of incompleteness, as if we've heard an element of music but not music itself.

*Tabula Rasa* (1977) lasts almost a half-hour, but its two parts still fail to be more than fragments. The first segment has more tintinnabulation, with gongs and highly colorful string harmonics. But its cyclical structure, a series of melodramatic crescendos over a trudging pedal rhythm that uncannily recalls the last movement of Prokofiev's *First Violin Concerto*, goes—where else?—nowhere. The



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# RECORD REVIEWS

second part is again allied to Cage's quest for stasis. It comes off, curiously enough, like the slow movement of Vivaldi's *Winter* (from *The Four Seasons*) distorted through some lethargic nightmare of dull obsession.

Commissioned by violinist Gidon Kremer, the work elicited the following response from the orchestra musicians when they first saw the score: "Where is the music?" As hapless Hamlet says in the play, *that* is the question.

—alan axelrod



## GEORGE BENSON

**20/20**—Warner Bros. 25178: *NO ONE EMOTION; PLEASE DON'T WALK AWAY; I JUST WANNA HANG AROUND YOU; NOTHING'S GONNA CHANGE MY LOVE FOR YOU; BEYOND THE SEA; 20/20; NEW DAY; HOLD ME; STAND UP; YOU ARE THE LOVE OF MY LIFE.*

**Personnel:** Benson, guitar, vocals; Michael Sembello, guitar, vocals (cuts 1, 3, 8); Randy Waldman, synthesizers, keyboards (1, 3, 6); Rob Mounsey, Synclavier (8); Clifford Carter (2, 8); Neil Larsen (9); James Newton Howard (2), synthesizers; Daniel Sembello, DX-7 Rhodes, bass synthesizer (3); Robbie Buchanan, synthesizer programming (4); Randy Goodman, DMX drum machine, DSX sequencer programming, synthesizer programming (6); Steve Kipner, DMX drum machine, DSX sequencer programming (6); Dave Grusin, flute synthesizer, string synthesizer (9); Richard Tee, bass synthesizer (8, 9); Rhodes electric piano (2); Barnaby Finch, DX-7 Rhodes (9); Randy Kerber, keyboards (10); Paul Jackson (4, 10); Cecil Womack (7); Dan Huff (4); David Williams (9), guitars; Marcus Miller (2); Nathan East (3); Anthony Jackson (7); Neil Stubenhaus (10), bass; Paulinho Da Costa (1, 3, 6, 9); Ralph MacDonald (7, 8), percussion; Errol Crusher Bennett, finger cymbals (7); Dave Weckl (1); Steve Ferrone (1); Carlos Vega (4); John Robinson (9); Rick Schlosser (10), drums; Cliff Magness, Russ Titelman, drum machine programming (1); Bryan Lee Janszen, Simmons drum programming (8); Jerry Hey, Gary Grant, Kim Hutchcroft, Gary Herbig, horns (1); George Young, flute (7); Patti Austin (1, 3, 6); James Taylor (6); Linda Womack (7); Lani Groves (1); Gordy Grody (1); Richard Marx (4); Deborah Thomas (4); Roberta Flack (10); Darryl Phinnessee (10); David Cochran (10), vocals.

★ ★ ★

Let's give Gorgeous George a break. Let's face facts. The man is a pop superstar. All you bebop curmudgeons can forget about Benson reprising *It's Uptown* or his burning sessions

with Jack McDuff. That's like waiting around for the Great Pumpkin to show up on Halloween. I mean, that stuff happened more than 20 years ago when young George was hungry and struggling. Now he likes his cars and his big home just fine, thanks. The man has paid his dues, so let's not begrudge him his success.

It's too easy to be cynical about this album. From a jazz perspective it would merit no stars. Maybe a half. But you can't listen to post-Breezin' Benson with the same ears you reserve for *Cookbook* or *Blue Benson*. Save that attitude for his current work with Jimmy Smith (*Off The Top* on Elektra Musician) and Stanley Turrentine (*Straight Ahead* on Blue Note), for instance. That stuff holds up under the strictest jazz scrutiny. But this album—it just ain't jazz. What's more, it never pretends to be anything more than slick, contemporary pop music geared for the airwaves and mega-sales. On that level *20/20* succeeds greatly. George has been consistently cranking out the most polished, engaging, and catchy pop music this side of Toto, and I'm sure he'll continue in that vein until sales begin to lag (and they haven't let up yet).

Interestingly enough, where Benson's early mentors and inspirations were his elders (Wes Montgomery and Charlie Christian), his current mentors are his juniors. Though his Wes-like guitar chops are still very much intact (when he does happen to pick up the instrument) George The Singer seems to emulate the vocal stylings of Michael McDonald, Kenny Loggins, James Ingram, and other *popmeisters* of their ilk. Not bad role models, if you want to sell records.

Musically this album has much in common with Al Jarreau's latest album (also on WB), *High Crime*. Many of the same sidemen appear on both records (Nathan East, Steve Kipner, Robbie Buchanan, Jerry Hey) to give it that signature modern pop sound. The title cut is a Jarreau-ish romp to the bright accompaniment of DMX drum and synth programs. Dig the hooks. James Taylor and Patti Austin add harmony vocals. This one is spelled h-i-t.

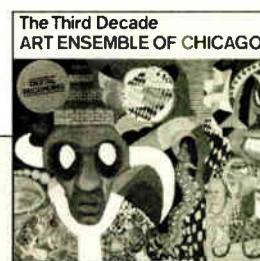
Guitarist/songwriter Michael Sembello figures prominently in this album. He penned *Hold Me* and the catchy *I Just Want To Hang Around* with his keyboard-playing brother Daniel. He also cranks out flashy Rockman-inflected solos on *Hold Me* and *No One Emotion*, a frantic little ditty that sounds not unlike another Sembello composition, *Maniac* from the dreadful movie *Flashdance*. *Please Don't Walk Away* is a breezy pop affair penned by Toto's guitarist/songwriter Steve Lukather. Eh, just so-so. *Stand Up* is a mildly engaging instrumental penned by Neil Larsen which pretends to be a showcase for Benson's scat-and-pick technique. If we're gonna talk about flaunting chops, I prefer *Cookbook*.

Crooner George gets schmaltzy to the max in a duet with Roberta Flack on *You Are The Love Of My Life*. The saccharine string arrangement here is just begging for a grandiose piano crescendo from Richard Clayderman. *New Day* is a polished love ballad with a country feel, penned by Cecil and Linda Womack and featuring Benson's golden falsetto. It's basically The Staples without the funk of Pops and the oomph of Mavis. *Beyond The*

*Sea* is the album's token nod to jazz, featuring a stellar cast of fer-real jazzmen covering this old pop hit by Bobby Darin with Basie-esque flair. This tune is getting massive airplay on jazz stations and is probably the only cut on *20/20* that jazz programmers would touch.

Still, George is cool. He has nothing to prove—not by me anyway. He's the baddest guitarist on the planet, period. You know it, I think he knows it. Of course, badness does not butter the bread. And Benson has been dining well lately, indeed.

—bill milkowski



## ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO

**THE THIRD DECADE**—ECM 1273: *PRAYER FOR JIMBO KWESI; FUNKY AECO; WALKING IN THE MOONLIGHT; THE BELL PIECE; ZERO; THIRD DECADE.*

**Personnel:** Lester Bowie, trumpet, flugelhorn, bass drum, cymbal rack; Joseph Jarman, soprano, alto, tenor, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet, clarinet, piccolo, Eb flute, C flute, conch shell, gongs, congas, tom-tom drums, whistles, bell rack, siren, bike horns, bass pan drum, synthesizer; Roscoe Mitchell, soprano, alto, tenor, bass saxophone, piccolo, C flute, clarinet, bongos, conga, gongs, glockenspiel, whistles, bells, pans, bike horns, dinner chimes, wood blocks; Malachi Favors Maghostut, acoustic bass, percussion, melodica, bass pan drums, electric bass, cymbals, belafon, cans; Famoudou Don Moye, "Sun Percussion" (trap drums, bendir, bike horns, whistles, congas, djimbe, djun-djun, donno, bongos, timpani, chekere, conch shell, long horn, elephant horn, gongs; cymbals, chimes, wood blocks, belafon, bass pan drums).

★ ★ ★

Third decade? I thought it was the AACM, not the 17-year-old Art Ensemble of Chicago, that was born in 1965. A quibble maybe, but self-consciousness about one's place in history is always a bad sign. For, just as the AEC falls to memorializing its own longevity, it also releases an album that, like its recent concerts, steers away from the process improvisation that once made it so provocative and toward a formatted repertory.

Four of the six tracks on *The Third Decade* course along fixed, old-fashioned paths: ceremonious Celtic three-step on *Prayer For Jimbo Kwesi*; disco kick-drum on *Funky AECO*; slow foxtrot on *Walking In The Moonlight*; and medium-fast bop on *Zero*. Even the transportive, ancestral chimes of *The Bell Piece* and the



aggressive group improv of the title cut backtrack familiar territory. Still, it's patented AEC country nonetheless, and there are some sweet if not world-shaking views along the way.

Roscoe Mitchell's cat-footed rendition of a slow-dance big band romance written by his father (also named Roscoe, and pictured as a young man on the back cover) wobbles like a delicate, sentimental pond in the wind, complete with out-of-tune "section" sound and wide vibrato, taking the ear directly to the heart. Lester Bowie's five amazing straight-ahead bebop choruses on his Zero are as harmonically intelligent and articulate as anything I've heard from any quarter—"avant garde" or otherwise—in a long time. Joseph Jarman's airy new synthesizer is promising, too, although here he only uses it to invoke that sentimental, two-chord schtick that Brit "new folk" groups like Silly Wizard milk a living from. And though the doodads and squiggles Jarman adds to the funnily appropriate tincan percussion on *Funky AECO* (a homemade *Rockit?*) are "correct," the tune itself seems merely a formal exercise to prove you can funk out without a million-dollar studio.

Surely the Art Ensemble hasn't endured this long just to prove a point. (The passage of time hangs thematically over this album in every respect; it is dedicated to the late European roadie, Jo Härtig, who died last fall in the same crash that killed Collin Walcott.) My own "third decade" wish to this unflinching quintet is that they not only continue to hold the enchanted ground they obviously have gained, but unearth new worlds as well.

—paul de barros

## JAMES WILLIAMS

**ALTER EGO**—Sunnyside 1007: *BLACK SCHOLARS*; *ALTER EGO*; *HAVANA DAYS*; *FOURPLAY*; *A TOUCHING AFFAIR*; *WALTZ FOR MONK*; *BEAUTY WITHIN*.

**Personnel:** Williams, piano; Bill Pierce, soprano, tenor saxophone; Bill Easley, alto, tenor saxophone, flute, alto flute, clarinet; Kevin Eubanks, guitar; Ray Drummond, bass; Tony Redus, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

## ROBERT WATSON/ CURTIS LUNDY

**BEATITUDES**—New Note 11867: *TO SEE HER FACE*; *KARITA*; *JEWEL*; *E.T.A.*; *MINORITY*; *ORANGE BLOSSOM*; *BEATITUDES*.

**Personnel:** Watson, alto saxophone; Lundy, bass; Mulgrew Miller, piano; Kenny Washington, drums.

★ ★ ★ ½

These two LPs are by and large the product of alumni of the University of Art (Blakey, that is): leader Williams and saxist Pierce from the Sunnyside album (also represented by pianist Donald Brown, who was Williams' replacement with Blakey and who composed this date's

*Havana Days* and *Waltz For Monk*), and co-leader Watson and pianist Miller from the New Note album.

There's an edge of excitement to Williams' record that's as palpable as its aural message—not only for the pianist's solos, but also for the protagonist's touch in his writing and leadership. The sidemen ignite brilliantly and the ensemble varies nicely from the standard Messengers-derived small group. The com-

posers (Williams and the aforementioned Brown) have voiced abstract, modal, latin, lyrical, and angular elements for the combo. Williams combines soprano sax, guitar, and flute or alto flute on the title cut and *A Touching Affair*—an obvious but little-used blend. Easley's flute solo on *Alter Ego* shows that certain distinctions between jazz and classical flute are often imaginary. (This album should open up some doors for Easley, who sounds

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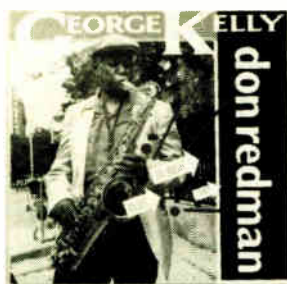
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# RECORD REVIEWS

adept on all his horns.) Pierce tempers his soprano tone to inhabit the mood of each tune—sylvan on *Alter Ego*, oboeish-Mid-Eastern-nasal on *A Touching Affair*—and his tenor solo on *Waltz For Monk* is a monumental outing recalling Coltrane's *Someday My Prince Will Come* solo from the Miles Davis LP of the same name.

Eubank's guitar also functions as a single-line instrument voiced with the horns on *Black Scholars*, *Waltz*, and *Havana Days*. The guitar solos are almost visual—tracer bullets of sound. Meanwhile, as a soloist Williams projects the intensity of McCoy Tyner and the springiness of George Cables. Excitement mounts cumulatively in his solos, rhythms dance on the edge of propulsion. Drummond and Reedus make all the soul, sweat, energy, and intellectual connections expected of a hip, 1985 rhythm section. The Muse was on duty for this album.

The first thing to say about the Watson/Lundy album is that it's very clean. This includes a clear definition of ideas, an unimpeded sense of direction, and fumble-free playing. It's largely Watson's showcase, as chief composer and expositor of themes. Lundy plays a supporting role; his is a selfless part, not a flamboyant one. Miller and Washington are good contributors to the overall design.

Watson's years with Blakey saw him develop into an articulate improviser and composer of substantial contemporary tunes. *To See Her Face* and *E.T.A.* were previously recorded by Blakey and the Jazz Messengers on *In My Prime Vol. 1* (Timeless Muse 301) and *Straight Ahead* (Concord Jazz 168) respectively. Here they receive the kind of concentrated performance discernible in a character study. If *E.T.A.* went any faster, the beats would blur together, but Watson would separate them with his crispness and metric balance. Washington's dry-sounding drums heat up the background like a brush fire on this tune. Gig Gryce's *Minority* burns, too.

*Karita*, *Jewel*, and the title tune are Watson's other written themes. On *Karita*, a bossa nova, he spins thoughtful double-time lines in a singing tone. He and Miller carefully essay the ballad *Jewel*'s dynamics and pretty sequences. The title cut involves some modality in its form and repeated licks by the soloists to generate excitement.

But there's another principal here—Lundy—and he has composed a sad, sort of longing piece called *Orange Blossom*. Miller's solo has an intimately soulful, late-night feel. Watson gets about as blue as anywhere on the record—he's not inclined to much tonal expression of the "blue" variety, which is one of the few drawbacks to his style. Lundy digs deep into his only solo on the album and lets the low notes hang in place and *resooooonate*. The contours of this solo recall the late Paul Chambers.

Lundy and Washington were once the elasticity and snap behind singer Betty Carter. Add Miller's crackling sound and laidback approach and Watson's pure alto tone, definitive articulation, and strong compositional sense and you've formed a solid combo with a certain eloquence.

—owen cordle



## ARTHUR BLYTHE

**PUT SUNSHINE IN IT**—Columbia 39411: *TUMALUMAH*; *PUT SUNSHINE IN IT*; *UPTOWN STRUT*; *SILHOUETTE*; #5; *SENTIMENTAL WALK* (THEME FROM "DIVA").

**Personnel:** Blythe, alto saxophone; Todd Cochran, synthesizer, synthesizer bass, computer drums, keyboards; Alphonso Johnson, bass, electric stick, bass pedal synthesizer; Stanley Clarke, bass (6); Leon "Ndugu" Chancellor, drums (2); Michael O'Neill, guitar (2, 6); Paulinho da Costa, percussion (2, 6); Bruce Purse, OB8 synthesizer (3); Gerry Brown, drums (6).

★ ★

## DAVID SANBORN

**STRAIGHT TO THE HEART**—Warner Bros. 25150: *HIDEAWAY*; *STRAIGHT TO THE HEART*; *RUN FOR COVER*; *SMILE*; *LISA*; *LOVE & HAPPINESS*; *LOTUS BLOSSOM*; *ONE HUNDRED WAYS*.

**Personnel:** Sanborn, alto saxophone; Don Grolnick, keyboards; Hiram Bullock, guitar, vocals; Marcus Miller, bass guitar, synthesizer, vocals; Buddy Williams drums, vocals; Ralph MacDonald, percussion (cuts 3, 5, 8); Errol Bennett, percussion (2); Michael Brecker, tenor saxophone (8); Randy Brecker, Jon Faddis, trumpet (8); Michael White, percussion (6); Hamish Stuart (6), Lani Groves, Vivian Cherry, Frank Floyd, vocals (8).

★ ★ ★ ★

As readers of *Billboard* are well aware, commercially oriented pop-jazz sells. Despite a consistent hammering from the critics, a lot of unimaginative but slickly produced music—much of it bland fuzak—is bought every day. This is not necessarily such a bad thing: pop-jazz certainly serves a purpose in the marketplace, and listening to it can be the first step towards a deeper appreciation of jazz.

Given that, it's enlightening to listen to these two albums and compare their effectiveness within the realm of commercial pop-jazz. The Sanborn album is certainly no surprise—he's been making LPs like this for years, and he has a large and loyal audience that knows exactly what to expect from him. The Blythe album is a shocker, though; it's totally unlike his previous work and aimed squarely at the pop market.

If you're familiar at all with Blythe's work, the jolt on hearing *Put Sunshine In It* is considerable. There's no mistaking the keen edge on Blythe's sound, but here it's set against a cushion of synthesizers over a mechanical funk beat. As I listened for the first time, I found myself thinking that maybe this wasn't so bad



after all, that maybe listeners would go on from this album to strong albums like *Light Blue* or *Lenox Avenue Breakdown*. But the more I listened, the more I began to doubt it. *Put Sunshine In It* is, well . . . limp. It's funk with no spunk, all jive and no drive.

From start to finish, Blythe sounds bored. His solos are distressingly monochromatic, and he never even pushes this material (weak to begin with) to its limits. It's positively irritating to listen to, and I get the unpleasant feeling that Blythe was pushed into this (or at least encouraged) by his record company. There's just no feeling of commitment here—it's hard to believe that the guy plodding through these tunes is the fervid improviser who made *Bush Baby* and *In The Tradition*. Worst of all, Blythe sounds uncomfortable—heck, he even looks uncomfortable in the cover photo, as if someone had pointed a gun at him and said, "Smile!" This record has no heart, and I don't see how it can do anything positive for Arthur Blythe, who deserves better.

Sanborn's album, on the other hand, may not be much more profound, but at least it's got some guts. Sanborn injects emotion into even the simplest two-chord vamps, and he's certainly not afraid to take some chances when he solos. (Wouldn't it be interesting to hear him play with someone like Wynton Marsalis?)

While much of Sanborn's music (and pop-jazz in general) suffers from too much studio polishing, *Straight To The Heart* is a bit rougher and consequently more likeable. Most of it was recorded "live" in the studio, with a friendly audience on hand, and it has the sound of a gig in a small club. With Marcus Miller anchoring a band of ace session players, the grooves are solid and sharp (if familiar), and there is just enough textural variety to make the tunes seem less formulaic. And Sanborn wails. *Straight To The Heart* may not be great art, but at least it's good music. Unfortunately, the Blythe album is neither.

—jim roberts

## JOHNNY COLES

**NEW MORNING**—Criss Cross Jazz 1005: *SUPER 80; SOUND OF LOVE; MISTER B; NEW MORNING; UNITED; I DON'T KNOW YET.*

**Personnel:** Coles, flugelhorn; Horace Parlan, piano; Reggie Johnson, bass; Billy Hart, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

## THAD JONES

**THREE AND ONE**—SteepleChase 1197: *INSTANT BLUES DISINSTANT; MY ONE AND ONLY LOVE; BUT NOT FOR ME; NIGHT MIST BLUES; MY ROMANCE; THREE AND ONE.*

**Personnel:** Jones, cornet; Ole Kock Hansen, piano; Jesper Lundgaard, bass; Ed Thigpen, drums.

★ ★ ★

One seldom gets the chance to hear Johnny Coles or Thad Jones leading a quartet. Both are highly respected musicians and reliable soloists in any setting, and the foursome set-

ting highlights what they're made of. Coles has been a sideman in several important bands including Ray Charles and Charles Mingus, and he's risen from occasional obscurity to lead inauspicious album dates on which he's been accompanied by at least another horn. *New Morning*, recorded in 1982, is only Coles' fourth album as a leader—and he's approaching 60. Jones, of course, has long-standing orchestra associations (he's recently returned to the Basie band as leader) and for all his

subtle skill as an improviser, albums like *Three And One* by him are virtually non-existent.

The two here play cousins of the trumpet: Jones wields his customary cornet to achieve fat brassy notes, sassy in aspect and abstract in the designs they make; Coles seems to be playing a flugelhorn with either a shallow mouthpiece or a smaller than usual bore, getting a sharper definition of tone in his middle and upper registers. Coles' selection of tunes makes his album delightfully successful,

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# RECORD REVIEWS

for there are sparsely written compositions by himself and by saxist friends Charles Davis and Wayne Shorter. Only Mingus' *Sound Of Love* is an "extended" work, but it is enough of a ballad for Coles to extemporize on its reflective properties and develop it with a mellow reverence. Davis' *Super 80* and in particular Shorter's *United* are excellent brass vehicles. Coles wrote the title track, an intriguing thematic line based apparently on an E Phrygian scale that sustains a disturbingly beautiful atmosphere and coaxes "Eastern" sensitivities from Horace Parlan, who in typical self-amusement interpolates *I Didn't Know What Time It Was* into his solo. The joy and ease of this performance are evident on all the selections, and Coles has a tight sound and concentration of focus in his long improvisational lines.

The Jones album leaves one a bit befuddled, though Jones' harmonic sensibility, once in the vanguard, is certainly a healthy characteristic. But the uptempo selections fare much better than the ballads. Paradoxically, Jones' bent notes, substitute chordal progressions, suspensions, and his general inclination toward the abstract—his standard arsenal of improvisational equipment—might have come off altogether better if *My One And Only Love*, *But Not For Me*, and *My Romance* didn't drag but were taken at slightly faster tempos. The brilliant interjections that ought to make his creations soar tend to result here in languor and meandering; inconclusive phrases stand out, and not because of Jones' harmonic bent. He struts out to good advantage on pieces that allow him the pacing that serves his cajoling and range of humor. The crux of the paradox lies in his resilience to rise above the very phrase that boxes him in—one of the momentary regenerative potentials of vacillation.

The rhythm section for Jones responds perfectly to his broad cornet strokes, and pianist Kock Hansen should be credited for making the ballads lively. Billy Hart drives the Coles set, and I wish someone would mic Reggie Johnson louder (his sound isn't that big, and for 20 years engineers haven't helped him much). This rhythm team is fine for Coles nevertheless, for its support of his web-like designs. In Parlan, Coles couldn't have found a more sympathetic pianist. —ron welburn



## IKE QUEBEC/ JOHN HARDEE

### THE COMPLETE BLUE NOTE FORTIES RECORD-

**INGS**—Mosaic MR4-107: *Tired*; *Blue Skies*; *Hardee's Partee*; *Hardee's Partee* (alternate take); *Idaho* (alternate take); *Idaho*; *What Is This Thing Called Love*; *Nervous From The Service*; *River Edge Rock*; *Sweet And Lovely*; *River Edge Rock* (alternate take); *C Jam Blues*; *Flying Home (Part One)*; *Flying Home (Part Two)*; *Tiny's Boogie Woogie* (alternate take); *Tiny's Boogie Woogie*; *Tiny's Exercise*; *Tiny's Exercise* (alternate take); *She's Funny That Way*; *Indiana* (alternate take); *Blue Harlem* (alternate take); *Blue Harlem*; *Indiana*; *Hard Tack*; *Hard Tack* (alternate take); *If I Had You*; *Mad About You*; *Facin' The Face* (alternate take); *Facin' The Face*; *Blue Turning Grey Over You* (take one); *Blue Turning Grey Over You* (take two); *Dolores*; *The Day You Came Along*; *Sweethearts On Parade* (alternate take); *Sweethearts On Parade*; *I Found A New Baby* (alternate take); *I Found A New Baby*; *I Surrender Dear*; *I Surrender Dear* (alternate take); *Topsy*; *Cup-Mute Clayton*; *The Masquerade Is Over* (alternate take); *The Masquerade Is Over*; *The Masquerade Is Over* (alternate take two); *Basically Blue*; *Someone To Watch Over Me* (take one); *Someone To Watch Over Me* (take two); *Zig Billion* (alternate take); *Zig Billion*.

**Personnel:** Hardee, tenor saxophone (1-16); The John Hardee Swingtet (cuts 1-6)—Tiny Grimes, guitar; Sammy Benskin, piano; John Simmons, bass; Sid Catlett, drums; The John Hardee Sextet (7-11)—Bill Bivens, vibes; Jimmy Shirley, guitar; Benskin, piano; Gene Ramey, bass; Catlett, drums; The Tiny Grimes Swingtet (12-16)—Trummy Young, trombone; Grimes, guitar; Marlowe Morris, piano; Jimmy Butts, bass;

Eddie Nicholson, drums; Quebec, tenor saxophone (17-49); The Ike Quebec Quintet (17-23)—Grimes, guitar; Roger "Ram" Ramirez, piano; Milt Hinton, bass; J. C. Heard, drums; The Ike Quebec Swingtet (24-29)—Jonah Jones, trumpet; Tyree Glenn, trombone; Grimes, guitar; Ramirez, piano; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Heard, drums; The Ike Quebec Quintet (30-35)—Napoleon Allen, guitar; Dave Rivera, piano; Hinton, bass; Heard, drums; The Ike Quebec Swing Seven (36-41)—Buck Clayton, trumpet; Keg Johnson, trombone; Grimes, guitar; Ramirez, piano; Grachan Moncur, bass; Heard, drums; The Ike Quebec Swing Seven (42-49)—Shad Collins, trumpet; Johnson, trombone; John Collins, guitar; Ramirez, piano; Hinton, bass; Heard, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★

This 1944-46 compilation covers a decidedly transitional period in jazz. Ike Quebec and John Hardee were tenor masters who matured under the influence of swing, and the Quebec sides signalled Blue Note's switch from traditional jazz and boogie woogie to modern swing; fittingly, since the saxophonist had worked with such well-known figures as Roy Eldridge, Benny Carter, and Cab Calloway. In the course of his career, Texas tenor Hardee recorded with Earl Bostic, Helen Humes, and Russell Procope, sitting in on one occasion with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Ironically, both hornmen practiced an idiom that was being crowded out by bop on one side and r&b on the other. By the late 1940s, they were the victims of diminishing playing opportunities and waning interest. Quebec fell prey to heroin addiction but saw a revival of his career starting in 1959 that produced *Blue And Sentimental* (Blue Note 84098), a should-be textbook on ballads. Hardee returned to his native Lone Star State to become the band director at a high school.

The style-setting impact of Coleman Hawkins is implicit in both players, though annotator Dan Morgenstern also identifies Ben Webster's "arsenal of licks, growls, and shakes" in the unfairly neglected work of Quebec and Hardee. The formal verities of swing—vigorous full-bodied melody statements followed by impassioned solos—are here in full-force and three-minute concision. The high points are many and there are five-star performances scattered over the eight sessions—ultimately, not one selection falls short of interest. Through both takes of *Blue Harlem*, Quebec's laidback after-hours attack itself becomes the blues; relaxed modulation and great flaps of breath waving up from the undersides of phrases. *Indiana's* two takes, in contrast, find him urgent, blazing, hard-accented.

The deep-toned Hardee displays comparable approaches in *River Edge Rock*, *Tiny's Boogie Woogie*, and *C Jam Blues*, among other situations. Sidemen including Milt Hinton (whose rare bass solos stood out in the '40s), "Ram" Ramirez, Buck Clayton, Trummy Young, Big Sid Catlett, and Oscar Pettiford make their own notable contributions. But the springy note-bending guitar of Tiny Grimes, so elastically inventive on *Blue Harlem*, leaves the

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deepest impression.

The Mosaic box contains 49 selections, of which 14 were never before issued, 14 available only on the original 78s, and 21 intermittently available on anthologies. Quebec has the larger representation (33 cuts) within the three hours of music that spans from funky blues and hard-swung romps to lit-from-within ballads. The lavishly illustrated booklet offers Morgenstern's track-by-track commentary along with biographies by producer Michael Cuscuna and a 1959-62 Ike Quebec discography. General sound quality is good, although my pressing suffered from sporadic surface noise.

The easy-to-love music gathered on these four records deserves renewed critical appraisal and public enjoyment. Mosaic limited edition albums are available only through the mail: Mosaic Records, 197 Strawberry Hill Ave, Stamford, CT 06902.

—peter kostakis



## VAN MORRISON

**A SENSE OF WONDER**—Mercury 822 895-1 M1: *Tore Down A La Rimbaud*; *Ancient Of Days*; *Evening Meditation*; *The Master's Eyes*; *What Would I Do Without You*; *A Sense Of Wonder*; *Boffyyflow And Spike*; *If You Only Knew*; *Let The Slave/The Price Of Experience*; *A New Kind Of Man*.

**Personnel:** Morrison, vocals, guitar, piano; Pee Wee Ellis, tenor saxophone; Bob Doll, trumpet; Chris Michie, guitar; David Hayes, bass; John Allaire, organ; Tom Donlinger, drums; Moving Hearts band (6, 7); Bianco Thornton, Pauline Lazano, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

Van Morrison has long held two public images: the accessible rock maestro and the arcane visionary. The mid-'60s had the young Irishman nurturing deep respect for black music that would soon, starting with the would-be five-star *Moondance* (Warner Bros. 3103), expand into a highly personal form of rhythm & blues. His acute yearnings to understand transcendental matters, especially his Gaelic life force, were first revealed on the haunting '68 classic *Astral Weeks* (Warner Bros. 1768). Through the years, recordmaker Morrison has seldom reconciled celebratory music with emotionalism enveloped in mysticism (vocal trances, poetic and jazz inclinations). Only *St. Dominic's Preview* (Warner Bros. 2633) and *Into The Music* (Warner Bros. 3390) of his past 15 albums have fully caught his marvelous expressions of both music and vision.

*A Sense Of Wonder* delivers on the promise of its title. An oft-stunning rapprochement of ecstasies, the new release actually has its beginnings in Morrison's late-'70s religious regeneration (*Into The Music*) and the spiritual motifs carried in the moody *Common One* (Warner Bros. 3462), and pop-fresh *Beautiful Vision* (Warner Bros. 3652). Morrison's typically fey romanticism inhabits *A Sense Of Wonder*, but his verbal excesses have been curbed and his introspection leavened by that strengthening faith in Creator and world. The forward-propelled songs are immediately approachable without any evidence of pandering to

commercial considerations.

Two songs here are extraordinary. The rocker *Tore Down A La Rimbaud* explodes with a Morrison vocal startling in its authority, a gutsy tunefulness supported by a strong backbeat, glorious *Moondance*-era horn arrangement, Pee Wee Ellis' apt saxophone spot, and febrile backup testifying. On the pensive title piece Morrison uses references to the seasons and an Ireland of yore as symbols of the state of his soul. Don't be put off: his committed lilt and brief recitation, above the band's restrained blend of folk, jazz, and rock, are inviting and hardly pretentious.

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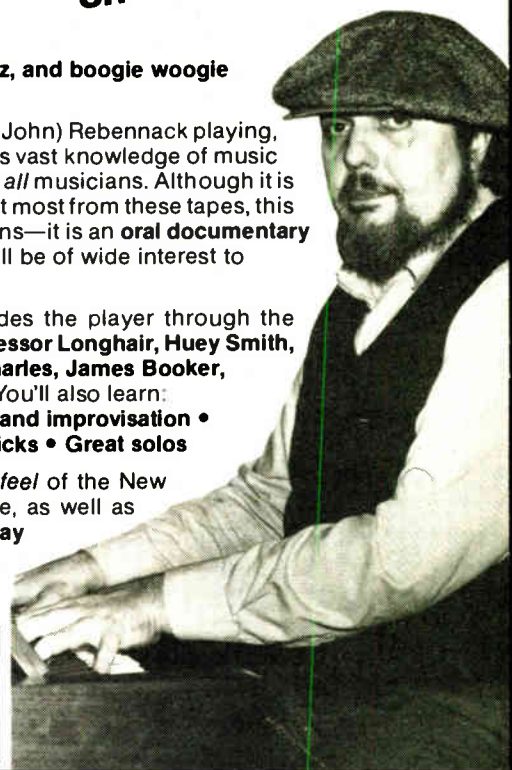
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# RECORD REVIEWS

Morrison originals *A New Kind Of Man* and *The Master's Eyes* are pleasant, straightforward notices of devotion, but they're undermined by banal lyrics no degree of feeling for Jehovah can right. Two instrumentals (a fairly new wrinkle to Morrison's songcraft) are delightful: *Boffyflow* And *Spike*, a folk-rock reel, bounces along in the estimable fashion of British guitarist Richard Thompson or the Albion Band, while *Evening Meditation*, with Morrison humming in quiet rapture, evokes the mystery of the night.

His superb treatments of Ray Charles' *What Would I Do Without You* and Mose Allison's *If You Only Knew* come from the deepest recesses of his heart and, er, soul. Choosing to cover *Let The Slave*, off Mike Westbrook's masterly album of William Blake's apocalyptic poesy (*The Westbrook Blake*, Europa 2006), is an inspired move by Morrison. He successfully lends drama to the allegory-heavy verse despite a somewhat strained and unfocused voice. His band, for once, seems lost.

—frank-john hadley

## CRITICS' CHOICE

### Art Lange

**NEW RELEASE:** Horace Silver, *Live 1964* (Emerald). As familiar, warm, and comfortable as your favorite jacket; this never-before-released session sports a probing front line of Carmell Jones and Joe Henderson alongside the sterling Silver piano.

**OLD FAVORITE:** Rahsaan Roland Kirk/Al Hibbler, *A Meeting Of The Times* (Atlantic). The ex-Ellington crooner's regal Cary-Grant-cum-Johnny-Hodges phrasing is awe inspiring, and Kirk provides roller-coaster reeds and on-the-money obbligato. Hank Jones, Ron Carter, and Oliver Jackson are the satin-toned rhythm.

**RARA AVIS:** J. B. Lenoir, *J. B. Lenoir* (Chess). Reissue of a two-fer from the '50s Chicago-style bluesman who combined topicality (*I'm In Korea*, *Eisenhower Blues*) with humor (*Don't Touch My Head*) and a wickedly biting introspection (*Let Me Die With The One I Love*—played as a jump boogie!).

**SCENE:** The String Trio Of New York's resourceful, wry interaction surprises like a banker's three-piece suit atop red sneakers; at Chicago's N.A.M.E. Gallery.

### Michael Bourne

**NEW RELEASE:** Ivan Lins, *Juntos* (Philips). Some of the best songs from one of Brazil's best songwriters; jazzily tropical hits revisited with Patti Austin, George Benson, Djavan, and others.

**OLD FAVORITE:** Hoagy Carmichael, *The Stardust Road* (MCA). Some of the best songs from one of America's best songwriters; jazzily heartfelt hits revisited in the '40s, his first, *Riverboat Shuffle*, and greatest, *Stardust*, among others.

**RARA AVIS:** Harvey Phillips, indefatigable and always fun, whether conducting 350 tubas playing Christmas music at Rockefeller Center or remembering his friend Alec Wilder with a Carnegie Hall concert and birthday bash at the Algonquin.

**SCENE:** Bob Dorough and Bill Takas at Panache in New York City; jazz and songs and laughs and panache aplenty.

### Frank-John Hadley

**NEW RELEASE:** Pablo Moses, *Tension* (Alligator). More incisive roots reggae from one of the masters. No matter if it's not as strong overall as his recent *A Song* and *In The Future*.

**OLD FAVORITE:** Billie Holiday, *The Golden Years* (Columbia). Billie's "blues" feeling pervades 48 evergreens from 1932-41. *Sui generis*.

**RARA AVIS:** Pam Windo and the Shades, *It* (Bearsville). Were life fair, Pam, not Madonna, would be the racy heartthrob of America. Ah... wild, eccentric r&b (sorta) with hubby Gary on tenor sax.

**SCENE:** Linda Dahl's *Stormy Weather* (Pantheon) is a well-written, informative, and thoroughly enjoyable book on famous and forgotten jazzwomen. Read it with *Jazz Women* (Stash) spinning on the turntable.

### Paul DeBarros

**NEW RELEASE:** Alvin Batiste, *Musique D'Afrique Nouvell Orleans* (India Navigation). The great clarinetist unifies a stunning variety of musical styles in this wild excursion, from classical to modern jazz to Old Time, under the shimmering banner of his New Orleans tone and wit.

**OLD FAVORITE:** Ben Webster, *Saturday Night At The Montmartre* (Black Lion). Only Big Ben could have rung out such sounds on *Londonderry Air*. The perfect romantic dinner record, live from Copenhagen, with Kenny Drew on piano.

**RARA AVIS:** Docteur Nico, *Mikalay* (Africa New Sound). The reputed father of the chimie Congolese guitar picking we've been hearing so much of lately turns out a crisply produced and infectious new LP with Zairean singer Abeti's crackerjack band, Les Redoutables.

**SCENE:** Orchestre Jazira at Brunel University, London. Ingenuous folksy stage presence, tightly wrought but roomy arrangements, and a huge range of musical savvy make this rainbow coalition of Ghanaians, Londoners, and Europeans one of the most endearing of the new London Afro-pop hybrids.





## DINAH WASHINGTON

**WISE WOMAN BLUES**—Rosetta 1313: *Wise Woman Blues*; *No Voot, No Boot*; *My Lovin' Papa*; *Shoo Shoo Baby*; *Blues For A Rainy Day*; *Arkansas*; *No Love, No Nothin'*; *Do Nothing Til You Hear From Me*; *Mellow Mama Blues*; *There'll Be A Jubilee*; *My Voot Is Really Vout*; *Million Dollar Smile*; *All Or Nothin'*; *And Her Tears Flowed Like Wine*; *Chewin' Mama Blues*.

**Personnel:** Washington, vocals; Lucky Thompson's All-Stars (cuts 1-3,5,9,11,13,15)—Thompson, tenor saxophone; Wilbert Baranco, piano; Karl George, trumpet; Jewel Grant, alto saxophone, clarinet; Gene Porter, baritone saxophone; Milt Jackson, vibes; Charles Mingus, bass; Lee Young, drums; Lionel Hampton & His Orchestra (4,6,7,10,12,14)—Hampton, vibes; Snooky Young, Wendell Culley, Joe Morris, Dave Page, Lamar Wright, trumpet; Vernon Porter,

Fred Beckett, Andrew Penn, Sonny Craven, Allen Durham, trombone; George Dorsey, Gus Evans, alto saxophone; Arnett Cobb, Fred Simon, tenor saxophone; Charles Fowlkes, baritone saxophone; Milt Buckner, piano; Billy Mackell, guitar; Charles Harris, Ted Sinclair, bass; Fred Radcliffe, drums; Duke Ellington & His Orchestra (8)—Ellington, piano; Cootie Williams, Rolf Ericson, Cat Anderson, Willie Cook, trumpet; Lawrence Brown, Chuck Connors, Buster Cooper, trombone; Jimmy Hamilton, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Hilton Jefferson, alto saxophone, clarinet; Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone; Paul Gonsalves, tenor saxophone; Harry Carney, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Ernie Shephard, bass; Sam Woodyard, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**THE FATS WALLER SONGBOOK**—Emarcy 818 930-1: *CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS*; *T'Ain't Nobody's Biz-Ness If I Do*; *JITTERBUG WALTZ*; *SOMEONE'S ROCKING MY DREAMBOAT*; *AIN'T CHA GLAD*; *SQUEEZE ME*; *AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'*; *BLACK AND BLUE*; *EVERYBODY LOVES MY BABY*; *I'VE GOT A FEELING I'M FALLING*; *HONEYSUCKLE ROSE*; *KEEPIN' OUT OF MISCHIEF NOW*.

**Personnel:** Washington, vocals; Eddie Chamblee, vocals (9,11), reeds; Charlie Shavers, Ray Copeland, Doc Severinsen (1-6), Reunald Jones (1-9,11), Clark Terry (10,12), Ernie Royal, Johnny

Coles, Joe Newman (7-12), trumpet; Chauncey Welsh (1-7,11), Jimmy Cleveland (1-6,10,12), Sonny Russo (8,9), Melba Liston (7-12), Julian Priestler, Rod Levitt, trombone; Hal McKusick (1-6), Frank Wess, Sahib Shihab (7-12), Jerome Richardson, Benny Golson, reeds; Jack Wilson, piano; Sebastian Muro (1-6), Freddie Green (7-12), guitar; Richard Evans, bass; Charlie Persip, Wesley Landers, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Dinah Washington's talent was prodigious and diversified. There was no hollow ring to her boast that she could sing "anything, anything at all" for she bent musical genres to her will, commanding blues, jazz, r&b, gospel, pop, and even country. The newly issued *Wise Woman Blues* evinces young Dinah's artistry on mid-'40s ballroom pop fare and saucy blues; and long-buried *The Fats Waller Songbook* (originally *Dinah Washington Sings Fats Waller*, 1958) besieges the entrenched canard that she was less a convincing jazz singer than a dynamic dilettante.

When Dinah joined the Lionel Hampton orchestra in 1943, at age 19, she brought with her an astonishingly mature singing style, a fusion of righteous gospel-trained voice and the sensuousness of devil's music. Soon she was recording blues sides with Lucky Thompson's capable octet for Apollo, eight of which resur-

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# RECORD REVIEWS

face on *Wise Woman Blues*. Dinah's clearly enunciated, piquant vocals, delivered with facility, make the tunes resound with urgency, no matter whether the lyrics are perceptive or banal. Especially incisive are her bald plea for affection in *Blues For A Rainy Day* and the emotionally complex lament over a profligate lover that is the title song. A suggestive novelty like *No Voot, No Boot* is explosive for showing her intense pride in womanhood.

The album also includes several radio-broadcast numbers featuring Dinah with Hampton's band. The sound quality is somewhat uneven but of no hindrance to experienc-

ing Dinah's winning spontaneity; she elevates the commercial, jitterbug-happy material with characteristic warmth and glorious traces of blues tonality. *Wise Woman Blues* also has one number of Dinah performing with Duke Ellington's orchestra, only weeks before her whirlwind life ended in late 1963.

The late-'50s found popular, queenly Dinah brimming over with self-confidence and élan. So goes *The Fats Waller Songbook*. Marvelously mirrored in spirit by the powerfully swinging big band led by Ernie Wilkins, Dinah pays bright homage to the mischievous pianist/songwriter whom she had worked beside

back in 1942 in Chicago. Yet she seizes the songs as her own, in rapture to new husband Eddie Chamblee, seated within her loving gaze in the reed section. *Ain't Cha Glad*, then, becomes her (their) celebration of romance and *Squeeze Me* blossoms as a heart-fluttering invitation to you-know-who. *Ain't Misbehavin'* comes across as her testimonial to the virtues of fidelity; *Honeysuckle Rose*, a duet with Eddie, makes for bandstand eroticism. Dinah's singing, with phrasing, intonation, and all jazz powers in order, is altogether free of mawkishness. The marriage, by the way, didn't last long. —frank-john hadley

## Big Rigs, Diverse Cargo

"You get too many players, it's hard to keep that *thing!*" A gathering of musicians in a cafeteria, all elbows and feet amid instrument cases, random patterns of black and white floor tiles, cups, spoons, ashtrays, remnants of sweet potato pie. They hum beneath the ceiling fan, talking shop, having just completed a difficult big band rehearsal.

"That *rhythm* thing."

The flow, the suppleness.

"Look here," a trombonist directs, "it's like vehicles. Automotive vehicles. Cars and trucks have different functions, understand what I'm saying? Cars carry people. Trucks are designed to haul cargo."

The half-dozen big bands reviewed herein move rather specific freight. They are contemporary because their music reflects current trends and influences but also because they operate without the dance/entertainment obligation which characterized bands of earlier eras. All six exist primarily to play the compositions and arrangements of their leaders. Judging by *Papa Lips* (CBS/Sony 28AP 2881), the **Bob Mintzer Horn Man Band** may be heavier equipment than the charts of tenor saxophonist Mintzer merit. Convened in a New York studio, the 17-man band includes the Brecker brothers, Lou Soloff, Dave Sanborn, Pete Yellin, Will Lee, Peter Erskine. Execution is professional. Solos are capable and routine, although Marvin Stamm rips open a few seams near the end of the album. If this were furniture, it would be styled Studio Modern.

The **Williamsburgh Contemporary Composers' Orchestra**, on the other hand, is grass roots. Produced by Brooklyn's Williamsburgh Music Center, *Contemporary Composers' Orchestra, Vol. 1* (WMC 3098) presents compositions by the band's co-leaders, bassist/guitarist Gerry Eastman and saxophonist Joe Ford. The material is modern, with pleasant outer contours while within it's thick with dark voicings and particularly effective use of strings. The 15-member band includes two violinists (one doubles viola) and a cellist. There's an attractive trumpet solo by Longineu Parsons. I wish his section-mate, Ambrose Jackson, whom I recall as a fine player, also had a spot. Ellington's *I Got It Bad* is sung, impressively, by Priscilla

Cleaves. It's obvious that this band is important to its members. Section and solo, these folks play like they mean it.

The remaining bands are European-based outfits of the "international" sort, drawing inspiration and players from the global village. The predominately Dutch **Gijs Hendriks Construction Company, Sámer** (Vara Jazz 4215), was formed by augmenting saxophonist Hendriks' strong working quartet (Stan Tracey, piano; Bert van Erk, bass; John Engels, drums) with six reeds and three brass. Hendriks looks like he deals pork chops by day and polkas by night, but is a first-rate jazz player and composer. The charts are reedy, pastel, austere—a breeze blowing through a sculpture garden. With the exception of turns on bass clarinet by Michael Moore and tuba by Tjeerd Oostendorp (an appropriate name for a brass bassist), solos are handled by the quartet. Tracey stands out, a clear, authoritative player with a natural affinity for Monk, early Cecil Taylor, and boppers like Kenny Drew. Hendrik's playing is as thoughtful and fresh as his writing. His tenor solo on *Berlin Dreiviertel* sounds spontaneous, yet displays a preconceived logic, made all the more telling by his hollow, spookhouse sound.

In this electronic age, acculturation is rapid and, too often, superficial. Mathias Rüegg, composer and conductor of the **Vienna Art Orchestra**, dabbles in music from a multiplicity of cultures behind a posture of "reverent irreverence" which denotes that it's all good fun, not to mention quite avant garde. Listening to *Tango From Obango* (Art 1002), a 1979 sampler of the group's efforts, is like watching a juggler keep an assortment of objects in the air. It's entertaining for awhile. Solos are generally uninteresting. Easily the best is Herbert Joos' fluegelhorn statement on *Panta Rhei*. The difference between this band's clever games and the Art Ensemble of Chicago paraphrasing and parodying their own heritage is the difference between a minstrel show and Richard Pryor. The orchestra is far closer to home with their recent *The Minimalism Of Erik Satie* (hat Art 2005), a two-record set that deals with works by the oddball French composer who died in 1925. The first record features orchestrations of Satie's brief piano works which then segue into "reflections" upon them penned by Rüegg. Sides three and four contain separate and lengthy ex-

temporizations upon Satie's *Vexations* by Roman Schwaller (tenor sax), Lauren Newton (vocal), and Wolfgang Puschnig (bass clarinet) respectively, each accompanied by vibist Woody Schabata. The album is at its best on side one, charming and playful, when sticking closest to Satie, but begins to drag even before the second record. Newton has considerable technique, but I find her free-form vocals nagging and the sound of her voice unpleasant, even chilling. Nevertheless, the value of Satie's music and the imaginative concept of this album make it significant. For a more positive view of this orchestra (and reasons why Europe is fertile ground for large "international" bands), see the feature article by Francis Davis in **db**, February 1985.

The sizeable American contingent in the **George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band '83** includes Marcus Belgrave, Tom Harrell, Julian Priester, Charlie Mariano, Howard Johnson, Bob Moses, Sheila Jordan. This 18-piece band has the resonance and benign might of a cathedral organ and Gruntz plays it like one. Much of *Theatre* (ECM 1265) is given over to theatrical pieces, an excerpt from *World Jazz Opera*, with lyrics by Amiri Baraka, and *The Holy Grail Of Jazz And Joy*, with lyrics "after Alfred Lord Tennyson" and seats assigned at the Round Table to soloists. Sheila Jordan stars as Queen Guinevere, singing with all the warmth and humanity which Newton's voice lacks. Mariano (Prince Gahmuret) is especially moving, but Belgrave's spot as Sir Gawain is far too brief. Program pieces like these could easily become affected, even silly, but composer/keyboardist Gruntz and his band handle them with grace.

Liveliest and most successful of these recordings is *Brikama* (SteepleChase 1188) by the **Pierre Dørge New Jungle Orchestra**. Where Rüegg seeks novelty, guitarist Dørge seems led to other musics by discovery of commonality. A striking symbol of his blend of European, African, and Afro-American elements into an organic (if unusual) whole is at hand in the band's most compelling soloist, saxophonist John Tchicai. Tchicai, who was born in Denmark of a Danish mother and a Zairean father, lived briefly in the U.S. during the '60s goldrush days of the new music. He became one of the music's heroes (The Jazz Composers Guild, NYC5, New York Art Quartet) but remained a somewhat enigmatic



figure. His gritty tenor work on this LP, quite different from the translucent, snakeskin sound of his more familiar alto, reaffirms him as a major voice. Dørge, however, is much the leader of this Danish-African band. His curious guitar style keeps things percolating along with echoes of The Brotherhood of Breath and tipsy allusions to Sunny Adé. His strength of pen and personality subsume all sources into a loony, charming meld of jazz, African melody, and rhythm (the 14-member band has a six-piece rhythm section which

includes bassist Johnny Mbizo Dyani), and lyric Danish melancholy.

Back at the cafeteria, the trombonist has been going on about tones, colors, voicings, orchestrations, the weight and power of massed horns. The drummer crumples a pack of Pall Malls. "I hear what you're saying," he grants, then makes one of those soft-shoe gestures, a shoulder shrug of non-chalant eloquence, the way Prez used to count off a tune, and adds, "but it's a bear to swing."  
—j. b. figi

## WAXING ON

### BIG BAND BLAST

**ERNIE WILKINS' ALMOST BIG BAND:** *MONTREUX* (SteepleChase 1190) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**GALT MacDERMOT'S NEW PULSE JAZZ BAND:** *BOOGIE MAN* (Kilmarnock 8501) ★ ★ ★ ½

**ROB McCONNELL AND THE BOSS BRASS:** *All In Good Time* (Palo Alto 8074) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**BLUE WISP BIG BAND:** *LIVE AT CARMELO'S* (MoPro 109) ★ ★ ★ ★

**JOHN VON OHLEN/STEVE ALLEE BIG BAND:** *LIVE* (MoPro 106) ★ ★ ★ ★

**PHIL WILSON AND THE BIG BAND MACHINE:** *LIVE AT JOE SEGAL'S JAZZ SHOWCASE* (Shiah 116) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**DALLAS JAZZ ORCHESTRA:** *FAT MAMMA'S REVENGE* (Unnamed record label) ★ ★ ★ ★

**PETE PETERSEN AND THE COLLECTION JAZZ ORCHESTRA:** *JAZZ JOURNEY* (Pausa 7163) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**ASHLEY ALEXANDER BIG BAND:** *PLAYS FRANK MANTOOTH* (AM-PM 12) ★ ★ ★

**BOB FLORENCE LIMITED EDITION:** *MAGIC TIME* (Trend 536) ★ ★ ★ ★

**LOUIE BELLSON AND EXPLOSION:** *LOUIE BELLSON AND EXPLOSION* (Pausa 7160) ★ ★ ★

**MARK MASTERS' JAZZ COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA:** *EARLY START* (SeaBreeze 2022) ★ ★ ★ ★

It is 1960-something, and the band—a dance band playing stock charts and other leftovers from the '40s—is sweltering on a parachute-draped stage at one end of a college gymnasium. The leader counts off another dreamy ballad. Halfway through it, one of the trumpet players stands in his chair and delivers a dizzying solo where there never have been trumpets before. Later, the errant trumpeter explains, "I thought the music said, 'Take it.'"

The musicians on these records aren't likely to mistake "Tacet" for "Take it"—or one note or rhythmic subdivision for another, for that matter. They're ferocious readers. They're knowledgeable interpreters, too. And some are very young.

One youthful influence that seldom made it to most of these records is fusion—the union of jazz and whatever, usually to the detriment of jazz. Not much wild, avant garde experimentation happens, either. It's a pretty traditional batch of records—conservative, you might say. Recent influences? Thad Jones crops up

in lots of hair-raising ensemble passages. Elsewhere, certain corkscrew rhythms may have come via Toshiko Akiyoshi. These are two of the most innovative writers-for and leaders-of big bands to emerge in the last 20 years. Earlier assimilations include the standard Fletcher Henderson reeds-vs.-brass format (perhaps updated by Quincy Jones), Gil Evans' harmonic colors, some Kentonesque density, the basic Basie feeling of swing, an occasional Benny Carter-like lilting saxophone soli (mostly with soprano lead today), fleeting glimpses of Ellington's part-writing, and a taste of Mulligan's lovely counterpoint. Every arranger puts them together differently. What results is not a copy but a personal interpretation of tradition, sometimes an extension. Dig it, from East to West.

**Ernie Wilkins' Almost Big Band** presents something different in its live-at-Montreux set: a 12-piece band (the leader's tenor makes it a baker's dozen) with the looseness of a combo—there are long stretches of soloist-plus-rhythm only—and the power and depth of a big band. Wilkins contributed to the Basie book during the '50s (hence, the looseness), but he has added beautiful harmonic colors since then (e.g., his *A Song For Ben Webster*). Former Basie trombonist Richard Boone sings a moody blue portrait, *Bird In A World Of People*, with Sahib Shihab's alto quoting Bird and moving on to Eric Dolphy. Shihab (stunning tenor arpeggios), and Wilkins (tenor romance) take solo honors on *Webster*. Bassist Mads Vinding has several solos (could Europe be the acoustic bass center of the future?), and drummer Aage Tanggard, subbing for Ed Thigpen, electrifies (pre-plug-in terminology) everything. Per Goldschmidt's bari work is strong throughout. The main attraction is the way everything—ensemble passages, solos, rhythms, colors, spirit—comes together.

**Galt MacDermot's New Pulse Jazz Band**, another 12-piece group—this one based in New York and led by the keyboard player and Broadway composer (*Hair*)—is the exception to the rule in this list of bands. Rather than following Swing Era and post-Swing Era big band tradition, MacDermot mixes eras and styles—mournful New Orleans brass band dirges, German brass band music, *Charleston*-era saxophones (MacDermot's use of the soprano, played by Allen "Wing" Won, owes a lot more to Sidney Bechet than to John Coltrane), Ellington-like "jungle" sounds, rock beats from the '60s, energetic electric bass lines from the '80s, and synthesizer sounds. His 15 compositions and charts follow "The



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# RECORD REVIEWS

Legend of Boogie Man," as printed on the album cover, but more than this theatrical unity, there is the linear integrity of each tune. MacDermot conceives of arrangements as shifting foci of bass configurations superimposed with solo melodies, ensemble melodies, and various countermelodies and dovetailing rhythms. The writing recalls Carla Bley—probably a case of mutually independent development—in its broad humor and harmonic gravity. MacDermot's synthesizer approximates wolves, birds, and the loneliness of the old West—all very appropriate to the story and all very rhythmically solid. The writing almost overpowers the improvised solos—the best are by Seldon Powell on alto—and improvisation isn't much of an emphasis of this music, anyway. The writing is definitely interesting.

Up in Canada, we get to Toronto-based **Rob McConnell And The Boss Brass**, a modern/mainstream band whose influence is spreading via the wide availability of valve trombonist McConnell's charts and records such as this one. The 22-piece band boasts french horns, which contribute to the cool-brass quality of *Darn That Dream*. It's a band that can play an airy chart such as the leader's *Phil Not Bill* and turn around and shout the blues righteously (McConnell's *Can't Stop My Leg*). Soloists? They're all over the place, but guitarist Ed Bickert on *Leg* and flugelhornist John MacLeod on *Ecaroh* sound especially

meaningful. Loonis McGlohon's *Songbird* gets a royal ensemble treatment full of beautiful lines and counterlines. So . . . this is a mature band that covers a variety of music very convincingly.

Cincinnati's **Blue Wisp Big Band** explores a wide range of material, too, on its live-in-California disc. Ernie Wilkins arranged a deliberately dated-sounding *Rockin' In Rhythm*, but band members Al Kiger and Larry Dickson scored the rest, including Strayhorn's *Blood-count*, Konitz' *Subconscious-Lee*, Cedar Walton's *Bolivia*, and others. The charts feature lots of leads and solos by alto and soprano saxophonist Mike Andres, a warm, fluid player. Pianist Steve Schmidt enlivens *Bolivia* with dancing fingers. In fact, Schmidt, bassist Lynn Seaton, and drummer John Von Ohlen are among the ensemble strongholds of this album. The charts are efficient and well played and reflect the middle of the mainstream.

The Indianapolis-based **John Von Ohlen/Steve Allee Big Band** has, in addition to the usual big band horn sections, a six-man rhythm section (including Von Ohlen's drums and Allee's acoustic and electric piano). Allee's writing intersperses vibes/organ/piano block chord passages among latin percussion, unison horn lines, thick chord voicings a la Thad Jones or Gil Evans, and driving drum accents. The program ranges from subtle, tone poem-like material (Allee's *Danse Of*

*Siam*) to straightahead shouting and swinging (Fats Waller's *The Joint Is Jumpin'*). In between come charts that are a bit more modern (more modal, floating, and spacious) than the Blue Wisp's program. Tenor saxophonist Harry Miedema brings back Coltrane's sheets-of-sound period in a pair of outstanding solos. One of those occurs on Allee's *Algeria*, an atmospheric tune that shows just how good this band can sound.

The third Midwestern band in this series is the **Big Band Machine**, a Chicago-based outfit that often invites guest soloists to its gigs. Trombonist and jazz educator **Phil Wilson**, in his stint with BBM, reminds us that his instrument operates on the physical principle of a *slide* and that the traditional principles of big band writing are far from exhausted. His charts emphasize swing, the blues in jazz, antiphonal voices, humor, and fresh rhythmic ideas. There are five Wilson originals plus *Ol' Man River* (great 12/8 feeling here) and *There's A Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon For New York*. The band (average age in the horns is 23) engages in some fancy no-fault playing, with sterling trumpets, a slugging rhythm section that keeps things limber like a whip just before it cracks, and the leader—his name is Rich Daniels; he's 24—adding Budd Johnson-inflected soprano saxophone solos. Ah, but Wilson is the spice, a man who covers the whole history of his instrument and has a great time doing it. He's a monster.

Heading southwest, this big band tour arrives in Texas, home of the **Dallas Jazz Orchestra**. Leaders and trumpeters Galen Jeter and Byron Parks employ a variety of composers and arrangers from outside the band, but the writers are like-minded in their uses of contemporary devices—soprano-led saxophone solis, ensemble passages where the rhythm section drops out, spread voicings and tight brass choir motion, a smattering of funk-rock (Pete Lengyel's title cut), and a hyperactive rhythm section. Trumpeter Chuck Willis brings a cutting edge and an airborne fire to his superb darting solos on Paul Baker's *Merlin* and Dave Robertson's *Rackafracker*. Mack Dougherty's guitar is prominent in a George Benson hum-cum-single line bit on Baker's ballad *Elise*. Like the Von Ohlen/Allee band, the DJO gets most of its inspiration from the '60s forward.

Some of the musicians from the DJO appear with **Pete Petersen And The Collection Jazz Orchestra**, another Dallas-based band, this one led by a baritone saxophone-playing commercial airline pilot. The charts—seven by Don Schamber, one by Rick Stitzel—are friendly brass-vs.-reeds variations, mostly on standard pop tunes. The rhythm section (including rhythm guitar—always a help in a big band—played by Kim Platko) is first-rate in terms of swing, unity, blend with the horns, and dynamics. On a lot of Schamber's arrangements, an occasional voicing reminiscent of Henry Mancini floats breezily through the horns. Good soloists abound—alto saxophonist Phil Chester on *Time After Time*, tenor saxophonist Pete Whitman on Schamber's jazz waltz *Passing Fancy*, trumpeter Dave Alexander on *I Can't Get Started*, and trombonist (superbonist!) Ashley Alexander (father of Dave) on *How*

## Corea.

"I don't think of it as a mystery, where someone takes over and plays the music through me. I'm doing the playing, but I'm deciding not to know what I'm going to play... It's like walking a tight wire, where each decision about balance is made instant by instant."

(Chick Corea to *Keyboard Magazine*, 1983)



Pianist and six-time Grammy-winner Chick Corea is known for bringing compositional clarity to improvisation. *Voyage* brings Corea into the studio with flute player Steve Kujala for their first-ever duet LP.

ECM

On ECM Records and Cassettes. Manufactured and distributed by Warner Bros. Records Inc. © 1985, ECM Records



*Deep Is The Ocean.* The album subtitle says, "Featuring Ashley Alexander." The credits say, "Rehearsed, Conducted, and Produced by Ashley Alexander," but *Ocean* is his only solo appearance. The band is a good one for togetherness.

The **Ashley Alexander Big Band**, based in California, where the trombonist resides and juggles positions with Mt. San Antonio College, the Saskatchewan School of the Arts, the Matteson-Phillips Tubajazz Consort, and the National Stage Band Camps, seems academic after the Petersen band. Frank Mantooth's writing has a Kentonish cast at times, but he has listened to Thad Jones, too. The charts are competent but not all that interesting one after the other. Alexander has a larger solo role here than on the Petersen album, and he jumps from the superbone's slide to its valves smoothly. Compared to Phil Wilson, he has a tighter tone and a more compact boppish solo style (e.g., *Secret Love*, *Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most*, and Mantooth's *Mixolydian Soul Frog*). Alto saxophonist Matt Catingub's solo on *Outside St. Louis*, a takeoff on *St. Louis Blues*, is brash, boppish, and excellent. The best performance is Mantooth's *Latin Schizophrenia*, which gibes the notion that all bossas are cool—this one has its share of aggressive, stimulating lines—and which gives the composer a nice, vibes-like outing on electric piano. Nick Ceroli plays drums. Remember that name.

If Ceroli sounds good on the Alexander album, he sounds like the best big band drummer in the world with the **Bob Florence Limited Edition**, another California band. And Florence's band sounds like one of the best bands in the world. All six compositions and arrangements are by the pianist/leader, and they're full of neat melodies, subtle ensemble details (check out the bubbling clarinets on the title track), mesmerizing and surprising colors, controlled dynamics, clear part-writing, and excellent solos. One thing that separates this band and this album from some of the others, as fine as they are, is the maturity of the soloists. They're all West Coast studio veterans. Alto saxophonist Lanny Morgan flies non-stop through the scary uttempo of *Rhythm And Blues*. Bob Cooper simply hangs a lyrical minor-key tenor solo in place on *Industrial Strength Stomp*, and trumpeter Steve Huffsteter follows him with equal artistry. How many players have the patience and reserve to *build* such solos? Baritone saxophonist Bob Efford, trombonist Charlie Loper, reedman Dick Mitchell, and trumpeter Warren Luening are others. The rhythm section of Florence, Ceroli, and bassist Joel Di Bartolo isn't a trio, it's a triumvirate, one that gives this band *Magic Time* to match magic writing. A beautiful, beautiful album.

**Louie Bellson And Explosion**, another group of West Coast studio monsters, suffers by comparison with the Florence band because of the various arrangers' attempt to get a "contemporary" sound. The charts don't always serve the best interests of jazz. A funky almost-disco beat inserted into *I Can't Get Started* cheapens a good Conte Candoli trumpet solo, for example. Bellson meanwhile reminds us that it's a drummer's band. His

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# RECORD REVIEWS

driving, flamboyant stickwork on his *Skin Deep* and his tuned-drums melody on former boss Duke Ellington's *Don't Get Around Much Anymore* carry flash and precision to a fine art. The other soloists—Chuck Findley and Ron King (trumpet and flugelhorn), Ted Nash and Joe Romano (altos), Pete Christlieb and Don Menza (tenors), and Ross Tompkins (piano)—are hip enough, but the charts by John Bambridge, Sammy Nestico, and others could have given them more inspiration.

**Mark Masters' Jazz Composers Orchestra** employs charts by various arrangers associated with Stan Kenton. This fourth West Coast band expertly recaps those cliff-hanging cutoffs, add-an-instrument entrances, high brass parts, and melancholy trombone combi-

nations purveyed by the late pianist and bandleader. The ballads—Ken Hanna's *September Morn* and arrangement of *You Must Believe In Spring* and Hank Levy's version of *A Time For Love*—top the program. Dan House's alto is the strongest solo voice (memories of early Art Pepper here), but the others are certainly respectable. Masters doesn't play, but he knows how to direct and bring out the best in the music.

Coda: The ratings are high because most of the bands deserve stars for integrity and craftsmanship. The distinctions between stars and half-stars reflect maturity, originality, excitement, surprise, variety, and the ability to swing together. "Take it" for what it's worth: this is a healthy batch of bands. —owen cordle

## NEW RELEASES

(Record Companies: For listing in the monthly New Releases column, send two copies of each new release to Art Lange, db, 222 W. Adams, Chicago, IL 60606.)

### SAVOY

**Dizzy Gillespie**, reissue of '46 octet and '50 orchestral sides in original packaging plus updated notes, THE DIZZY GILLESPIE STORY. **Cannonball Adderley**, debut disc from the Floridian altoist, circa '55, PRESENTING CANNONBALL. **Milt Jackson**, vibist's '56 quintet includes Lucky Thompson, THE JAZZ SKYLINE. **Wild Bill Davison**, and the usual '51-'52 Chicago-style crew originating RINGSIDE AT CONDON'S. **Yusef Lateef**, exotic changes, mid-'50s style, with roots in the blues, JAZZ FOR THE THINKER. **Joe Turner**, premier blues shouter wails a dozen '46-'47 tracks, AND THE BLUES'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY TOO. **Boyd Raeburn**, adventurous big band charts highlight this '45-'46 reissue, MAN WITH THE HORNS. **Various Artists**, Wardell Gray, Dexter Gordon, Hampton Hawes, Sonny Criss and others from '47 jam a JAZZ CONCERT WEST COAST. **Various Artists**, '57 varieties of tunes from Frank Wess, Sonny Redd, Sahib Shihab, Yusef Lateef and others, JAZZ IS BUSTING OUT ALL OVER. **Sahib Shihab**, fronts two '57 sextets w/ the same front line (his bari, Phil Woods & Benny Golson), JAZZ SAHIB.

### CONCORD JAZZ

**Various Artists**, George Wein leads from the keyboard Scott Hamilton, Slam Stewart, Norris Turney, Warren Vache, & Oliver Jackson, THE NEWPORT JAZZ FESTIVAL ALL-STARS. **Joe Newman/Joe Wilder**, impeccable swing trumpeters team up in quintet material arranged by Franks Wess & Foster, HANGIN' OUT. **Tania Maria**, fiery latin stylings caught live, WILD! **Dave Brubeck**, a half-dozen originals and one standard dedicated to the pianist's wife, FOR IOLA. **Jeannie/Jimmy Cheatham**, soulful songstress/pianist and tromboning husband join all-star cast for blues-drenched outing, SWEET BABY BLUES.

### DISCOVERY

**Clare Fischer**, keyboarder joins Salsa Picante for a latin romp, CRAZY BIRD. **Nashville Jazz Machine**, big band swing from the c&w capitol, WHERE'S ELI. **Sarah Vaughan**, 10 classic '45-'47 numbers including the title track w/ Bird & Diz, LOVER MAN. **Lisa Rich**, appealing singer's debut reissued, LISTEN HERE.

### LANDMARK

**Yusef Lateef**, exotic reedman returns to African roots with indigenous drum backing, IN NIGERIA. **Bobby Hutcherson**, West Coast vibes vet joins Branford Marsalis' saxes and Philly Joe Jones' drums, GOOD BAIT. **Kelth MacDonald**, premiere recording of standards by well-rounded pianist, THIS IS.

### CRISS CROSS

**Kirk Lightsey**, pianist's '83 trio outing features tunes by saxists Shorter, Rollins, Henderson, and Griffin, ISOTOPE. **Kenny Barron**, '83 trio with Buster Williams and Ben Riley tackles standards, GREEN CHIMNEYS. **Jimmy Raney**, plectrist's '81 quartet includes son Doug's guitar, RANEY '81. **Warne Marsh**, '82 querying quartet (Hank Jones, George Mraz, Mel Lewis) reaches STAR HIGHS. **Doug Raney**, guitarist's '83 sextet adds a pair of Scandinavian saxists, MEETING THE TENORS. **Johnny Coles**, trumpeter's '82 quartet includes the ubiquitous Parlan piano, NEW MORNING.

### STASH

**Various Artists**, '30-'41 recordings by Ray Noble, Artie Shaw, the Dorseys, and the like, compiling A COLE PORTER COLLECTION. **Maxine Sullivan**, ageless singer newly waxes THE GREAT SONGS FROM THE COTTON CLUB. **Earl Coleman**, romantic vocalist returns to recording with 10 chestnuts, STARDUST. **Greg Packham**, guitarist fronts kinetic septet in search of ACTION-REACTION.



## INDEPENDENTS

**Horace Silver**, first release of classic comps by Silver/Joe Henderson/Carmell Jones quintet, from Emerald Records, LIVE 1964. **Ray Drummond**, strong, versatile bassist leads quintet w/ Branford Marsalis/Manny Boyd front line, from Nilva Records, SUSANITA. **Charles Davis**, Big Apple vet blows straight-ahead tenor, from Nilva, SUPER 80. **Bill Saxton**, underrated saxist debuts w/ trio/quartet accompaniment, from Nilva, BENEATH THE SURFACE. **Victor Mendoza**, vibist/marimbist and a gang of cohorts hit vinyl w/ latin beat, from Tortilla Records, VICTOR MENDOZA. **David Matthews**, all-star cast cuts the charts of this popular arranger/composer, from GNP Crescendo, ICE—FUSE ONE.

**Jerry Coker**, saxist/teacher plays live in Florida and molds, via Revelation Records, A RE-EMERGENCE. **Per Henrik Wallin**, Swedish pianist and his trio are introduced to an American audience, from Revelation, 4TH BALCONY JUMP. **Danny Mixon**, former Mingus keyboardier premieres his trio (plus guests), from Cinderella Records, MIXIN' WITH MIXON. **Roseanna Vitro**, songstress pops up with sterling accompaniment, from Texas Rose Music, LISTEN HERE. **Scott Robinson**, plays all manner of brass and reeds in mostly mainstream outing, from MultiJazz Records, MULTIPLE INSTRUMENTS. **Joy Spring Jazz Quintet**, Clifford Brown-inspired band does their independent thing, from Njoy Records, RETRY. **Jimmy McConnell**, K.C. trumpet/flugeliste backed by big band, from Fifth Street Records, IN THE WIND.

**Charlie Rouse**, Monk's main man bops out with Red Rodney in tow, from Uptown Records, SOCIAL CALL. **Claude Bolling**, high-charting classical/jazz fusionist seduces an old love—big bands, from CBS Records, LIVE AT THE MERIDIEN. **Bob Thompson**, keyboarder composes lyrical settings for John Blake's violin and others, from Rainbow Records, 7 IN 7 OUT. **Bill Reichenbach**, highly thought-of Hollywood trombonist fronts fast company, from Silver Seven Records, QUARTET. **Hot Mustard Jazz Band**, good-time music from a veteran bunch of swingers, from Dave Burns Music, HAPPY FEET. **Carl Arter**, Pittsburgh pianist plunders his songbag for eight originals, from Earwig Records, SONG FROM FAR AWAY.

**Shad Weathersby**, guitarist/vocalist wrote all the songs 'cept one by guest George Winston, from Dancing Cat Records, LIGHT OUTSIDE THAT DOOR. **David Onderdonk**, stylistically varied mostly acoustic guitarist plays solos and a pair of duets w/ synth, from Quaver Records, CLOSE CALL. **Fred Simon**, multifaceted keyboarder from Simon & Bard cuts solo album, from Quaver, SHORT STORY. **Wall Matthews**, all-but-one original pieces from the Baltimorean, via Clean Cuts Records, SOLO PIANO AND GUITAR. **Norman Salant**, new wave saxist straddles rock and jazz styles, from C.D. Presents, SAX TALK. **Bill Hodges**, guitarist's trio creates "sonic shapes," from Expansion Records, EXPAN-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

# 10

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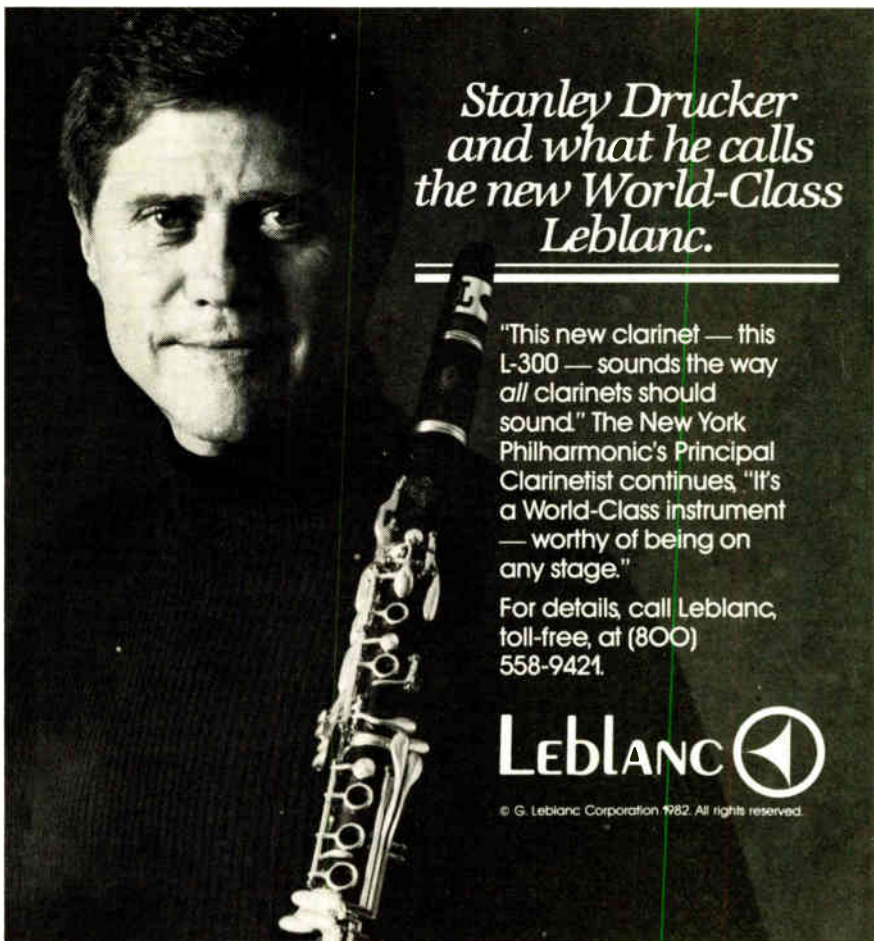
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# RECORD REVIEWS

SION. **George Sopuch**, guitarist's electric quintet out L.A. way, from Seven/P.M. Records, SEVEN.

**Various Artists**, Taj Mahal, Allen Toussaint, David Murray, Carla Bley and others musically energize words by Ishmael Reed, from American Clave Records, CONJURE. **James Newton**, flutist creates nine solo tone poems, from Celestial Harmonies, ECHO CANYON. **Zeltgeist**, new music ensemble performs two haunting compositions by Tristan Fuentes, from Time Ghost Records, TOO MANY. **Pablo Moses**, reggae with a Rastafarian slant on social issues, from Alligator Records, TENSION. **Various Artists**, anthology of reggae tracks from Jamaica's Rockers International Records, via Alligator, EXPLOSION.

**Bud Freeman**, first American LP in too-long from the pioneer tenorman, from Principally Jazz Records, THE REAL BUD FREEMAN 1984. **Hal Russell**, Windy City's Woody Herman of the avant garde fronts youthful crew of experimenters, from Principally Jazz, CONSERVING NRG. **John Shaw**, reedman's second self-produced outing supplies good vibes, from Aisha Records, SPIRITS FLY WITH THE

WIND. **Oliver Griffith**, multi-reed'er wraps his horns around Dave Friedman's vibes in quintet, from Red House Records, PICTURES. **Gerard Marais**, fronts nine guitarists (plus bass & drums) in provocative, mostly original program, from Open Records, B.B.G. **Joel Futterman**, energetic new music pianist prodded by Jimmy Lyons' alto and Richard Davis' bass, from JOF Music, INTERACTION.

**Rodney Jones/Tommy Flanagan**, guitarist/pianist share leader duties in '81 quartet, from Timeless Records, MY FUNNY VALENTINE. **Enrico Pieranunzi**, Italian swing pianist backed by American rhythm (Marc Johnson & Joey Baron), from Timeless, NEW LANDS. **Various Artists**, Billy Butterfield, Peanuts Hucko, Trummy Young, et al, from Timeless, in a TRIBUTE TO LOUIS ARMSTRONG. **Various Artists**, '80 live gig in Montreal brings together Dizzy, Moody, Philly Joe, Hank Jones, Milt Jackson, Ray Brown, from Black Tiger Productions, CONCERT OF THE CENTURY. **Various Artists**, Big Mama Thornton, Lightnin' Hopkins, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Esther Phillips alternate '76-80 tracks, from Black Tiger, THE GREAT BLUES IMMORTALS. **Primitive Art Group**, New Zealand quintet confronts

their creative daemons, from Braille Records, FIVE TREAD DROP DOWN. **Bosse Wärmell**, Scandinavian saxist of bop bent waxes post-humously, from EMI Odeon Records, MAJ 1962. **Köln Saxophon Mafia**, sextet of saxes scorch 11 original charts, from Jazzhaus Musik, DIE SAXUELLE BEFREIUNG. **Franz Wittek/Wolff Kaiser/Dieter Manderfeld/Georg Ruby**, German new music quartet make "out" attractive, from Jazzhaus Musik, MOERS DUISBURG KÖLN. **Thomas Stabenow**, German bassist in solo, duet, trio, and quartet self-penned settings, from T.S. Records, CHIARA. **Toto Blanke/Rudolf Dasek**, two-guitar duo play 10 originals including a dedication to Florence Foster Jenkins, from Aliso Records, KIRCHENMUSIK. db

## MAIL ORDER SOURCES

If your local record store doesn't carry these records, try writing NMDS, 500 Broadway, NYC 10012; Daybreak Express Records, POB 250 Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215; Roundup Records, POB 154, N. Cambridge, MA 02140; or North Country Records, Cadence Bldg., Redwood, NY 13679.

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# BLINDFOLD TEST

**1 SAM NOTO.** *NOSTALGIA* (from *EN-TRANCE!*, Xanadu). Noto, trumpet; Fats Navarro, composer.

That was Fats' tune that we opened with at the Starlight. I have no idea who it is. What I like about the trumpeter is that he's adventuresome, and achieved what he went for. There were a few suspensions that I don't understand, but I give him credit for being a spontaneous player. Three stars.

**2 ABBEY LINCOLN.** *WHEN MALINDY SINGS* (from *STRAIGHT AHEAD*, Candid). Personnel as identified. Rec. 1961.

That was Abbey Lincoln and Booker Little, on a poem by Paul Lawrence Dunbar. I don't care for the way it was set to music because the words all came out on top of each other and you couldn't digest the meaning. She's a unique singer and has her own sound. She has the courage of her convictions and does what she wants to do; I respect her for that. Yet she needs proper production, and her talents are not used here to her benefit.

Booker Little was a great trumpeter; the shortness of his life was a true tragedy and a great loss. His trumpet was not important to the performance; it could've been any other solo here. He's capable of much more. Two stars.

**3 MILES DAVIS.** *DJANGO* (from *LEGRAND JAZZ*, Columbia). Davis, trumpet; John Lewis, composer; Michel Legrand, arranger.

That's John Lewis' composition, and I like the way the MJQ play it better. The arrangement sounded a little schmaltzy with the harp in it, but I like this, too. The trumpeter sounded so much like Miles Davis that it must have been, because I can't imagine anyone wanting to sound so much like someone else. Yet there were no surprises, and I usually hear surprises in Miles' playing. Three stars.

**4 FLETCHER HENDERSON.** *STAMPEDE* (from *STUDY IN FRUSTRATION*, Columbia). Henderson, composer, leader; Rex Stewart, Joe Smith, trumpet; Coleman Hawkins, tenor saxophone. Rec. 1926.

Wasn't that Fletcher Henderson? Coleman Hawkins? That was not Louis Armstrong first; the second trumpet sounded more like him, but he didn't have that open exuberance. The first solo sounded set up; it's no sin to set up a solo, but it is if it *sounds* set up. That must have been very early; I know why Duke said in *Music Is My Mistress* that he wanted his band to sound like Fletcher Henderson's. Three stars.

## Art Farmer

By FRED BOUCHARD

Looking just as solid and distinguished as his flugelhorn sounds, Art Farmer recently made one of his more and more frequent trips to the States from Vienna, where he made his home in 1968 and is a well-known and welcome face on the European theater of jazz.

Thanks to the recent trend towards record company reissue programs, a great deal of Farmer's lyrical, compelling early trumpet and later flugelhorn work is available on labels like Prestige and Contemporary (both under the aegis of Fantasy's Original Jazz Classics). More current samples of Art's art can be heard on his own Concord Jazz albums (*A Work Of Art*, CJ-179 and *Warm Valley*, CJ-212) and as a member of the reconstituted Jazztet (*Moment To Moment*, Soul Note 1066), of which he was a co-founder.

At 56, Farmer still appears quiet, strong, and thoughtful, and wastes as few words as he does notes. He listened for structure, content, and shading, made unflappable



DONNA PAUL

and judicious comments throughout his only Blindfold Test since *db*, 9/8/77. He was given no information about selections played.

**5 KENNY WHEELER.** *'SMATTER* (from *GNU HIGH*, ECM). Wheeler, flugelhorn, composer; Keith Jarrett, piano.

Sounded like Freddie Hubbard. The trumpeter was never dull or boring and had a big, fat sound. He was able to improvise well on a form that doesn't sound easy to me; he met it head on and didn't sound constricted. He wasn't afraid to hold a note and played some nice things. When he stopped I couldn't wait for him to come back, he was so dynamic. Not that the pianist wasn't good, too. Five stars for the trumpeter.

**6 WOODY SHAW.** *WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN* (from *FOR SURE!*, Columbia). Shaw, trumpet; unidentified string section.

Sounded like Freddie Hubbard. Very well played, but the playing didn't have much to do with the song. It lacked mood to me. A nice loose rhythm section could have worked better than the strings. Too much was asked of too few strings. For the trumpeter, two stars. When I hear a ballad, I like more atmosphere.

**7 GEORGE RUSSELL.** *LISTEN TO THE SILENCE, PART I* (from *NEW YORK BIG BAND*, Soul Note). Russell, composer, leader; Stanton Davis, trumpet.

It could've used a bridge in it, some hills

and valleys, more contour. Yet I kind of like the intensity. It started off in a dark mood, with a slow subtle development in that ostinato figure. The trumpet solo had some humor to it. It reminded me of some of George Russell's things. Could it have been the Vienna Art Orchestra? Two stars.

**8 CHET BAKER.** *LITTLE WING* (from *DAYBREAK*, SteepleChase). Baker, trumpet; Doug Raney, guitar; Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, bass; Richie Beirach, composer.

It started at a certain dynamic level and never picked up from there. It was well played, no faults with the level of execution or articulation, but it got kind of monotonous. It's hard to build or change colors within the confines of a duo, but you have to try. No rating.

**9 DUKE ELLINGTON.** *UP AND DOWN* (from *SUCH SWEET THUNDER*, Columbia). Ellington, composer, piano, leader; Clark Terry, flugelhorn.

Give it all the stars you've got! That's one of my favorites. Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn are "beyond category." This has form, it swings, the solos are great. Clark was used very effectively, and performed what he was asked to do perfectly. *db*



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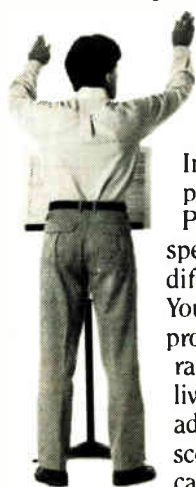
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## Henry Kaiser

*Influences as diverse as Asian cultures and Delta blues, augmented by the latest in electronic technology, make this free-thinking guitarist's music unlike any other.*

BY BILL MILKOWSKI

Most guitarists, particularly rock and blues players, can count on one hand the number of musicians who have significantly affected them. The three Kings (Albert, B.B., Freddie) are perennial favorites in this department. Chuck Berry, the Ventures, and Jimi Hendrix are frequently mentioned as prime inspirations. The more esoteric blues guitarists may name Hubert Sumlin, Guitar Slim, or Jimmy Reed as motivating forces, while the younger crop of today's players would no doubt point to the likes of Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, and Eddie Van Halen as guiding lights. Jazz-oriented guitarists might even include various horn and keyboard artists who inspired them to extend their vocabularies—John Coltrane, Miles Davis, McCoy Tyner, and the like. But still the number of major influences could be contained on a single page.

A list of Henry Kaiser's musical influences, however, would unfurl like the Dead Sea Scrolls and encompass musics from nearly every corner of the planet. And as this self-described compulsive listener sees it, they are all related somehow. From the rough-edged Delta blues of Skip James and Bukka White to the exotic sounds of Indian sarod master Ali Akbar Khan and Korean kayagum player Sang-Won Park, they are all linked by one unifying element—passion.

"There are things in common that I find in the music of many different countries; the feeling of the blues, for instance," says Kaiser. "But there are also many alien qualities; people in other cultures seem to have developed music to express many different emotions and feelings that we do not have expressions for in Western music. I find this especially apparent in Korean music. So I like to go out and search for these new areas—emotional and technical—and then I try to bring them home into my

life and into my guitar."

You can hear strains of Korean kayagum on *Book Of Gold* from his latest solo album, *It's A Wonderful Life* (Metalanguage 124). But it's not a kayagum he's playing, it's an Epiphone Blackstone acoustic guitar. Moreover, a lot of Kaiser's fast behind-the-bridge vibrato and bending on this album came from listening to traditional Vietnamese music performed by Tran Van Khe on a steel-stringed zither. "He crafts emotional melodic and rhythmic improvisations that are propulsive, exciting, and at times almost blues-like," he says.

Many of the non-tempered sounds, exotic textures, and odd intonations featured on the more than 20 albums Kaiser has played on may have been derived from the musics of Japan, China, Indonesia, or Okinawa. For the past eight years, Kaiser has tried to expose more people to these non-Western musics as the host of a weekly radio program on KPFA in Berkeley, California. "On this show I play all of the music that I love, and some of it can be quite strange to the average listener. For instance, I could sit and listen to Korean music all day, and it may sound like cats howling on the roof to somebody else. But I do get a lot of calls and letters at the station from listeners who are surprised by how much they've enjoyed and learned from the exotic listening."

Of all the world musicians that Kaiser has studied from his massive record collection, India's Ali Akbar Khan stands as the monumental influence on him. "For me, he is the greatest musician and improviser on the planet," says Kaiser. "He plays his instrument, the sarod [a 25-stringed fretless lute-like instrument with four main playing strings] with the

greatest technical command and emotional depth of anyone that I have ever heard. I have more than 60 different albums by him and all of them are excellent. I have learned more about emotion in music, about different types of scales, different right hand plectrum techniques, note bending, and musical development from listening to Ali Akbar Khan than to any other musical artist."

Kaiser's interest in the blues is also quite strong, particularly the Delta sound. There's an unmistakable Delta blues stamp on *Jinx Blues*, a Willie Brown/Son House composition on his 1981 double-album, *Aloha* (Metalanguage 109). And there's more of the same with *Special Rider Blues* and *Hard Time Killin' Floor Blues*, two Skip James tunes on *Who Needs Enemies?* (Metalanguage 123), done with frequent collaborator Fred Frith.

"I've had a lot of fun learning pieces by Skip James and Son House," says Kaiser. "They are some of the most intense and emotional music that our country has produced. I've carefully listened to other acoustic blues artists like Charlie Patton, Fred McDowell, Robert Pete Williams, Blind Willie Johnson . . . these guys were making up their own musical rules. A lot of their music can be really strange and eccentric, but I enjoy those rough edges and strange contours that seem to have been sanded off by the historical evolution of the blues in more recent forms."

While Kaiser is attracted to the purer forms of world music and acoustic blues, he is also intrigued by electronics. "I was a science-minded kid all through elementary school and high school. I had no kind of musical experience at all until the middle of college, about 12 years ago, when I started playing guitar."

What made Kaiser pick up the guitar



E. STREET



back then was hearing the music of British avant gardist Derek Bailey. "I was really impressed by what he did, emotionally more than technically. I could identify with his sound. I heard a record and that made me get the guitar. Then I tried to figure out technically what he was doing. I took his playing apart just the way somebody would learn a blues lick. Then I saw him about a year after that and things instantly became a lot clearer."

Bailey employs many unorthodox methods of sound production even though he uses regular acoustic and electric guitars with standard tuning. By playing closely voiced tone clusters, natural and artificial harmonics, oddly voiced wide intervals, and unorthodox plectrum attacks, Bailey has created an entirely new vocabulary for the guitar, and it's one that Kaiser has assimilated into his own style.

"I consider Derek Bailey to be among a handful of the greatest innovators that the guitar has known. He began developing this new vocabulary in the late '60s, basically because he felt that he needed a greater palette of colors and techniques to be able to play the kind of music that he imagined."

What Kaiser imagines goes even a step further. Combining his diverse range of musical influences with his own electronic know-how, he has evolved a signature sound that can only be described as guitar fantasia. Listening to *It's A Wonderful Life*, it's hard to grasp the fact that all the multi-textured sounds are being performed live in real time by one guitarist. On the lengthy title cut, for instance, there are clearly several voices at work. The effect is puzzling and slightly disorienting, to say the least.

Kaiser attributes this interest in achieving multiple voices through the use of digital delay processing to the influence of minimalist pioneer Terry Riley. "A lot of my solo material owes a lot to him, particularly an album called *Shri Camel* (CBS Masterworks 35164). To me, this album is a model of how to use digital technology to achieve a transcendent and expressive performance. Riley basically plays modal, polyphonic improvisations on an electric organ that has been re-tuned to different just-tempered intonations, and he processes the signal through several digital delay loops. However, instead of sounding like someone playing over a repeating tape loop with feedback, Riley sounds like several people playing quite complex music together."

Kaiser's dense, tense clusters and otherworldly textures are achieved by processing his signal through a Lexicon

Super Prime Time in series with a Lexicon PCM-42 and an MXR Pitch Transposer. That all goes through a Howard Dumble Steel String Singer amp and is augmented by a Dbx 160X compressor and a Zeta Polyfuzz to help him attain other colors in his varied palette. He generally plays two or three guitars through this setup—a 1970 black Fender Telecaster with Modulus Graphite neck and Bartolini LCH pickups (which he used on *It's A Wonderful Life* and on his guitar parts for Herbie Hancock's album, *Sound-System*); a 1958 sunburst Fender Stratocaster with Modulus Graphite neck, one stock Fender pickup and one Zeta Hex pickup, and a Floyd Rose tremolo; and a red 1977 Gibson 335 (which he used on *Aloha*).

By skillfully manipulating those separate outputs from the different digital delays and panning them through a mixer, Kaiser creates the illusion of overdubbing. "Through sleight of hand you can make it seem like there's a lot more going on than there really is," he explains. "I'm really interested in the advances made recently in digital technology. I think, for me, that's what the whole thing in music is about right now. But the irritating thing is there's going to be a three-to-five year wait before the technology of, say, the Synclavier gets down to an affordable level. So I'm just kind of sitting around waiting."

In the meantime, Kaiser continues his ambitious experiments with digital processing and Linn drum programming. The Linn drum tracks he laid down for the Frith/Kaiser studio project, *Who Needs Enemies?*, were among the most inventive and eccentric yet devised on that drum computer. He says that his Linn drum programming on that album was greatly influenced by expatriate composer Conlon Nancarrow.

"Mr. Nancarrow is a 64-year-old American who relocated to Mexico in 1940. Since that time he has composed exclusively for his own customized player pianos (recorded on 1750 Arch Records). Nancarrow believes that human players are not capable of the technical demands that he feels are necessary for his compositions so he laboriously punches out his own player piano rolls by hand to match his scores. And the music produced is not at all mechanical-sounding. On the contrary, it brims with fire, emotion, life, and humanity. And it's true that his studies are metrically too complex to be played by a human, which is also one of the advantages of the Linn drum. You can program things on it that can't be played or even dreamed of by humans."

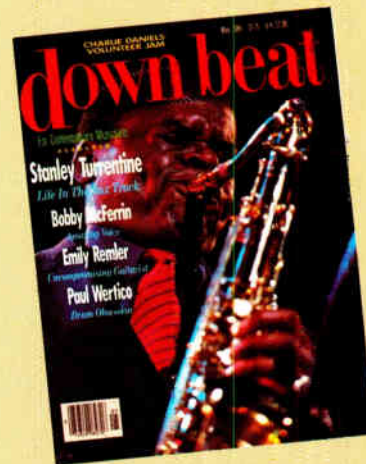
"I can't play drums at all," Kaiser con-

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# PROFILE

tinues. "I have no idea how to. But because of the way that a human can interface with a machine, thanks to microcomputer technology, it becomes possible for people to play things and express themselves musically in ways that they couldn't before. That's what interests me. Computers, I think, are going to change the whole way that we produce, consume, and appreciate music radically within the next 10 years."

Kaiser studied economics at Harvard University around the same time he began delving into the work of improvising artists such as Derek Bailey, saxist Evan Parker, and German guitarist Hans Reichel. Another big influence during this formative period was rock renegade and surrealist Captain Beefheart.

"Beefheart's 1969 album, *Trout Mask Replica* (Reprise 2027), had a big effect on me," he says. "The guitar playing by Bill Harkleroad (Zoot Horn Rollo) and Jeff Cotton (Antenna Jimmy Semens) is just about the most exciting guitarwork that I know of. Beefheart's own guitar parts have their roots in country and Delta blues. Lots of slide playing is evident. But on this album there's a lot of chord work and complex harmonization between guitars and bass that go far beyond what anyone else has attempted in rock music. And while this music is very rigidly structured and totally composed, I feel in it a special kind of energy and conviction that I usually hear only in more improvised forms."

Upon graduating, Kaiser got involved in film production, working on industrial training films and television shows for PBS. He says that experience has paid off handsomely today. "I have a production background from working on projects where time was money, and I've sort of applied that a lot to making records. I'm putting out high quality product and doing it very economically. The whole solo album I just did (*It's A Wonderful Life*) cost about \$250 to record at most. All the records that I have produced at Metalingua (the Berkeley-based label cooperatively owned by Kaiser, pianist Greg Goodman, and members of the Rova Saxophone Quartet) have been made very economically."

While Kaiser continues an ongoing relationship with Fred Frith, the Rova Saxophone Quartet, Greg Goodman, and the group Material, he constantly seeks out new collaborators to stimulate his creative juices. "I've got a short attention span, I think. Maybe that's why," he speculates, adding, "I play with people I get along with personally and whose musical expression I like. I try to seek them out in order to do things together

with them, so I do tend to play with a lot of people you wouldn't expect me to play with, given my association with the avant garde improvising scene."

One of those odd collaborations occurred recently at a gig in the Bay Area, when Kaiser got together with bassist Andy West (formerly of the Dregs), slide guitar virtuoso Scott Colby, vocalist Victoria Williams, Canadian new music saxophonist John Oswald, and drummer John Hanes. "We came out and played one of the things off the Korean record I just made with Sang-Won Park and drummer Charles K. Noyes (*Invite The Spirit*, Celluloid 5008/9). Then we did *Mystery Train*. Then we did one of Andy's

jazz-rock things, a Patsy Cline song, *Walkin' After Midnight*, Beefheart's *Alice In Blunderland*, and a Willie Dixon tune—it was a pretty strange gig, but a really great one too."

You can't get more eclectic than that, though Kaiser keeps trying. He's already got an album in the can featuring fellow guitarists John Abercrombie and Amos Garrett. And he's planning a project for this year with Frith and British rock guitarist Richard Thompson. You never know quite what to expect from the iconoclastic Mr. Kaiser.

As he puts it in his self-written liner notes from *Aloha*: "The only rule that I operate by is that there be no rules." **db**

## Larry Novak

*A fixture in Windy City clubs for nearly three decades, this pianist is the epitome of the well-rounded studio/band/teaching musician.*

BY JON BALLERAS

"I like to think of myself as one of the last of the generalists," commented Larry Novak, as he settled back into a comfortable-looking couch in the living room of his home in a northern Chicago suburb. And this musical director, pianist, conductor, composer, arranger, and teacher used the term *generalist* with precision, for his activity on Chicago's musical scene has encompassed everything from bebop to impressionistic small group jazz, from backing singers doing show tunes and torch songs to cutting jingles and composing music for mental health and ecology series on the Public Broadcasting System. How does a single musician develop such varied talents?

Born in Chicago, Novak began his musical training at age five, with studies in such traditional piano literature as Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin. But, he says, music didn't come together for him until his early teens, when he studied with Max Stelter at Walter Deller's School of Music at Kimball Hall. "Stelter," Novak explains, "made me aware of more things than just the notes—of orchestration and structure and harmony and of the art and science of music."

In a more informal yet equally significant way, Novak's musical outlook was



D. SHIGLEY

shaped shortly after this time by pianist Bill Evans who Novak met when Evans was playing flute with the Fifth Army Band at Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Novak recalls that Evans "was still playing like Bud Powell, but was starting to stretch out from there, doing things like listening to Bartok and analyzing him and talking about it." "Bill," Novak continues, "had a great deal of influence on my direction, because of his linear playing. After Bud Powell, he was the only one who really paid attention to detail. His voicings, his orchestration, the way he went about constructing his solos, his mood—it wasn't just a bunch of mathematics to Bill. He made music."

After a stint in an Army band in which he held down a trombone chair, Novak returned to Chicago to head up the house trio at the London House, a now sadly defunct supper club which was on



# EASTMAN

the North edge of the Loop and consistently booked first-string jazz groups, including those of Oscar Peterson, Teddy Wilson, Cannonball Adderley, Herbie Hancock, and George Shearing. Such a club was not merely a choice gig for Novak, it was a place where he could interact with some of the most capable jazz players. "If I had a question about something," Novak recalls, "I could ask George, or Oscar, or Dizzy Gillespie, and they were free with information. The situation wasn't as competitive as it is now. Jazz was an important thing to do, but it wasn't blown out of perspective. The people who were playing it weren't self-important because they were doing it. They just had fun with it. They enjoyed doing something artistic and were gratified that someone enjoyed what they did. And they wanted to communicate and discuss it."

During this formative time, Novak was especially influenced by George Shearing, who he got together with on long afternoons when the two pianists drank tea, talked about music, and traded ideas at the keyboard. "Shearing's orchestration within what he does is just as beautiful and wonderful as his solo line playing," Novak respectfully points out.

After several years at the London House, Novak moved to Mr. Kelly's, a sister club of the London House, which featured such show business-oriented acts as the Platters, Helen Reddy, and Bill Cosby, as well as such jazz stalwarts as Sarah Vaughan, Buddy Rich, and Nancy Wilson. Novak's title at this club, which he stayed at for 14 years, was musical director and his job required him to play piano, conduct, and pen charts as the occasion required, as well as to play jazz sets between acts. Novak's heading up the band at Mr. Kelly's represented another opportunity to learn and broaden his versatility. "It was a unique situation," Novak points out, "to have a job locally that would change ambience every two weeks. Mel Tormé, for example, would be there for a couple of weeks and then it would be a totally different situation with whoever was after that, say, the Smothers Brothers."

Novak later toured with Peggy Lee, among other performers, and his remarks on working with her give a clear indication of how finely honed his talents had become. "Conducting for such a perfectionist was another strata," Novak explains with pleasure. "It was great fun to work with someone who had as high or higher standards than you have and expected absolute perfection at every performance. Not one song or even one

CONTINUED ON PAGE 57

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## ONE NIGHT WITH BLUE NOTE

TOWN HALL

**NEW YORK**—Record company founder Alfred Lion had great ears for the most vital jazz players of the '40s, '50s, and '60s. Among the former Blue Note leaders who've survived, Art Blakey, Kenny Burrell, Walter Davis, Lou Donaldson, Herbie Hancock, Joe Henderson, Freddie Hubbard, Bobby Hutcherson, Jackie McLean, Cecil Taylor, McCoy Tyner, and Tony Williams helped make this Janus-faced concert tribute to the label being revived by Bruce Lundvall at Capitol/EMI special enough to deserve the videotaping, filming, and audio-recording it was afforded. Michael Cuscuna and emcee Hancock kept the five-and-a-half-hour production rolling, so that only the last two ensembles tried my patience. But the question remains: Is there a future beyond reissues?

The new Blue Note signatories are guitarist Stanley Jordan, whose short set didn't jell until the end of his blues *Jumpin' Jack*—he's played better; flutist James Newton, who deftly recreated Eric Dolphy's classic *Hat And Beard* with Hutcherson, Williams, and Ron Carter, then recalled James Spaulding's solo on the vibist's *Little B's Poem*; and tenor saxist Bennie Wallace, whose a capella blowing was responsibly rambunctious and who stood firm when Cecil McBee and Jack DeJohnette launched their support. Also due from BN/EMI are projects from Burrell/Grover Washington (here, with drummer Grady Tate and bassist Reggie Workman they essayed a tepid *Nica's Dream* and *Summertime*), a straightahead date from Stanley Turrentine (whose *A Child Is Born* feature left me unmoved), and Charles Lloyd/Michel Petrucciani (the pianist a tasteful, mildly stimulating accompanist to the hollow-toned saxist/huffy-puffy flutist's nice ideas and inconsequential realization, despite McBee and DeJohnette's presence). Without a young rhythm section—say, Kenny Kirkland, Charnett Moffett, and Marvin "Smitty" Smith—can there be a new Blue Note stable?

The best performances by far were from the veterans. For example, pianist Walter Davis suggesting the nuances of Monk and Bud Powell, helped by Blakey and Workman, then bringing up Bobby Timmons' *Moanin'* with ripsnorting Johnny Griffin, subdued Curtis Fuller, and Freddie Hubbard. Hub may be stuck in the style he perfected long ago, but he came to play strong, long, vivid phrases and high squeals on *Paper Moon*. With



From left, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Freddie Hubbard, Joe Henderson, and Tony Williams.

Hancock sitting in, and bassist Carter, Hutcherson stopped time on his ballad *Bouquet*. Hubbard returned with tenorist Henderson and the great, splashing Williams, for *Cantaloupe Island*, *Recorda Me*, and *Maiden Voyage*—all sounding fresh, with Hancock refiguring his every voicing.

After an intermission, club owner Max Gordon was introduced to plug the Village Vanguard's 50 years. Then came the Lloyd/Petrucciani and Wallace demonstrations. McCoy Tyner swung *Sweet And Lovely* all alone but beautifully. Even better, McLean, trumpeter Woody Shaw, Tyner, McBee, and DeJohnette tore into *Appointment In Ghana*, *Passion Dance*, and *Blues On The Corner*. Here were the heights of the Blue Note sound; McLean and Shaw, both currently without record contracts, cut their solos to the bone and sinew of the songs, while the rhythm section was on the ball. Cecil Taylor's solo, which followed, didn't seem out of place at all. Hank Mobley came onstage just to tell a joke on Lou Donaldson, who kicked off organist Jimmy Smith's set with slippery bop licks. Smith, Burrell, et al funk on 'til 2 a.m.

Of the speechifiers, artist Reid Miles was best, saying if he'd known the label was going to take off, and reissue his work 20 years later, he'd have charged Lion more for some 900 album cover designs. Sound engineer Rudy Van Gelder looked happy, Lion appeared justifiably proud. Lundvall beamed in delight. But somebody could have at least mentioned Horace Silver, and a roll call of the Note-worthies in absentia—among the living, Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, Richard Davis, Elvin Jones, Andrew Hill, Sam Rivers, and Wayne Shorter; among the departed, can you imagine a Blue Note night without memories of Clifford Brown?—would have been more appropriate a stalling action than the naming of '80s celebrities—what's Sting got to do with it? He didn't even show up. A party next-door, with hors d'oeuvres, drinks,

and a jam session (pianist Ronnie Matthews and bassist Ray Drummond backed a lineup of aspirants) lasted nearly until dawn, by which time Blue Note had re-established quite a bit of good will.

—howard mandel

## CHARLIE DANIELS' VOLUNTEER JAM

MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM

**NASHVILLE**—Germany is associated with Oktoberfest, New Orleans with Mardi Gras, and Kentucky with the Derby. In comparison, the 11-year-old Volunteer Jam, with host Charlie Daniels, is just a child, but a very wild child indeed. Nashville experiences Jam fever with tickets usually selling out a few days after going on sale. The one-night event corrals people from all over the world to participate in the festivities. In the past few years, the Volunteer Jam has turned into a major worldwide media event, broadcast live over a network of pay cable television services, U.S. radio stations, and the Voice of America overseas. This year Showtime cable television videotaped the Volunteer Jam for later special broadcast.

A very large party takes place annually in the convention area below the Municipal Auditorium stage. Hundreds of music industry figures and VIPs are treated to a variety of food and drink. Closed circuit coverage of the live musical proceedings upstairs are broadcast on a large screen television, and tv monitors are scattered throughout the banquet area.

The unknowing might think of Charlie Daniels as strictly a c&w artist, known for his million-selling albums like *Million Mile Reflections*, or his big hit, *Devil Went Down To Georgia*. But Daniels claims to love all kinds of music and attempts to infuse different styles into his own, try-





Little Richard (center) and Charlie Daniels (right).

ing to escape the "Southern rock" restrictions many critics and fans put on him. For that reason, Daniels is respected among his peers, and in past years has brought together an almost unbelievable array of musical talent that cuts across stylistic boundaries—the Woody Herman big band finds itself sharing the stage with the funky soul of James Brown; Rufus Thomas easily starts a dance craze with his *Funky Chicken*, or Papa John Creach duels fiddles with Daniels. Other past participants have included Billy Joel, classical violinist Eugene Fodor, Leon Russell, George Thorogood and the Destroyers, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble, and Jump 'N The Saddle to mention a few.

Of course, the Volunteer Jam boasts a heavy helping of Nashville's number one musical export. Roy Acuff, the Dirt Band, Willie Nelson, Larry Gatlin, and Boxcar Willie are just a handful of the homegrown c&w acts to grace Daniels' all-embracing stage.

Country took a larger part of the proceedings this year than at past Jams. Gail Davies, Bill Medley, Eddy Raven, Alabama, Roy Acuff, Nicolette Larson, and Emmylou Harris each performed. Amy Grant sang gospel, Kris Kristofferson debuted songs from his soon-to-be-released album, Dickey Betts, former Allman Brothers guitarist, traded hot licks with Daniels (on guitar this time). Ted Nugent brought his fiery rock & roll and Papa John Creach, a Jam regular, added his scorching blues fiddle.

The highlight was undoubtedly a maniacal performance from Little Richard. Daniels' band backed him and kicked into his classics *Tutti Frutti* and *Lucille*, prodding him to return to his old rock & roll. Instead the born-again preacher tore into what he calls his "message music" from atop a white grand piano. He

drove the crowd to a frenzy, eventually throwing his boots and shirt to the audience. Toward the end of the evening he came back to sing background harmony with Kristofferson, as Daniels and the assembled musical multitude jammed on into the night.

—phd toivne

## LESTER BOWIE'S BRASS FANTASY

### SWEET BASIL

**NEW YORK**—Horst Liepolt first presented a festival of new jazz in 1975 in Australia, calling the festival "Music Is An Open Sky." When he moved to New York in 1981 he was disheartened that the better jazz joints didn't offer the newer music. So, he and his partners, Phyllis Weisbart and Mel Litoff, determined to offer jazz new and old and in between at Sweet Basil. And to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Liepolt's "Open Sky" they presented 15 nights of new directions in jazz, starting with Gunter Hampel and ending with Anthony Braxton. Among others playing were notables Bill Dixon, John Carter, and the World Saxophone Quartet. And, as the house was often full and the audience enthusiastic, the festival was a success. Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy was a highlight.

Bowie gathered a nine-piece band, including eight among the best and the brightest of brass: Malachi Thompson, Bruce Purse, Stanton Davis, and Bowie on the trumpets, Steve Turré and Craig Harris on trombones, Vincent Chancey on french horn, Bob Stewart on tuba, plus Philip Wilson at the drums. Bowie, in his trademark white lab-coat, played solo at first, some bluesy musings from a New Orleans back porch. Soon he was

joined by other voices in a full-blown spiritual, *When The Spirit Comes Back*.

Bowie preached, his trumpet shouting loud above the faithful—but the music wasn't always sanctified; the sacred and the profane intermingled. Craig Harris talked about the *C.C. Rider*. Malachi Thompson was downright wicked, calling for his *Sugar*. Bowie returned at the climax, ever the pointillist, not playing lines so much as assembled sounds: quick squeaks or squawks or his breath alone fluttering through the trumpet, playing the microphone with the finesse of a Sinatra.

Steve Turré stole the show on his own *Macho*, a feature for his virtuoso solos on conch shells. At first he played two middle-sized conchs, the alto and the tenor (as it were). Mostly he growled, his fingers thrusting in and out of the shells—but then, as Wilson cooked up some Afro-Caribbean gumbo behind the horns, Turré switched to smaller (soprano and sopranino) shells and he was playing, flutter-tongued trills and trombone-like smears with his fingers as the slide. Often he played two shells at once—and I herewith announce my vote for Miscellaneous Instrumentalist of the Year: Steve Turré, the Rahsaan of the conchs!

Everyone in the band is a Talent Deserving Wider Recognition. Turré's turn on the conchs was only one aspect of one of the most imaginative and most unheralded young masters. After umpteenth years as a sideman, his trombone playing and his all-around musicality ought to be acknowledged with at least an up-front recording. Harris, too, plays the whole history of the trombone, from gut-bucket to the stars. Chancey's french horn was, again and again, a warm breeze, the calm of even the wildest storms Bowie and Wilson whipped up. Stewart's tuba was both anchor and heartbeat. Davis and Purse were featured, but Malachi Thompson was another revelation of the night, often Bowie's alter ego, sometimes insinuating a counterpoint to Bowie, or the response to Bowie's call.

The first set climaxed with *Webop*, a straightahead bebop head with a *Flying Home* flourish even Hamp might envy. Bowie's wit is infectious—at least two of the soloists flirted with the *Flintstones* theme. Part two's highlights included *The Great Pretender*, complete with doo-wop "woo-woos," and a new Bowie reggae to celebrate Bob Marley's birthday.

This is a band that ought to be recorded—but I expect it will always be so much more fun when it's so live. Bowie's Fantasy is indeed fantastic.

—michael bourne

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# PRO SESSION

## An Analysis Of Michael Brecker's Harmonic Style

**BY TRENT KYNASTON**

*Trent Kynaston teaches saxophone and directs the jazz ensembles at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. He has published numerous books of solo transcriptions—including Phil Woods Solos, Stan Getz Solos, and Michael Brecker Solos—each published by Studio P/R. Kynaston plays in the Western Jazz Quartet, a faculty ensemble in residence at the School of Music.*



**M**ichael Brecker is one of the premier saxophonists on the music scene today. He owes a great deal to John Coltrane when it comes to his stylistic approach to the tenor saxophone, but he has developed a distinct voice from that influence—one that has earned him the utmost respect from musicians and fans throughout the world.

The intent of this article is to identify some of the characteristics that consistently appear in Brecker's playing through an examination of his treatment of minor seventh and dominant seventh chords. All of the musical examples I have included are taken from Brecker's solo on *Invitation*, recorded in 1977 on *You Can't Live Without It* (Chiaroscuro 185), under guitarist Jack Wilkens' leadership. This album demonstrates straightahead bebop playing, but the concepts discussed below can be found in his playing in every style.

### Minor Seventh Chords

Over minor seventh chords (ii<sup>7</sup>) Brecker uses the Dorian scale almost exclusively. Other than playing chromatically through these chords, the most common variation is his regular use of the Major seventh. You will note in examples 1-3 below, while the chord change is a Dm<sup>7</sup>, Brecker uses a C<sup>♯</sup> more often than C natural. (Examples 4-7 illustrate the same usage over Am<sup>7</sup> and Bm<sup>7</sup>.) When you replace the C in the D Dorian scale with C<sup>♯</sup>, the resulting scale is a D ascending melodic minor. (I specifically refer to the ascending portion of the scale because jazz players generally do not use its altered descending pattern.) Brecker makes good use of this scale. Not only does the C<sup>♯</sup> add a great deal of brightness and forward motion to the Dm<sup>7</sup> chord, it also forecasts the color of the flatted fifth (raised 11th) of the V<sup>7</sup> chord to come. Many players use the Major seventh over a minor seventh chord as a chromatic leading tone, but Brecker outlines the note from every angle. It is too prominent to simply be a passing or neighboring tone.

### Dominant Seventh Chords

Most of the unique colors in Brecker's playing come from his treatment of dominant seventh chords. Over these chords he regularly uses what many have called the Coltrane scale—a Diminished-Whole Tone scale (also known as a Super Locrian scale, see ex. 8). Others have called this same scale Lydian/Mixolydian or Lydian/Flat Seven (ex. 9) or Lydian/Augmented (ex. 10). It is also the ascending melodic minor scale I mentioned earlier (ex. 11). Since the notes in all four of these scales are exactly the same, I prefer to use the melodic minor terminology because it is one of those basic scales that almost everyone learns very early. The question then is how to apply it in a jazz context.

All Coltrane disciples use the scale built a half-step above the root of the dominant seventh chord (ie. B<sup>♭</sup> melodic minor over A<sup>7</sup>). (Note the tones that are present in this application. Using the example of B<sup>♭</sup> melodic minor over A<sup>7</sup>, the B<sup>♭</sup> is the flatted ninth of A<sup>7</sup>, the C is the sharpened ninth, D<sup>♭</sup> = C<sup>♯</sup>, E<sup>♭</sup> is the flatted fifth, F is the raised fifth, G is the seventh, and A is the root. The application gives you the essential notes of the A<sup>7</sup> chord—root, third, and seventh—plus all of the important color, or altered tones.) I have presented numerous examples (12-18) below, in various keys, to illustrate how Brecker uses this scale. (A scale analysis is indicated in parenthesis above each example.) You can see in example 13 that he uses the straight Mixolydian scale over the first part of the change and then shifts to the melodic minor, leading chromatically to the next chord. Many will argue that he is using the tri-tone substitution (ie. F<sup>♯</sup> in the place of C<sup>7</sup>), which may be true, but the notes, with occasional chromatics, almost always add up to the melodic minor scale. (If you consider the true chord in example 13 to be the tri-tone substitution



(F $\sharp$ <sup>7</sup>) then the scale could be a Lydian/Mixolydian based on F $\sharp$ —thus the rationale for inventing that scale.)

Although all of the examples I have presented came from one particular solo recorded several years ago, Brecker used these scales extensively then and still does today. Much of his solo on Chick Corea's *Quartet No. 1* (Warner Bros. 3552), recorded in 1981 (also in the earlier mentioned publication) is built on a modal scale that is derived from the notes of the indicated A<sup>7</sup> chord, and the adjacent B $\flat$ m chord. (The resulting scale [ex. 19] is once again the B $\flat$  melodic minor with an E chromatic passing tone added.) Throughout this solo he outlines the B $\flat$ m tonality against the A<sup>7</sup>.

Brecker does not use this scale exclusively when playing over dominant seventh chords—both blues scales and diminished scales (along with the Mixolydian) are common in his solos, but the melodic minor is his obvious favorite. Another very important feature of his playing involves his use of Pentatonic scale patterns within the harmonic structure we've been looking at. This is also a Coltrane characteristic that Brecker has developed to an art. Add this to a very fluent chromaticism and you have the basis of the Michael Brecker harmonic/melodic concept. Once you get past the analytical approach I encourage you to closely study some of the other aspects of his style, such as his marvelous creativity, sound, technique, intonation, energy, stylistic flexibility, and the like. Good Luck!

#### Examples:

1 D $\flat$ <sup>7</sup>

2 D $\flat$ <sup>7</sup>

3 D $\flat$ <sup>7</sup>

4 A $\flat$ <sup>7</sup>

5 A $\flat$ <sup>7</sup>

6 B $\flat$ <sup>7</sup>

7 B $\flat$ <sup>7</sup>

8 A diminished-whole tone

9 E $\flat$  Lydian/mixolydian

10 D $\flat$  Lydian/augmented

11 B $\flat$  melodic minor

12 C<sup>7</sup> (G diminished) C<sup>7</sup> (C $\flat$  melodic minor) (F $\sharp$ <sup>7</sup>)

13 C<sup>7</sup> (C mixolydian) (C $\flat$  melodic minor) (F $\sharp$ <sup>7</sup>)

14 A<sup>7</sup> (B $\flat$  melodic minor)

15 A $\flat$ <sup>7</sup> (A melodic minor)

16 F $\sharp$ <sup>7</sup> (G melodic minor)

17 E<sup>7</sup> (F melodic minor)

18 E $\flat$ <sup>7</sup> (E $\flat$  mixolydian) (E melodic minor)

19 B $\flat$ m A<sup>7</sup> db

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- X = scratch deadened string
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- = ghost note



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## PROFILE continued from page 51

vowel was thrown away. It was total concentration. She expected the best."

Stints on and off the road with such artists as Frank Sinatra, Shirley MacLaine, and the Pointer Sisters round out Novak's resumé, as well as film scoring and doing specials for the Public Broadcasting System, extensive studio work, and several jazz piano albums. But what does this diverse experience as a high grade musical generalist add up to? Novak answers the question this way: "I really think that you can communicate all kinds of feelings to audiences, to people. It can be a real, touching human thing. If you can communicate feelings and ideas without words, you can make an impression on people. I've done it and have been in situations where it's happened, where the impression I was communicating came to fruition. And it wasn't for the applause. That's not the idea at all. The idea is to be able to take what you feel and transmit that to someone else. It's a feel-

ing that goes on, if someone gets involved in the music with you, if you really get immersed in what's happening around you—in the swell and the swirl of the music. I've been fortunate on a number of occasions to do that and so I keep striving for that every time I play. I'm talking about tenderness and beauty, and other feelings we feel as human beings."

As Novak spoke, Gary, his 15-year-old son and a drummer, ushered his friends into the family's basement for an afternoon rock rehearsal. "I'm really having a great deal of fun with my son," Novak commented. "You might say I grew my own drummer." Announcing the work in progress for their first record together and recalling his son's appearance with Novak's trio at the 1982 Chicago Kool Jazz Festival, Novak added that Gary "is probably one of the best drummers I've ever played with. He knows exactly what I want and can read me before I get to anywhere I want to go. So, playing with him is fun."

Perhaps Larry Novak isn't one of the last of the generalists after all. **db**

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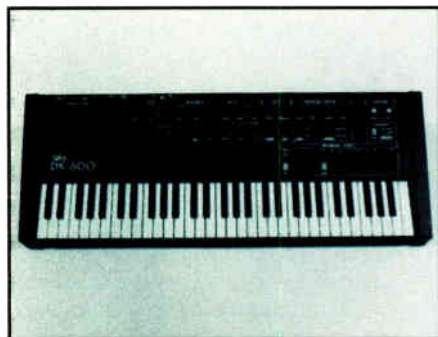
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direct result of how we feel at that particular time."

Wertico compares the method of Ear Wax madness to the approach of much of the ethnic music he loves to listen to at home. "I do listen to some of the commercial music today, just to stay in touch. Because after all, it is the real world. But if you find that you've hit a slump or you feel like you're getting out of touch with yourself from playing with too many drum machines or whatever, you start wondering why you're even playing music to begin with. At that point, if you go listen to some ethnic music you can get back to the root of why you started playing. When you put on African field recordings you hear a whole different thing than the clean, controlled sound of commercial music today. You don't hear a click track or any EQ. You just hear pure expression from their souls. And that's the kind of approach we take with Ear Wax Control. I never want to lose touch with that energy force. And I don't think I ever will, because it means too much to me."

Yet another ongoing side project is Spontaneous Composition, a group with bassist Doug Lofstrom and saxist Rich Corpolongo that he describes as "a free trio which is bordering on classical." And he also plays in a quartet with virtuoso harmonica innovator Howard Levy. This all takes place, of course, when he's not on the road or in the studio with the hardest working man on ECM's roster, Pat Metheny.

Says Wertico of that prized gig: "When I get done playing a set with Pat I feel like I've done everything I would have wanted to do musically. It's a very fulfilling feeling. It's not like when you're playing in certain bands and you're not doing this type of thing that you happen to enjoy—where you say, 'Man, if only I could swing on one tune.' But with Pat I'm constantly switching gears. There's such an incredible range of dynamics in his music. Every tune is so different. I have to make the drums sound like a jazz kit on one tune, then feel like a rock kit on the next. One minute you're using brushes and the next minute you're bashing the shit out of the drums. We run the whole gamut in one set and that's a fantastic feeling. I couldn't think of a better gig."

Interestingly enough, as Wertico looks back over his 32 years, the person he credits with helping him to get where he's at today is his high school band director at Cherry-Grove High School in Cary, Illinois. "His name is Donald Ehrensberger and he's still at Cherry-Grove. And the thing about him was he gave me carte blanche as far as my creativity, which is really unusual. Most band direc-

tors want to put you in with everybody else and you end up losing your identity. But this guy gave me so much room it's hard to believe. I mean, I was writing free drum cadences for the marching band—these really hip things where we'd just blow. If there was something that I really liked, he would just let me do it. He never stifled me. So I'd say that meeting Mr. Ehrensberger, and forming Ear Wax Control, were two of the most important things in my career as far as just letting me be what I wanted to be at the time."

Another turning point in Wertico's musical development came at Western Illinois University, where Gary Chaffee

was his drum instructor. Wertico was a freshman when the Cannonball Adderley group came to campus for a seminar/performance. Wertico was lucky enough to sit in with the group and he held his own. After the concert, Wertico got to talking with Cannonball's drummer, Roy McCurdy, about playing and studying. "I told him, 'Man, I don't want to be here. I want to be playing.' And he said, 'Yeah, you should.' Wertico heeded that advice and quit school the very next day. "Gary was a great teacher but I don't think I was a great student. I just wanted to do things my own way. I've always been geared toward that kind of thing—doing it in an unorthodox way, however I felt." **db**

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MARK McHENRY, Band Director, Kokomo High School, Kokomo, Indiana

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When he took over nine years ago, there were 30 kids in a band barely able to play the school's own fight song, and a booster organization completely unable to muster as much as \$2,000 a year in total receipts.

"Before I came," he confided, "the program was in shambles."

Today it's anything but. His files reveal that this 100-member band now performs more difficult, more meaningful music and drills each

year. The booster organization can raise more than \$40,000 a year *in profits* — in spite of a struggling local economy.

The band has brought home a great deal of "hardware," as he calls it, from state and regional competitions. Trophies crowd his office, display case, and band closet.

They've been invited to play before both Presidents Ford and Reagan, and given McHenry the highest honor and the praise of the people of Kokomo.

And along the way the kids have learned from him the key to success: cooperation. It's as true for the program in general as it is for any single performance.

Everyone — the school board members, the administration, the

boosters, all the teachers and local music retailers — everyone shares in the band's success. And McHenry's the first to admit it.

"Together we've made it happen," he's proud to say.

We at *down beat* and *up beat* magazine ask you to take a hard look at the band program in your hometown. Remember, one kid can't carry the band, or one director, the program. Success requires the active participation of the director, the administration, the retailers, and the community in general. Everyone.

The greater the teamwork behind the scenes, the better the performance in front of the crowd. It's as simple as that.

"But you'd be amazed at the difference," said one who knows.

**down beat**  
For Contemporary Musicians

## Lundvall Enlivens A Legacy

BY JEFF LEVENSON

Bruce Lundvall looks very much like the prototypical corporate executive—fit, impeccably groomed, and at times given to the kind of mannered boardroom optimism one expects of a high-level management figure. Yet one thing sets him apart from similarly placed individuals: beneath the veneer of the businessman, there beats the heart of a jazz fan. Even while alluding to career objectives, or discussing the overall marketing strategies he hopes to employ in his new position, the true Lundvall emerges—a man who loves the music. This acquired predilection should be comforting to most jazz fans, because Lundvall has been entrusted with the responsibility of upholding perhaps the most valued reputation in the jazz record business. He is reviving the legendary Blue Note label.

The long, illustrious tradition of Blue Note dates back to 1939, when Alfred Lion, a native of Berlin with a passion for American jazz, settled in the States and recorded boogie woogie keyboard giants Meade Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons. Shortly thereafter, in a company brochure issued by Lion, Blue Note's bold yet simple creed was offered to the record-buying public: *Blue Note Records are designed simply to serve the uncompromising expressions of hot jazz or swing, in general. Any particular style of playing which represents an authentic way of musical feeling is genuine expression. By virtue of its significance in place, time, and circumstance, it possesses its own tradition, artistic standards, and audience that keeps it alive. Hot jazz, therefore, is expression and communication, a musical and social manifestation, and Blue Note Records are concerned with identifying its impulses, not its sensational and commercial adornments.*

In the years that followed, Blue Note stuck to its original statement of purpose, Lion and partner Francis Wolff supporting the efforts of Swing Era artists like Earl Hines and The Port of Harlem Jazzmen, and then backing the burgeoning bebop movement by recording giants like Miles Davis, Bud Powell, Fats Navarro, Tadd Dameron, and Thelonious Monk. In the '50s and '60s, years considered by many to be the label's golden period, Blue Note expanded its roster to include, among others, Sonny Rollins, Jackie McLean, Wayne Shorter,

Kenny Dorham, Horace Silver, Lee Morgan, Bobby Hutcherson, and Herbie Hancock. Throughout the ever-shifting stylistic periods of jazz the label made its mark by properly emphasizing the music above all else.

The importance of maintaining this Blue Note tradition is not lost to its current-day president. "In thinking through the direction of the label," Lundvall points out, "I decided that it had to be a label of great integrity, and it had to continue in the manner in which it was started by Alfred Lion. The company's whole image, and its approach to the music and the musicians have had a tremendous impact on the jazz world over the years. We have to move ahead in that way."

Lundvall arrives at Blue Note by way of Columbia and Elektra Musician. As president of CBS Records, he had been instrumental in launching the careers of numerous pop and rock artists. In his first jazz signing he brought Herbie Hancock to the label, and in subsequent years followed with Al Di Meola, Arthur Blythe, Paquito D'Rivera, and Wynton Marsalis, all of whom represent a partial listing of the CBS jazz roster under Lundvall's tenure.

While at Elektra Musician, he successfully shaped a label that, by his own admission, "attempted to represent the musician's point-of-view." He is especially proud of the fact that he recorded a broad spectrum of artists, and that "their vision was reflected in the records we made, not my vision as the person running the company."

Will things be appreciably different now on Blue Note? "The main thing," he explains, "is that I must sign artists who can develop the future of the label, artists who have long-term career potential. In doing so, I'll stay with the pure music. We're not going to do a lot of crossover

records, or attempt at achieving Top 40 airplay. We're going to try to find the brightest, young, serious talents, and we're going to try to sign the major players who are in the mainstream of the music. Some can be very avant garde; I'm not saying that I wouldn't be interested. But I'm not going to do a lot of fusion records, or funk records, or commercial crossovers—not that I object on principle to that stuff, but I don't think it fits the image of Blue Note."

Among Lundvall's first releases is Stanley Jordan's major label debut, *Magic Touch*; a collaboration between Grover Washington Jr. and Kenny Burrell, *Together*; a Charles Lloyd/Michel Petrucciani group album entitled *A Night In Copenhagen*; and George Russell's grand orchestral work, *The African Game*.

In tandem with the release of this newly recorded music, the label has embarked on an ambitious back-catalogue reissue program, coordinated by producer Michael Cuscuna. Initial offerings include noteworthy Blue Note classics, as well as previously unavailable material by Jackie McLean, Hank Mobley, Lee Morgan, and Clifford Brown. In keeping with Blue Note's long-standing concern for fashioning their records with optimal sound quality—most of the original albums featured the distinctive engineering touch of Rudy Van Gelder—the reissues will be digitally remastered and pressed on virgin vinyl. The buyers, Lundvall feels, "will get their money's worth."

"You have to remember," he advises, "it's not often that consumer allegiance to a label is an important variable that management has to deal with. But this is a special case, a special label. And," he adds before preparing for his next appointment on this heavily scheduled day, "the history of Blue Note speaks for itself."

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