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After 14 years of giving an almost-nightly Weather Report, the highly respected saxophonist/composer felt the need to report the rest of the news. Now on tour with his new quintet, he reveals some insightful commentary to Scott Yanow.

BILL FRISELL: IN SEARCH OF THE LOST CHORD AND OTHER SOUND **EFFECTS**

Don't be fooled by his outward reticence; behind that guitar (plus special effects) lurks one of the most explosive, exploratory, empathetic axemen on the scene, as Howard Mandel



To this avant-rock drummer, success equates with happiness. and with his Golden Palominos exploding into the public consciousness, Fier's ecstatic. Bill Milkowski gives us the details

25 **ALLEN TOUSSAINT: NEW ORLEANS HIT MAN**

This producer/songwriter/pianist has had a hand in over 35 gold or platinum discs, dating back to the late '50's. Don Palmer gives us the lowdown on the legendary hit man's current attempt to bridge the chasm between studio and stage.

DAVID STONE MARTIN

A gallery of works by jazz' foremost illustrator.

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Cover photograph of Wayne Shorter by Chris Cuffaro; Bill Frisell by Mitchell Seidel.

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Bill Frisell



Anton Fier



Allen Toussaint



The Long Ryders



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On THE BEAT

66 t's going to be better than the Talking Heads movie." So said Branford Marsalis of Bring On The Night—the feature film of Sting and his jazz sidemen from last year-well before it hit selected theaters for a couple of weeks before Christmas, then abruptly disappeared. On the other hand, the Heads' film Stop Making Sense recently celebrated its 61st straight week at Chicago's Fine Arts Theater (the same venue Sting's film failed to last an entire month at). It's no accident



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120 Claremont Avenue New York, New York 10027 (212) 749-2802 that the one outlasted the other by such a wide margin—Branford's early forecast notwithstanding, Stop Making Sense is clearly the better film.

Not that Bring On The Night is a complete clunker. Branford himself is funny and engaging, as when he imitates Sting's puzzled reaction to his use of a notorious 12-letter word ("Oh," says Branford in a mock British accent, "so you think my music's a motherf***er"). Bassist Daryl Jones' deadpan insistence that his real ambition is to become a Las Vegas nightclub singer is another of the movie's comic highlights, ending with Jones and Marsalis belting out an impromptu vocal duet of New York, New York. The other band members, including the backup vocalists, are fun to get to know. And the music, of course, is as good as the band's album, though there isn't enough of it to

justify a feature-length film.

The film's major flaw is the pretentiousness that results from its attempted deification of Sting. The movie opens with Sting, flanked by his new bandmates, announcing the creation of his new band at a Paris press conference bristling with excited reporters (the scene is more befitting the convening of SALT IV talks; let's try to remember that, good as they are, these guys are just a rock band). Then we get Sting as intellectual, the star giving us carefully considered reflections on such deep issues as what it felt like the first time he heard a stranger whistle Roxanne (he's a songwriting genius, but no intellectual would write a line like If You Love Someone, Set Them Free—it just ain't grammatical). There's also Sting's oddball photographers, a couple of guys who dress up weird (their exact wardrobes escape me, but picture a sideways baseball cap, thick plastic-framed glasses, plaid sportcoat, Bermuda shorts, and hightop basketball sneakers and you get the idea) and shoot Sting both while skipping madly alongside him, and as he wades through a city fountain (the audience is paying to see the band, not the working methods of photography's nouveau nitwits).

The biggest blotch on the film, however, is director Michael Apted's decision to include footage of Sting's common-law wife giving birth to their youngest son just before the band's debut concert. Perhaps because he needed something to help flesh out the film's often lackluster footage, Apted seemed to be attempting some sort of soulful bounding metaphorical leap from the birth of Sting's kid to the birth of his band. But that's absurd—the birth of Sting's son has no more to do with the birth of his band than the kid's umbilical cord (which we watch Sting snip) has to do with the chords he strums on rhythm guitar. The birth scene is exploitive and irrelevant—and it doesn't belong in the movie.

In contrast, Stop Making Sense consists of nothing but brilliantly photographed concert footage. Watching it is like viewing a Talking Heads concert from not one, but-due to the various camera angles—several of the best seats in the house. It's non-stop quality rock from beginning to end; it never drags with moments of dull interview, and there are no superfluous delivery room scenes. So, if forced to choose between the two films, ignore Branford's biased opiniondespite its title, the Talking Heads film makes the most sense.

ERNIE WATTS

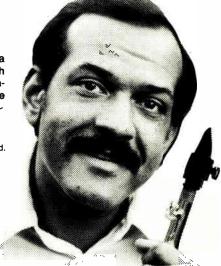
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CHORDS & DISCORDS

Monk business

Lam currently working on a biography of Thelonious Monk. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who knew or worked with Monk, as well as anyone with any relevant correspondence, memorabilia, or photographs. I would also be interested in talking to anyone who saw Monk perform frequently and has a strong impression of Monk in action. I can be written at 77 W. 85th St., New York, NY 10024.

Peter Keepnews

New York City

Feb's first-class

Just a word of thanks for the excellent February issue. Starting with Bill Beuttler's invitation for suggestions in On The Beat (mine is to keep up the good work), and continuing with News, Riffs, the features and profiles, record reviews, and everything through Auditions—it was an especially fine issue that I read cover to cover in one sitting. My compliments.

My only question came out of Fred Bouchard's review of the new Ben Sidran album, On The Cool Side. And to think that I kind of liked the LP. Oh well, that's what makes horse races!

P.S. Is Mr. Art Lange the same Art Lange that has recorded several fine albums on the F.CM label? If so, my compliments.

John O'Brien Mt. Clemens, MI While Art Lange can take credit for orchestrating the February issue you're so fond of, it's Art Lande you should be complimenting for the ECM albums.

—Ed.

Sidran rebuttal

This is not an attempt to review that con-



tentious piece of trash that passed for an analysis of my new album in your last issue.

I just want to suggest to Mr. Bouchard that he ask himself how many people are out there singing his reviews before he takes up such a lyrical pen again.

Ben Sidran Madison, WI

Coker corrections

We at Revelation Records appreciate the nice review of our Jerry Coker album (Rev. 46) in "Waxing On," January '86. We do, however, think your readers will appreciate a few corrections: Coker plays tenor, not alto sax. Mr. Bouchard may remember Coker from "a couple of Clare Fischer dates from the '60s," but there was really only one-Extension (now on Discovery, previously on Pacific Jazz). Jerry Coker does not teach at the University of Miami (he left there in '73), but at the University of Tennessee/Knoxville, where he has been Professor of Music since 1975. Coral Gables, where the U. of Miami is located, is 350 miles from Gainesville, home of our record label [and the U. of Florida]. Coker's lovely album is available, incidentally, from North Country Distributors, Redwood, NY.

John William Hardy Revelation Records

Gainesville, FL

Missing personnel

In your December '85 issue, Jack Sohmer's review of Sunset All-Stars states that the personnel of the Ray Bauduc group is unknown. It has been listed as: Joe Graves, trumpet; Don Lodice, tenor; Ray Sherman, piano; Barney Kessel, guitar; Tom Scully, bass; and Bauduc, drums. Alternate titles are also listed: Jefferson Jump for Keep The Beat, Messin' On Melrose for King Kong Song.

Don Lodice recorded with Artie Shaw, among others, and Ray Sherman has recorded extensively in California. Can anyone throw some light on Joe Graves or Tom Scully?

Nigel Faigan

New Zealand

Begging for blues

I really like your magazine and have been reading it for years. One complaint I have about jazz musicians is that they look down on blues players because of their lack of technique. But it's the spaces, not the notes, that count. I like jazz, but my heart and soul are in the blues. I want to correct you on one of the best players on the blues scene today. In your New Releases section, Dec. '85, you said that Robert Cray's album False Accusations was his second album. It was his

second on the Hightone label, but he also had an album on the Tomato label, Who's Been Talkin', a great debut LP.

I would like to see more articles on blues players—Robert Cray, Otis Rush, Johnny Copeland, Stevie Ray Vaughan —and even those out of the blues vein, like Tom Waits.

Dickie Durlauf

Louisville, KY

Delights in diversity

In or around 1974, I moved from California to Montana. Country & western and bluegrass were very big in the Bay Area back then, so I assumed I would find or hear plenty of both when I moved out to the sticks. I looked forward to this as I was just beginning to play a stringed instrument but was pleasantly surprised, just the same, to be exposed to some very fine jazz music instead: Weather Report's blue-clouded album cover and Miles Davis' Bitches Brew come to mind instantly.

Then in 1975 I moved to Cape Cod. I was now singing a bit and working at a newsstand, when I became aware of your magazine. Weather Report was listed in your classified ad section. They were looking for a singer to audition for them. I was impressed to think that such a fine group would place this kind of ad. I never answered the ad, but was impressed just the same.

Now it is 1986—I am still on The Cape, I have managed to survive (while experiencing some rather nice musical moments), and once more I have had a pleasant surprise relating to down beat.

I recently purchased a subscription to your magazine. I knew that you'd been around for awhile and figured I could count on you to provide some insight on the latest word in jazz. I was in a daze when my first issue arrived with a feature on one of my all-time favorite bands, not a jazz band either, but a down-and-dirty blues band of the highest caliber. None other than The Fabulous Thunderbirds! All of this just goes to prove that one should never generalize. And if you won't, neither will I. Thanks for being diverse.

P.S. What is jazz anyway? Improvised blues?

Judy Wallace

Wellfleet, MA

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News

Uptown: what's hot, and what's not

NEW YORK—*Uptown*... It's Hot! is the newest Broadway celebration of the great black entertainers. Maurice Hines, who starred in previous Broadway tributes to Eubie Blake and Duke Ellington, is now director/choreographer/conceptualizer and star of *Uptown*, an overview of black show business from the 1930s to the present.

While the frame of the show is somewhat silly—entertainment "angels" earning their wings by traveling through time and impersonating some of the great black artists—the singing and dancing is often as "hot" as subtitled, especially the half devoted to the 1930s and '40s. Marion Ramsey explodes singing Louis Armstrong's Swing That Music, and the Cotton Club is remembered, first by Lawrence Hamilton leading Three Gents in a spectacular tap-dance, then by Hines and Alisa Gyse

singing a heart-bursting Stormy Weather—and there's even a jungle number complete with cheesecake (and beefcake). Leon Evans and Darius Keith Williams recreate a Nicholas Brothers routine with all the flourish and splits of the originals, and Hines offers homage to legendary dancer John Bubbles with plenty of footwork fireworks. Act One ends with everyone jitterbugging to Chick Webb and Count Basie at the Savov.

Act Two offers an uplifting Gospel Caravan and Jeffrey V. Thompson recreating a Judge Pigmeat sketch from the Apollo of the '50s, but the second half is never as musically or choreographically exhilarating as what's come before. Diana Ross is spoofed (quite cruelly) in what seems an anti-tribute to girl groups of the '60s, a Stevie Wonder ballet (representing the



METHENY MEFTS MILTON: Hubert Laws (left) and Put Metheny (right) at the recording session for Brazilian singer Milton Nascimento's (center) album Encontros E Despedidas (Meetings And Farewells), just out on Polydor. And speaking of Metheny, he wrote the music for a recent episode of NBC-tv's Amazing Stories, produced by Steven Spielberg and directed by Timothy Hutton.

1970s) is uninvolving, and the show ends with tiresome rap and Princes 1999. Only a 1980s-style Radio Play-off is fun: as dancers out-blast each other with bigger and bigger boxes, Hines comes on astride a ghetto-blaster as big

as the stage.

Hines and the other "angels" earn their wings at the end of *Uptown*, but the audience is already exhausted—and thrilled royally—by the intermission.

-michael bourne

POTPOURRI

Music messages: Wynton Marsalis and Huey Lewis have recorded public service announcements for the American Federation of Musicians' radio campaign supporting school music programs, following similar announcements by Willie Nelson and Billy Joel; Marsalis' spoken messages are backed by the cut Blues from his Black Codes (From The Underground), and the Lewis spots feature excerpts from The Heart Of Rock & Roll . . . Jackson jammin': rocker Joe Jackson has been polishing some new material with a number of unannounced performances at NYC clubs; the British songwriter was seen recently with his new band at CBGB's and at Sounds Of Brazil, culminating in the recording of a live album at New York's Roundabout Theater . . . mr. clean: Jaco Pastorius is walking the straight and narrow these days; the reputed wildman appeared at Manhattan's Seventh Avenue South recently with quitarist Hiram Bullock, drummer Kenwood Dennard, and special guests Michael Brecker and Mitchel Forman, and an album is in the works teaming the legendary bassist with legendary harmonicist Paul Butterfield . . . back at the board: studio Svengali BIII Laswell is back in the studio, this time with a personal hero of hisfunkateer Bootsy Collins; the

bassist's latest is being recorded at the Power Station in New York City for Warner Bros. Rumor has it he's been seen in the studio with Miles Davis and an unlikely bunch of electro-axe wizards too-stay tuned, and look for the full story in db in the coming months . . . stealin': Walter Becker and Donald Fagen, collectively known as Steely Dan, are back in the studio waxing a new LP, their first in four years; further, talk has been bandied about of an honest-to-goodness live tour . . . stayin' on the scene: James Brown is still feelin' like a sex machine after all these years; packing Radio City Music Hall for a smashing show recently, the Godfather of Soul looked trim and sassy as he got on the good foot, took the night train, and did the camel walk in classic J.B. style Hooker update: 68-year-old John Lee Hooker will headline a blues package including The Nighthawks and Robert Cray at Carnegie Hall 4/24; the bluesman's been busy recently, picking up his second straight Traditional Blues Artist of the Year award at last year's W. C. Handy Blues Awards, and recording a song for the soundtrack of The Color Purple . . . Wonder vs. drunk driving: blind rock musician Stevie Wonder appears alongside the caption "Before I'll ride with a drunk, I'll drive myself," on a poster

Reader's Digest hopes will open the eyes of young people to the dangers of drunk driving; the poster is part of the magazine's \$500,000 Don't Drive and Drink College Scholarship Challenge," which is now underway among U.S. high schools . . Coleman commission: composer/oboist Joseph Celli and the Kronos String Quartet have commissioned Ornette Coleman to compose a new work for string quartet and oboe; the saxophonist's work will premiere at Carnegie Hall 1/16/87 . . . Stones reggae: once again, the Rolling Stones are dabbling in reggae; one of the first rock bands to make use of Jamaican rhythms. the Stones recently signed for the right to cover D.J. Half Pint's island Top 10 song Winsome . . . cutting-edge catalog: the 1986 New Music Distribution Service catalog crams over 2,000 indescribable LPs from 400 labels into its 92 pages; with day-glo cover by graffiti artist Keith Haring and forward by Greg Tate, it's an invaluable document, obtainable from NMDS, 500 Broadway, NYC 10012, (212) 925-2*21 . . career change: former db editor Jack Tracy, a veteran in nearly every aspect of the music industry, has opened his own sales/marketing/ premotion company; contact him at 14155 Magnolia Blvd., #122, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423, (818) 783-4490 . . . line for Lyons: a benefit was recently staged at NYC's Public Theater to honor es-

teemed alto saxophonist Jimmy Lyons, who suffers from lung cancer; among those paying tribute to the longtime Cecil Taylor sideman were the George Adams/Don Pullen Quartet; Anthony Davis; Sun Ra & John Gilmore; the World Saxophone Quartet; Joseph Jarman & Don Moye; Archie Shepp, Muhal Richard Abrams, William Parker, and Andrew Cyrille; the Jeanne Lee Ensemble: Walt Dickerson; and Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy . . . Sun City re-unions: Little Steven Van Zandt, Bruce Springsteen, and Clarence Clemons weren't the only former bandmates reunited on the anti-apartheid record Sun City; the album also brought Miles Davis back together with one-time rhythm-mates Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams from his famous '60s quintet . . . Florida fest: Buddy DeFranco, Nat Adderley, and Ira Sullivan will be on hand at the fourth annual Pensacola (FL) Jazz Fest, 4/19-20; for more info, contact the Arts Council of Northwest Florida, PO Box 731, Pensacola, FL 32594, (904) 438-8888 . . Grammy whammy: to counteract some of the controversy and complaints in response to the lack of jazz representation on last year's televised Grammy awards show, this year NARAS plans to include a healthy chunk, including homage to the great trumpet lineage of Louis Armstrong (on film) to Dizzy Gillespie to Jon Faddis (both live) . . .

Building the ARC

NEW YORK-The 2,000-plus spectators who shivered in line in the bitter late-night cold, dropped \$15 a head, and then crammed into the multi-level church-turneddisco called the Limelight may have come to see Laurie Anderson perform for the first time in over a year, but that's not where their door money went. Anderson, along with downtown musical mainstays like Arto Lindsay, Daniel Ponce, Suzanne Vega, Frank Christian, and David Johansen as lounge lizard Buster Poindexter, took turns taking the stage for brief sets to raise money for the ARChive of Contemporary Music, while backstage and in the audience beamed such luminaries as Andy Warhol, Nile Rodgers, Adrian Belew, John Giorno, and Jellybean

What kind of creature is the ARC that it could inspire such a stellar turnout? Well, it's not so much what the ARC is as what it's intended to become after its estimated twoyear start-up period. A non-profit organization based in Manhattan's Tribeca neighborhood, the ARChive of Contemporary Music, as envisioned by co-founders B. George and David Wheeler, will collect (via deposit copies, donation, and direct acquisition) recordings of rock and pop music in all formats from 1950 on, including international and independent releases as well as those of the major U.S. labels; relevant periodicals, books, and printed matter; and video, film, and graphic material related to the musical holdings. In a nutshell, it wants to live up to its name and become an invaluable and unparalleled resource that will house, preserve, and organize the irreplaceable artifacts of our pop music culture. Current holdings amount to some 20,000 recordings, not including the recent donation of another 2,000 by the Lincoln Center Library; eventually, with the projected deposits and donations from participating record companies, that number is expected to reach 150,000.

The ARC is not intended to be merely a specialist's dream or a fossilized memento mori. Rather, the center itself will be open to anyone and everyone for listening, viewing, or research. Of course, those who work in the field may appreciate that resource more immediately than others, since even in a museum- and library-rich town like New York, already gifted with the substantial musical holdings at the Lincoln Center, Donnell, and Schomberg Center libraries, it can be very difficult to ferret out all the relevant info on a pop-music topic in one place—if you can do it at all without pestering private collectors. In addition, to extend the ARC's benevolent reach beyond geographical borders, data will be accessible via telephone modem.

The very existence of the ARC ratifies the key notion that mid-20th century pop culture, especially music, is not simply a group of ephemeral phenomena that should appear and disappear at the whim of some corporate behemoth's warehousing difficulties or cash-flow subtleties. The music has changed the face of the world by supplying a common basic language that can be spoken by Americans and Nigerians, Britons and Brazilians, Russians and Jamaicans alike-the inflections and accents may vary from dialect to dialect, but its universal roots make it intelligible to anybody with the energy to listen. In a country and world infected by dreams of Star Wars, federal or foundation grants to the ARC may seem only a small countermeasure, but they can't hurt. -gene santoro



FORD HAS A BETTER IDEA: The Brandeis University Jazz Ensemble (above) will premiere three new compositions by Thad Jones, Jack Walrath, and Jahn Stubblefield in a 4/13 concert at the school's Waltham, MA, campus. Directed by saxophanist Ricky Ford, the €nsemble will be joined for the concert by guest flugelhornist Art Farmer and the University of Maine Jazz Ensemble, directed by Don Stratton. For more info, coll (617) 647-3384.

Houston hosts New Music

HOUSTON—No one knew what would happen when a handful of experimental composers and musicians staged a "new music" festival in New York in 1979, but thousands attended that first event, and ever since New Music America has hosted similar events at various U.S. cities annually. The eighth such festival—New Music America 1986—will be held 4/5-13 in Houston, running alongside the Houston Festiva. Foundation's celebration of the Texas city's sesouicentempial.

Over 150 composers and musicians are expected to take part in 50 musical events, among them the world premiere of the full-length version of John Cage's Ryoanji, to be performed in the Museum of Fire Art's scurpture garden: a chamber orchestra adaptation of Steve Reich's The Des-

.

Eddie Taylor, blues guitarist and

ert Music: works by three composers created specifically for the Astrodome's special acoustics, including one using a blimp to manipulate sound; and electronic scores at the city planetarium, including Return Of Halley's Comet by sonic virtuoso Morton Subotnick. Leroy Jenkins and John Zorn will be among the artists in attendance, and everyone will be invited to get into the act for Under Houston Humming, which will be led by San Francisco composer Bonnie Barnett, credited with leading the largest group hum in history in

The festival consists of both free and ticketed events: for more information, contact festival coordinator Michael Galbreth, New Music America 1986, 1964 W. Gray, Suite 227, Houston: TX 77019.

—bill beuttler

FINAL BAR



Joe Farrell, tenor saxophonist and flutist best known as a member of Chick Corea's original Re-

turn To Forever band in the 1970s. died of a blood disease Jan. 10 in Los Angeles at age 48. Born Joseph Carl Firrantello in Chicago, he majored in flute at the University of Illinois before sitting in alongside such key influences as Johnny Griffin and Ira Sullivan in the late '50s. After moving to New York, Farrell recorded with Mavnard Ferguson, Jaki Byard, Charles Mingus, the Thad Jones/ Mel Lewis Orchestra, and the Elvin Jones Trio. In the mid-'70s he relocated in Los Angeles, and in 1979 he toured and recorded with Mingus Dynasty.

singer, died Dec. 25 at age 62. Originally from Benoit, MS, Taylor moved to Chicago and started working on Maxwell Street for tips in 1949. Best known as a longtime Jimmy Reed guitarist, he also recorded with John Lee Hooker and under his own name. His original songs include Stop Breaking Down, which was covered by the Rolling Stones on the album Exite On Main Street. Taylor was re-

corded at the 10th anniversary of

the Austin, TX, blues club Antone's

last summer, and the club is planning an LP of Taylor appearances there.

Dick Phipps, manager of public radio station WLTR-FM in Columbia, SC, and the Peabody Awardwinning producer of several National Public Racio series, died Jan. 7 in Columbia at age 60. Among the nationally aired Phipps-produceo programs are American Popular Song With Alec Wilder & Friends, Remembering Alec Wilder, and Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz.

RIFFS

Philip Glass

NEW YORK—"I was really thinking about a song cycle," says composer Philip Glass about his latest Columbia Masterworks release, Songs For Liquid Days, "but people were confused because I chose to work with Linda Ronstadt and the Roche Sisters. They'd say, 'How's your pop record coming?' I found that very alarming, because if that's what they expected, they were going to be disappointed."

Possibly not, because no one expects Glass to forego his own distinctive sound, the repetitive cells and steady rhythms, the additive processes and ensemble modulations-let's avoid the term "minimalism"—that have become immediately recognizable. His presumably avant garde Einstein On The Beach has become the best-known and most controversial American opera since Gershwin's Porgy And Bess (for those who missed it a decade ago, Einstein was restaged last year at Brooklyn Academy of Music, and is the subject of an hourlong PBS special aired this spring), and his soundtrack for the high-tech, environmentally concerned film Koyaanisqatsi became an international hit. Glass is one innovative late 20th century composer who's found a large audience (you can, perhaps, name two others—and then?) despite his serious intent, to some marketers' surprise. "Masterworks may not know what to do with me, but I'm selling records anyway," he claims with muted delight. Songs From Liquid Days, with lyrics by Laurie Anderson, David Byrne,



Paul Simon, and Suzanne Vega sung by Bernard-Fowler (of Herbie Hancock's *Rockit* Band), Janice Pendarvis (an oft-recorded and soulful vocalist), Douglas Perry (from Glass' opera *Satyagraha*), and Ms.' Ronstadt and the Roches, with backup by Glass' ensemble and the Kronos String Quartet, will probably catch the attention of some listeners who still don't know Glass, though it's unlikely to replace Twisted Sister on the radio.

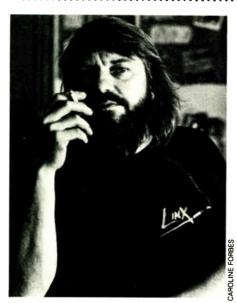
"I thought, 'What would it be like if I wrote an album of songs?'" Glass recollects. "And then I decided I would work with people who spend their lives in the business of melding words and music:

songwriters. These people work in the vernacular, and that was the medium I chose. I decided to ask my friends. They're all triple-threat people, who not only write their own words, but also their own music, and they perform. Except for David, I don't think they've had their words set to music by other composers before.

'What I learned from the project is how much the singer brings to the song-a tremendous interpretive presence—more so perhaps than in the world of opera. But if this record enters the pop market, it will be because people are sick of formula songs. Donny Christensen, who's the drummer for the Raybeats as well as an engineer who works for me, said, 'If your song album becomes popular, it will change the way people write songs, because the formulas simply aren't there. Wouldn't that be great?' Well, I wasn't writing for, let's say, didactic purposes. I don't want to be pretentious about it, but Songs For Liquid Days clearly has more to do with orchestral song cycles than with records by pop song writers.'

That may be for the audience to decide.

Meanwhile, Glass has moved on to compose a setting for Twyla Tharp's choreography based on Edgar Allen Poe's story Descent Into The Maelstrom, an opera with Doris Lessing based on her futuristic novel The Making Of The Representative From Planet Eight, and the score for the next movie directed by Godfrey Reggio, working title North-South, which Glass laughingly calls Bride Of Koyaanisqatsi. —howard mandel



Robert Wyatt

TWICKENHAM, U.K.—"I heard one of my old songs being played on one of those Western propaganda programs: *The Voice Of America* or *Radio Free Europe*. 'Bless me,' I thought, 'I don't want my music used this way!'" So says Robert Wyatt, who in the late-'60s was one of Europe's foremost jazz-rock drummers, until an unfortunate

accident incapacitated him and forced him to make music with his voice, his mind, his heart, and his conscience. His songs weave together threads of jazz, art rock, international folk musics, and his unmistakable vocals. He has a commonman's tenor, with a haunting and melancholy edge, which he uses beautifully: singing, whistling, humming, and scatting. There's no easy label for his music. "I try to make completely normal records, but they must come out funny." He's called it "English blues."

In 1966 he was the drummer and occasional singer with Soft Machine, the pathbreaking British band which first mixed psychedelic pop with contemporary jazz. "My schoolday heroes were Max Roach, Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, Yusef Lateef, and later, John Handy," Wyatt recalls of that period. He left Soft Machine and formed the more-experimental Matching Mole in 1971. In 1973, however, he broke his back in a fall which put him in the hospital for a year, and ultimately into a wheelchair. He came out of that "nightmare" with 1974's powerful and idiosyncratic *Rock Bottom* (Virgin 2017).

His next album, Ruth Is Stranger Than Richard (Virgin 2034), included a version of Charlie Haden's Song For Che. "His Liberation Orchestra was a major inspiration," Wyatt acknowledges.

Haden's music introduced Wyatt to Carla Bley and Michael Mantler, and he worked with them on several projects, acting as the haunting vocalist on

Mantler's The Hapless Child (Watt 4, with text by Edward Gorey) and Silence (Watt 5, adapted from a Harold Pinter play). On his own singles since the mid '70s, he's covered songs as varied as The Monkees' I'm A Believer (a hit for him in England), Billie Holiday's Strange Fruit, songs by Eubie Blake, Thelonius Monk, and John Cage, Latin-American folk songs, and Elvis Costello's Shipbuilding (another British hit)-all collected on LPs like Nothing Can Stop Us (Rough Trade 35) and 1982-84 (Rough Trade 25). He says he doesn't think much about pop music, but he performs on several recent British pop records. His latest album, Old Rottenhat (Gramavision 18-8604-1), is his first album of all-original material since 1974. Uncompromisingly political, it takes on cultural and military imperialism, national amnesia, mass media, the political misuse of language, and the state of the Labor Movement.

"I'm interested in highlighting certain issues, identifying groups who need help to be heard." So he's lent his voice, his name, even space on his records to unknown political artists, to the striking miners, the anti-vivisectionists, and the anti-apartheid movement. Humbly, he explains, "I have to defuse any big claims about this, you know. I'm just earning a living making records, and I think I may as well sing songs about what interests me—and if people want to keep in touch with life and ideas, I would hardly recommend following pop lyrics."

—brent wilcox



Red Rodney

CHICAGO—Red Rodney has witnessed and taken part in so much jazz history down through the years, that if you asked him he could probably write a book. Well, that's exactly what he's begun to do. But while reminiscing on his tenure with Bird and other feats of yesteryear, Rodney is not about to allow an autobiography to close the book on his career. Instead, the 58-year-old trumpeter has his eyes squarely focused on upcoming chapters filled with innovation and a startling movement away from his bebop past. His words point to a sharp change of direction. "I feel that I have to keep growing and incorporating many of the new sounds and styles in music and try to fit them into my own specific style."

Out of this strong desire was born a new group named Red Alert. Though still rehearsing, Rodney expects substantial results from this sextet comprised of pianist Gary Dial, bassist Jay Anderson, multi-reedman Dick Oates, drummer Joey Baron, and electric keyboardist Gerard D'Angelo.

However, new personnel provides only a slight hint of the new direction signaled by Red Alert. More conclusive evidence comes from some newly installed instrumentation. "We've added a

synthesizer player [D'Angelo] to the group in order to experiment with the new sounds," Rodney explains. "With the exception of Steps Ahead, I haven't cared for most electric jazz groups. So we're trying a different approach by using electronics to color my trumpet playing."

Though well aware of the new possibilities available through electronic colorations, Red will not allow an overload of his musical circuitry. He adamantly refuses to sacrifice integrity for the sake of beat-box rhythms or better-paying gigs. "I've been able to comprehend and enjoy many aspects of electronics—the strings, different sounds of the bass, and the various other programs. However, I've resisted the usage of electronic rhythms. I'm used to jazz rhythms and don't find other ones to be conducive to my playing. So we're trying to convert some of the funk and rock beats to rhythms I can blow over. I didn't form Red Alert to make money, but to develop a musical statement."

In addition to working with the new band, Rodney intends to tour as a single, as a clinician for the E.K. Blessing Company, and with longtime partner Ira Sullivan for a few special performances. At the same time he will proceed with his as yet untitled autobiography—a review of the old days by a man very concerned with getting back to his future.

—tom nuccio

Peter Scherer

NEW YORK --- You've heard more of what he does than you may realize. "You know that Miller Lite commercial that's a take-off on the space bar scene from Star Wars?" asks the thin young man with a trace of a Swiss accent. "The voiceover was done with the Synclavier: the actor read the whole script, we sampled it and cut it apart into phrases, and then we made it sound weird-lower, or more robot-like, whatever. Then when we put the words back onto the video the monster's lips weren't moving to the script, so we had to edit it in piece by piece. And all the sound effects came from the Synclavier: all the crowds, the waitress with the tray who went nnnhhh, the sounds of them turning their heads, glasses clinking, laughter, and screams. It took about 30 hours of work over about two weeks." Peter Scherer leans back and smiles. "It was a lot of work, but it was a lot of fun, too."

The 30-ish synthesist has been more and more able lately to combine work and play, after years of training and struggling. His resume reflects his determined well-roundedness: a BA in piano from the Conservatory of Basel; music composition studies with Gyorgy Ligeti in Hamburg ("I started working with synthesizers there, eight to 10 hours a day"); more comp studies with Terry Riley, Robert Ashley, David Behrmann, and David Rosenbloom at Mills College ("It was a very different world from Hamburg—minimalistic, very dogmatic, and extremely Californian"); computer music studies under John Chowning at Stanford ("I spent a lot of time struggling with machines and learning the techniques"); an MA in

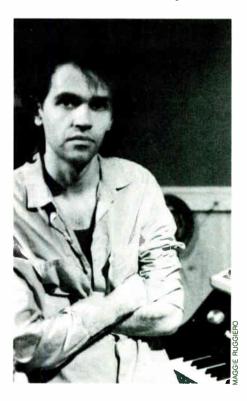
composition from Brooklyn College; and all sizes and shapes of computer-related courses. At the same time, Scherer was performing in a variety of bands playing material that ranged from dance music to Pink Floyd to Soft Machine. When he finally landed in N.Y. in 1983, he met Kashif, who needed someone to program and run his Synclavier for him on tour. "We loaded all the background vocals—I think it was the first time anybody had done that," he recalls. "It was pretty wild. All these vocals would be coming from the stage, and entire 16-bar sax solos blasting with perfect sound, guitars, percussion. People were actually screaming from the audience, 'Where's the saxophone? Where are the singers?'"

Soon people were asking, "Who's the guy behind the Synclavier?" Downtown hybridmaker Kip Hanrahan was among the first to tumble to Scherer's prodigious abilities, and used him for a track on Coup De Tete that also happened to feature noise-quitarist Arto Lindsay, who was impressed enough by Scherer to feature him as co-producer, co-writer, and keyboard mainstay on Envy (Editions EG 39), his last ambitious release. From there one thing led to another—as in work for Hall & Oates, Kenny G., Roma Baran, and others—until Nile Rodgers picked up on him and started weaving Scherer's synthwork through his productions. Why him? "The fact that I've done so many different things was confusing to me at one point," admits Scherer, "but it means that if there is a problem I can approach it from all these different ways, which is better than being locked in to any one style exclusively. I can do whatever is good for the song."

That whatever often starts with Scherer's library

of sampled sounds, which numbers into the thousands, of which 95 percent are his own. Still, this technological wizard puts his work into a perspective too many other synthusiasts lack: "I'm into technology, obviously, but I'm not into the fetishism of technology. I think that better sounds make better music."

— gene santoro





Wayne Shorter Interview

ayne Shorter, one of the most original composers and saxophonists to emerge in the 1960s, has had a rather fascinating musical career. Born August 25, 1933 in Newark, New Jersey, Shorter started playing music at the comparatively ripe age of 16, yet advanced so rapidly that within a year he was already being recognized as one of the up-and-coming talents. After

graduating high school as an art major, Wayne worked at a Singer sewing machine factory for a year, saving money for college. He received a degree in musical education from NYU in 1955, and his reputation as one of the important young tenormen remained undiminished despite three years in the Army.

After his discharge, Shorter free-lanced around New York until he auditioned for Maynard Ferguson's orchestra, at the urging of his new friend Joe Zawinul. Wayne beat out the heavy competition (Eddie Harris and George Coleman!) for the tenor chair but only stayed four weeks when he found out that Art Blakey also needed a tenor. Soon Shorter was Blakey's musical director, contributing original compositions that added much variety to the driving hard-bop contingent. Five years with the Jazz Messengers (1959-64) were followed by five more with the Miles Davis quintet (1964-69), a unit whose influence on creative music has continued to grow over time.

Shorter received many recording opportunities both as a leader and sideman during the '60s. His often-brilliant Blue Note sessions are gradually being reissued and sound completely undated today. But most of the free-lancing ceased with the formation of Weather Report in 1971, which Wayne co-led with Joe Zawinul. Although he's been an important part of the fusion group's sound (especially in its earlier years), many fans feel that much of Wayne Shorter's huge potential was untapped with this unit, and have long wished that he would produce his own music again. In 1985 Shorter finally broke away.

Scott Yanow: What instigated you to form a group outside of Weather Report?

Wayne Shorter: I just said to myself that if I don't do it now, I never will. Joe Zawinul and I first talked two-and-a-half years ago about how we should eventually play our own individual music. A year later we shook hands and agreed to go our separate ways for awhile. He wanted to work on a one-man band approach. Neither of us had done much recording or playing outside of Weather Report in a long time, despite a lot of invitations. Myself, I've only recorded with Joni Mitchell, Steely Dan, and just a few others over the past 14 years.

SY: And Herbie Hancock's VSOP.

WS: Yes, but that's not a lot of activity for that long a period. I've decided that it's time for me to be more sociable as a

musician and, with this new band, to get around more. People seem to be glad about what we're doing. See, I've been hearing from everyone, "Get your own band!" For years recording companies, letters in the mail, and other musicians have been telling me this. First I needed to tend to other aspects of my life, especially family. Tina Turner, who's a good friend and stayed at our house for four months, once said something about first having to purify her life, and I guess it was similar with me. You meet a lot of resistance when you want to create something valuable, such as making a painting that's a little different or a record that might not have big sales. I knew last April that it was time.

SÝ: Tell me a bit about your new group. What special musical qualities do the musicians have that appeal to you?

WS: The new band is composed of five musicians. The bass player, Gary Willis, once played with Hubert Laws. During our first rehearsal he came in knowing a lot of music and basslines that I'd written in the past. By the second rehearsal whatever he had not mastered initially he'd nailed down by doing his homework. With him I don't have to worry about holes in the rhythm section or lapses of memory, and he's developing quickly. The drummer, Tom Brechtlein, played with Chick Corea on and off for seven years. The way he plays, it really registers with people. He's already on the verge of getting standing ovations—and not just when he takes a drum solo.

On keyboards we have Tom Canning, who used to be with Al Jarreau and has worked with other vocalists. He has a sense of choral coloring when he plays that works well. Also, he doesn't insist on having a whole rack of seven or eight keyboards. Tom just lines up the DX7, one small keyboard that he keeps on top of the acoustic piano, but he gets a lot of colors out of it. He reads quite well, and I really need someone with that talent.

Before we struck out on our first tour—America, Europe, and back to America—we only had three weeks rehearsal: just four hours a day, three or four days a week. This combination clicked from the start. There wasn't anything drastic that needed surgery after the first two weeks on the road. Last week we added a percussionist who also sings, Vicky Randall. She played a steady gig with George Benson and recently had a job in Las Vegas with Jeffrey Osborne. I saw her in San Francisco singing in a nightclub. At this point she's only rehearsed with us maybe three times, but she already fits right in. Vicky has a following in Japan, so since we'll be leaving for Japan in a few days it makes perfect sense. She has quite a bit of recognition for one who's unrecorded. Her voice is very direct, without going through a lot of b.s. to get to the message. Also, Tom Canning works well with her; a light came on in his face when he first got to play behind her.

SY: How would you describe the music of your new group? **WS:** Describing music is very difficult. Eric Gravitt used to say that if he could describe how he played drums, he wouldn't need to play them. Music really has to be experienced. I used

to try to explain to people what belop sounded like without playing a record. It can't be done. Members of our audience have called our music fresh, exhilarating, happy, hopeful, I even heard the word young-meaning enthusiastic.

SY: Do you believe this will be a fairly permanent group? Is Weather Report going to be part-time now or is it nearing its end?

WS: We'll see what happens. Right now my new group will be touring Japan, South America, taking a little time off to make a new record around June, play some American festivals, then Europe, and back to Japan. Somewhere along the way I'll have to disappear awhile and write more music. We're booked pretty well through '86 and I can see this continuing through **'**87.

SY: So Weather Report's on hold for the time being?

WS: Yes. I think that's quite fair considering it's been our main work for 14 years.

SY: And yet you recently completed an album with Weather

WS: Yes, we're finishing it up. Today Carlos Santana is in the studios, playing on some songs. We'll be adding a singer to some cuts soon although I'm not sure who yet. After the record is completed, Joe will be going to Japan with his oneman band.

SY: Did you write much material for the album?

WS: No, actually I didn't write a thing. I'd just come back from the road with my band a couple of weeks before, and it had been a tough physical tour. For example, after a week in Spain we played in Paris one day, then in New York the next. I just play on the Weather Report album, and that's all. On any future album I want to have plenty of time so I can contribute some music.

SY: There have long been rumors about a duet album by you and Zawinul. Has that been planned?

WAYNE SHORTER'S EQUIPMENT

Wayne Shorter plays a Yamaha soprano saxophone with a curved neck, and a Selmer Mark VII tenor saxophone. He uses Otto Link #10 mouthpieces on both horns, with Rico #4 reeds for the tenor and Rico #3 reeds on soprano. To compose at home, Shorter utilizes a standard acoustic piano and a portable Korg 800 synthesizer.

WAYNE SHORTER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

ATLANTIS-Columbia 40055

NATIVE DANCER—Columbia 33418 MOTO GROSSO FEIO-Blue Note LA014G SUPER NOVA-Blue Note 84332 SPEAK NO EVIL-Blue Note 84194 SCHIZOPHRENIA-Blue Note 84297 ADAM'S APPLE—Blue Note 84232 THE ALL-SEEING EYE—Blue Note 84219 JUJU-Blue Note 84182 NIGHT DREAMER—Blue Note 84173 ETCETERA—Blue Note 1056
THE SOOTHSAYER—Blue Note 988
SECOND GENESIS—Affinity 114 WAYNING MOMENTS-Affinity 126

with Weather Report SPORTIN' LIFE - Columbia 39908 DOMINO THEORY -- Columbia 39147 PROCESSION-Columbia 38427 WEATHER REPORT—Columbia 37616 NIGHT PASSAGE—Columbia 36793 8:30—Columbia 36030 MR. GONE-Columbia 35358 HAVANA JAM I—Columbia 36053 HAVANA JAM II—Columbia 36180 HEAVY WEATHER—Columbia 34418 BLACK MARKET—Columbia 34099 TALE SPINNIN'—Columbia 33417 MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER-Columbia

I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC---Columbia 31352

WEATHER REPORT - Columbia 30661

with Art Blakey

ROOTS & HERBS—Blue Note 84347 INDESTRUCTIBLE—Blue Note 84193 FREE FOR ALL-Blue Note 84170

FREEDOM RIDER—Blue Note 84156 BUHAINA'S DELIGHT—Blue Note 84104 THE BIG BEAT-Blue Note 84029 AFRICAINE—Blue Note 1088 MOSAIC-Blue Note 84090 NIGHT IN TUNISIA—Blue Note 84049 LIVE MESSENGERS-Blue Note LA473-J2 THERMO-Milestone 47008 KYOTO-Original Jazz Classics 145 CARAVAN-Original Jazz Classics 038 UGETSU-Original Jazz Classics 090

with VSOP

THE QUINTET—Columbia 34976 LIVE UNDER THE SKY-Columbia 36770

with Miles Davis

BITCHES BREW—Columbia GP26 DIRECTIONS—Columbia 36422 CIRCLE IN THE ROUND—Columbia 36278 LIVE AT THE PLUGGED NICKEL --- Columbia 38206 HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD-Columbia

38566 WATER BABIES—Columbia 34396 IN A SILENT WAY-Columbia 9875 FILLES DE KILIMANJARO-Columbia 9750

MILES IN THE SKY-Columbia 9628 NEFERTITI—Columbia 9594 SORCERER—Columbia 9532 MILES SMILES -- Columbia 9401 ESP-Columbia 9150

with Jaco Pastorius WORD OF MOUTH-Warner Bros. 3535

with Various Artists JAZZ AT THE OPERA HOUSE-Columbia 38430



ANCIENT HISTORY: Wayne with Ron Carter, Tony Williams, and Miles.

WS: That is still in the germination stage. We need a lot of time to plan that and have to take into consideration our own projects. It's still in the future.

SY: You started playing music rather late, when you were almost I6. Before that, what did you see yourself doing later as a profession?

WS: Oh, I was going to be a fine artist. While in grammar school I won first prize in an all-city contest and I saw that as an omen. I went to an art school for four years.

SY: What areas did you study?

WS: Painting, sculpting, many general areas. By the time I was a senior I minored in music. Music appealed to me over art eventually because it has more of a group interaction rather than the solitary creativity of art, and also I'd have a chance of making a living.

SY: Do you still paint at all?

WS: Not right now, but someday I will for my own enjoyment. Someday when I won't have to tour all the time, year-in and year-out. It's funny, some managers say, "You can be on the road working 52 weeks a year if you want," as if nothing else

SY: What first interested you in jazz?

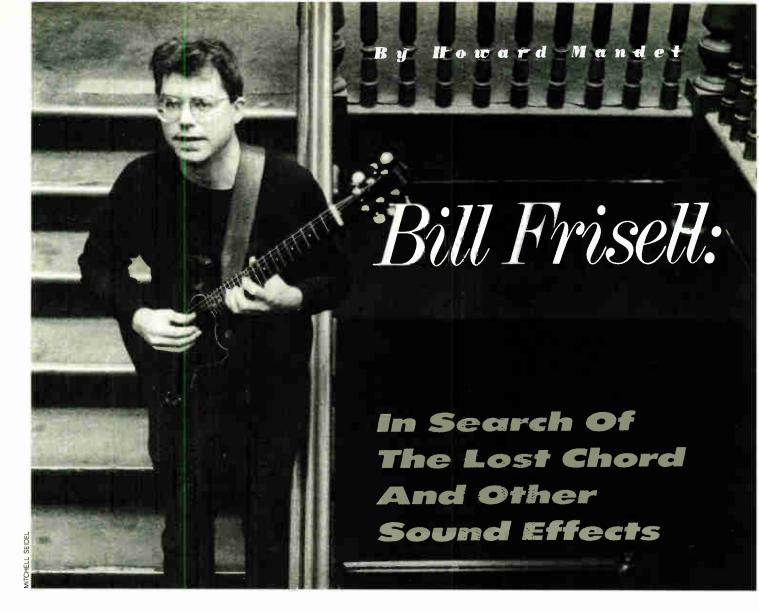
WS: It was the experience of listening to the radio, especially Martin Block's Make Believe Ballroom on WNEW every night at 7:30. I remember one week he announced that he was going to play something different, a new music called belop. I heard Monk, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Dizzy; imagine hearing that on AM radio! I also listened to Symphony Sid's show. I loved the energy and life of the music. I couldn't wait to go to New York to see Bop City, the Bandbox, the latin bands at the Palladium and Birdland. It seemed like being part of this music would initiate a lot of what I'd like to get out of life—a good time! [Laughs] But a good time with deep roots and meaning.

SY: In your junior year you cut a lot of classes to see jazz bands. WS: Yes, I was out of school so much, as much as 56 days, that the vice-principal of the school asked where I went. Most of the time I hung out at the Adams Theater, where they had shows—a big band and a movie—for 50 cents. I used my lunch money for that. It was suggested that I minor in music and take classes with Achilles D'Amico, a fine music teacher. That saved my senior year. I started on clarinet, playing in a big band in New Jersey. It was hard to find good trumpeters at the time in Newark, so I used to play trumpet parts on clarinet during tunes like The Peanut Vendor and Harlem Nocturne. It gave me a stronger sound, playing lead parts, and I soon started doubling on tenor.

SY: Within a year of starting music you were strong enough to sit in with Sonny Stitt. You must have practiced quite a bit to advance so quickly.

WS: Well, actually I could only play in three keys. When I did

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Sitting with saxophonist John Zorn on the cramped, backroom stage of King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, an East Village bar about 200 yards across Tompkins Square Park from the last home of Charlie "Yardbird" Parker, guitarist Bill Frisell bites his tongue, deep in concentration, plucking a chordal underpinning to Night In Tunisia. Zorn is blowing relatively conventionally—for the moment, he's using a whole alto rather than the separated mouthpieces and bird calls he's collected—and Frisell, too, is squeezing the comped figure on his fretboard, without a glance at the digital delay and distortion box on the table aside him or the volume pedal on the floor. This is their homage to the tradition, and when they've finished several choruses, come to an agreeable but unplanned end, Frisell looks up at his partner with a boyish grin of pleasure in accomplishment.

The local, midweek crowd, appreciative but too hip to act excited, applauds mildly; they've already heard a set of totally spontaneous, unstructured, fast-changing duet improvisations. Zorn, a composer, improvisor, professional

eclectic, and iconoclastic innovator. launches a Blue Note-school blues. Frisell, the modestly soft-spoken but risktaking, inventive guitarist who's been a valued voice on ECM sessions by Arild Andersen, Jan Garbarek, and Eberhard Weber, in drummer Paul Motian's band, duetting with John Scofield in bassist Marc Johnson's new quartet Bass Desires, on Gramavision projects by Billy Hart and Bob Moses, in collaboration with guitarists Vernon Reid and Mike Stern, altoist Tim Berne, and many others. who's digging into his own scattered past to come up with original compositions like those on his quintet album Rambler, smiles at the task, and bends in his chair around his instrument, like a student trying to show he's mastered a lesson, slightly uncertain, as if he doesn't try really hard he won't be able to keep up.

His tongue slips between his lips again. He's a little further from his school days as a clarinetist, his purist period and tutelage under Jim Hall, his years at Berklee, and the mellow swell of his ECM sound than he is from the spirit of musical adventure, hearing and adding to the

moment that may still haunt the town-house where Bird lived. How'd he get

"I first met Zorn about three years ago, at the Soho Music Gallery store where he was working; he recommended some records," Frisell recalls in his slow-starting but steady manner, as though he's got so much of the present on his mind that the past is foggy—which may be the case. He's been a father for all of three weekshis daughter's named Monica—and he's just returned from a week in Norway, where he recorded with Paul Bley (whom he'd never met before), Motian, and John Surman, following a week in Boston laying down tracks for drummer Bob Moses' new LP The Story Of Moses. His distraction's understandable. "I guess I'd heard about Zorn, but I think it was after I met him that I first heard him play with Derek Bailey and Company and all those people. . . ." And not so long after that Frisell became an important member of this dedicated-to-the-art-of-it-but-don'tforget-the-fun circle, Manhattan's freethinking downtown scene.

"Did Zorn tell you about Godard, the

tribute piece he recorded for this small French label? I do a duet, for a moment, with Christian Marclay spinning a record of some Jimi Hendrix feedback," he enthuses, not bragging. "And I did a record of Ennio Morricone music with John, that's going to come out on Yale Evelev's label, through Nonesuch," Frisell goes on. So do the projects in which he's involved; so do the types of music he's played in the last 20 years, since picking up an electric guitar "more for recreation" than for the kind of serious study he'd associated with the clarinet, his instrument from the fourth grade through his second year of college.

"My parents thought clarinet would be a nice thing for me to play, and it was always, 'You've got to practice an hour a day.' I had a strict teacher who I'm grateful to, 'cause all the basic musical knowledge I have came from this man. He made me tap my foot, play in time. He was the director of my marching band. Maybe it wasn't that pleasant of an experience, but it gave me a foundation.

"The guitar was always for fun. I didn't learn to read on it. I mean, technically, on the clarinet I got pretty proficient. There was a point where I could have possibly gone to Oberlin, I could have maybe gotten into some second-rate orchestra somewhere. My parents would have probably preferred me to take that route, or to get a teaching degree. But they never held me back, and I'm really

grateful for that.

"It took me a while to figure out I just wanted to play the guitar. Gradually I started thinking it could be a serious instrument, too. There was a teacher I found right at the end of high school, in Colorado, who was great, he was like an oasis out there, he opened up a whole world of Sonny Rollins and Monk and Miles for me: Dale Bruning. At that time I was listening to a lot of blues—Paul Butterfield, Mike Bloomfield, B. B. King. There was sort of a resurgence of that music in the late '60s, I guess, though I didn't know anybody else who was interested in it then. But the high school I was in was right in the center of Denver, and was racially integrated, about half-black and half-white, so after I played Wes Montgomery's Bumpin' On Sunset at a talent show all these guys who were imitating the Temptations, Smokey Robinson, the vocal groups in their purple tuxedos, wanted the trio I was in to be their rhythm section. So we played the dances-got horn players, and played James Brown songs, that stuff. Which fit right in with the blues; it was coming from the same place, really.

"I was listening to Hendrix, too. Just after I got out of high school, that's when Bitches Brew came out, that movement was happening. But not long after that I sort of closed up, shut off a lot. I got into Jim Hall, Wes Mongtomery—probably because of the influence of that teacher

—a purist kind of attitude. I spent a few years narrow-minded; I ignored a lot of what was happening right then, anything rock-influenced. I went to Berklee School of Music in Boston for one semester, and didn't like it—there was too much rock & roll guitar for me. So I left. My parents had moved to New Jersey by this time, and I stayed with them. I took a few lessons with Jim Hall, which were really great—I still wish I could do some of the things he was showing me. Here I am, wanting to add more electronic stuff all the time, getting more dependent on all these things-and it's great to hear him get this incredible, beautiful, really big sound, with just his hands and the same amp he's had for 30 years.



"When I studied with him, I wasn't at a very advanced level. We played Stella By Starlight, and that was one of the first times I'd ever played that tune. But he always made me feel like his equal, somehow. He had me play Bach violin sonatas, analyze them for their harmony and phrasing; he showed me a lot of harmonic things, which he'd expanded on from things I think George Van Eps had done; he helped me break out of playing just chords. He got me thinking more in terms of sound, or density, or different levels of dissonance and consonance, staying in the key. There's a lot you can play with only two notes, instead of playing a full chord. That's sort of obvious in Jim Hall's playing; he'll play small things that make the impression of being big-

"You know, when you're playing with a bass player and a melody instrument, the bass note and melody note usually define the chord—you don't need to state the whole chord, it's pretty much right there. So as a guitar player you can play some harmony to it. You try to find something that's not there, even if it's only one note. Something that's really strong in relation to it. If you understand what the basic structures are, you can play either with them or against them. You can blend in, or put a sheen over what's already there, or go against what everything else is doing, too—I don't want to rule that out. And this seems to work in any musical context."

When and why did Frisell open up again, and begin to use the electronic devices that he employs to create

his distinctively various, compellingly

odd, and lyrical sounds of today?

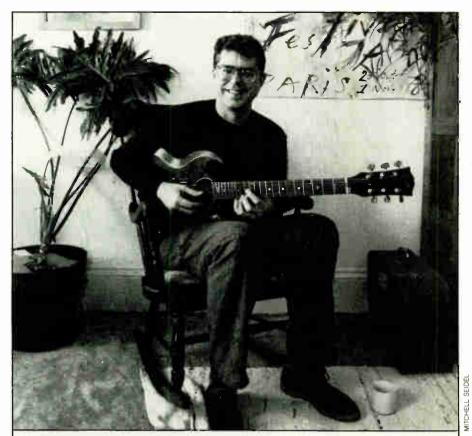
"After living with my parents in New Jersey, I went back to Colorado, because I had friends there, people I'm still in touch with, musicians who'd gone through a lot of the same things I had. And I met a guitar player named Mike Miller—I think he's doing studio work in Los Angeles now-who was playing really loud, his amp set on 10, but playing intelligently, musically. I was giving lessons at a music store, playing a few gigs—there was a Las Vegas-style big band that accompanied people who came through town, and I subbed in it occasionally; I backed up Rod McKuen and Frank Gorshin. After meeting Mike Miller, I began to think, 'Why cut myself off from anything that I know?' Whether it's the Ventures, or Jimi Hendrix, or country music-do you know Greeley, Colorado? It's just miles and miles of cows, and cowboy music was really popular, but I never thought much about it when I was there. Now people say it comes out in my playing.

"The thing is, music is so large, and all I know of music is such a tiny speck. I thought, 'Why should I deny any bit of that speck that I can use?' And I started turning myself up. I got a fuzz tone and a volume pedal. I had one of these little cassette tape delays—I don't know if they make them anymore. And that's basically what I use now, a combination of volume pedal and delay, and some distortion sometimes. My equipment's gotten a little better, but that's the basic sound, I

guess

"I returned to Berklee in '75, and this time I really enjoyed it, got a lot out of the place. I studied with great people—John Damien, Herb Pomeroy, arranging with Michael Gibbs—and unlike Colorado, which was pretty much a closed circle, there were new people to play with every day. There was a place called Michael'sit's not there any more—where students could play and sometimes a name from out of town would come through. I joined a Top 40 band, and was back playing the kind of music I'd played in high school. I kept busy, playing jazz, too, as an accompanist and solo, playing weddings—I did that when I first came to New York, too.

"When I got to New Jersey, there were lots of people I'd known from Boston around-that seems to be a common path, from Boston to the New York area. So it wasn't like I'd come to the city cold. At Berklee I'd met Pat Metheny, during the time he was just starting to become known, and he helped me out-he was the person who helped me get with Paul Motian, who's been my main partner, employer, whatever, for the past few years. He's got a lot of music, Paul; I wish people were more aware of him. He's so deep, and he's got so much history playing with Bill Evans' trio, with Oscar Pettiford's band when he'd first come to



BILL FRISELL'S EQUIPMENT

"Mainly, I have this Gibson SG-lately it's been a 1962 Les Paul Junior, which replaced an SG I had a long time that wore out," says Bill Frisell of his number one instrument. "I also have a Stratocaster, a '57 reissue :hat Robert Quine helped me pick out. I don't use that much on gigs, but it records really well; its good for rhythm, it's clean and bright, good for funk stuff or Hendrix-type feedback, and it's get that whammy bar which my other guitars don't have, that I can't keep my hands off of

"And in the last couple of years I've started playing guitar synthesizer; mainly what I use is the older Roland model, the GR300. It's pretty primitive compared to newer models, not programmable, but it's a lot easier for me, it responds more like a guitar and faster than the newer ones. so I can quickly change the sound. I've also got the GR700, but I still haven't used it on a gig-I play it a lot athome. It's a lot farther from a guitarwhen you hit the string, the sound comes out, but it's got little to do with the guitar, it's really a different instrument. But I use the Roland G3303 guitar with both synthesizers.

"I have a D. Armand volume pedal, TC Electronics compressor, MXR Distortion Plus unit, and an Electroharmonix 16-second delay. I have an Ibanez DM 2000 d'gital delay, too. Sometimes I use an MXR pitch transposer, but it's that 16-secand delay that I'm really dependent on in certain situations. I have a Music Man amp, and sometimes I use a Fender Super Champ. D'Addario XL 120 strings on the SG, XL 110s on the Strat. Any kind of heavy picks-D'Adcario's are pretty good, they use some kind of heavier plastic than the Fender picks which I tear up, banging in some weird way

"Another thing I'm working on, in its early stage, s a project with Henry Kaises, using the Synclavier. We'll play things on guitars, but the project will be less about guitar than about the Synclavier—there's just so much you can do with this instrument. You play a couple of notes on quitar, then manipulate them for hours, or days, so you've come up with something else. That project's for ECM; Manfred Eicher will probably come to California to help produce it, because the Synclavier's like a refrigerator, you can't really transport it

"When I first got with Kaiser we played solos and duets at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco using Ovation acoust's guitars; I ve got both rivion and steel string models. But Kaiser had an old fihele Epiphone that was really loud. I'd love to have one of those someday.

BILL FRISELL SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader RAMBLER-ECM 1287

IN LINE-ECM 1241

with Vernon Reid SMASH AND SCATTERATION-Minor Music 005

with Paul Motian

JACK OF CLUBS--Soul Note 1124 THE STORY OF MARYAM—Soul Note 1074
PSALM—ECM 1222

IT SHOULD'VE HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO-ECM 1283

with Jan Garbarek WAYFARER-ECM 1259

PATHS, PRINTS-ECM 1223

with Eberhard Weber

LATER THAT EVENING—ECM 1231 FLUID RUSTLE—ECM 137 with Tim Berne

THEORETICALLY-Empire 72K

with Billy Hart

OSHUMARE - Gramavision 8228

with Arild Andersen A MOLDE CONCEPT-ECM 1236

with Herb Robertson

TRANSPARENCY-JMT 850002

with Bob Moses VISIT WITH THE GREAT SPIRIT—Gramavision 8307 WHEN ELEPHANTS DREAM OF MUSIC—Gramavision

8203 THE STORY OF MOSES-Gramavision 18-8408-1

with Lyle Mays LYLE MAYS-Geffen 24097

with Paul Bley

FRAGMENTS-ECM tha

with Mark Johnson BASS DESIRES-ECM 25040-1

New York, or sitting in with Coltrane when Elvin Jones couldn't make it, and Monk, and Sonny Rollins. We play in Europe, mostly; I'm thankful there's a place for us there, but it's weird the music doesn't quite fit in New York. It's too out to play at the Village Vanguard, I guess, and somehow too traditional for the Wah

"With Paul, 90 percent of the material is his own. And each of his tunes is a world of its own. Some of them are conventional chords and melodies, played in time. But some are complicated harmonies, or involve harmony and melody but the time isn't strict. We've played a lot together, so we can play on these complicated structures and still know where we are. He's got tunes that are fast and loud, but not strict 4/4—the phrases breathe. And there are tunes that we play as compositions, then go totally berserk on, that are based on a scale or something. We still do the quintet, but it seems like we'll be doing trio work, Paul and Joe Lovano and me, in the near future, mostly.

"I'm trying to write more tunes, but it's hard," sighs Frisell, whose compositions on Rambler were unexpectedly detailed for tuba and trumpet, referring to marching bands and earthy Western spaces, after the airy, often-overdubbed musings of his first ECM effort, In Line. "If there's any discipline I have now, that's it—I mean, practicing, I really need to badly, but . . . " he shudders, "it's really hard for me to sit down and work on technique, which I need to, because I feel lacking in what I can do physically on the instrument. But on the rare occasions when I sit playing scales, it seems to take me further away from the music. If I spend a whole day thinking about this scale and that one, working on being able to play something fast, then I go to a gig, it keeps me from getting into what's actually going on in the music. When I'm really playing, I'm not thinking about any notes, or mathematics," he says.

"And when I write something, it just sort of comes out. I'm not thinking, 'Now I'm gonna write a cowboy song,' it just happens, then usually later I think about what must have influenced it. When I sit down to write something in a certain style, it doesn't work. I don't know if that's important, something I need to do, or if it doesn't matter," he shrugs. "I don't care; I'm thankful something comes out, sometimes.

"It's the same when I play; I'm not thinking about anything at all. It's just this thing happening. Sometimes, when I'm with Paul we'll be playing uptempo, a couple of choruses, and then suddenly I'll become aware—'Wow, I'm playing really fast and it's okay, I'm doing it, I can't believe I'm reallly doing it!'—and as soon as I realize that, become conscious of it, I fall on my face, everything's gone." Yet Frisell keeps trying. He even fights

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he year is 1982. An odd assortment of curious no-wave fans and followers of avant-funk has gathered at Danceteria, the tragically hip nightclub near Manhattan's Chelsea district, for what promises to be the event of the year a performance by an all-star aggregation of downtown noisemakers and improvisors, collectively known as the Golden Palominos. Their lineup boasts such New York notables as Arto Lindsay (DNA, Lounge Lizards), Bill Laswell (Curlew, Massacre, Material), David Van Tieghem (Steve Reich, Laurie Anderson), John Zorn (a ubiquitous figure on the downtown improvising scene), Jamaaladeen Tacuma (Ornette Coleman's Prime Time), and the band's ringleader, drummer Anton Fier.

It seemed as if everything Fier had done in his musical life to this point had prepared him for this moment. A self-taught musician, he had spent several years in virtual obscurity with various cult bands. After scuffling around his hometown Cleveland playing in one Top 40 cover band or another, he hooked up with Pere Ubu, an ambitious and slightly surreal rock group led by bizarre vocalist David Thomas. To say that Pere Ubu was unconventional would be sheer understatement. As a singer, Thomas seemed equally influenced by Captain Beefheart and Curly of the Three Stooges; meanwhile, Fier's tricky backbeats within the multi-tempoed flux often sounded equally influenced by Ronald Shannon Jackson and

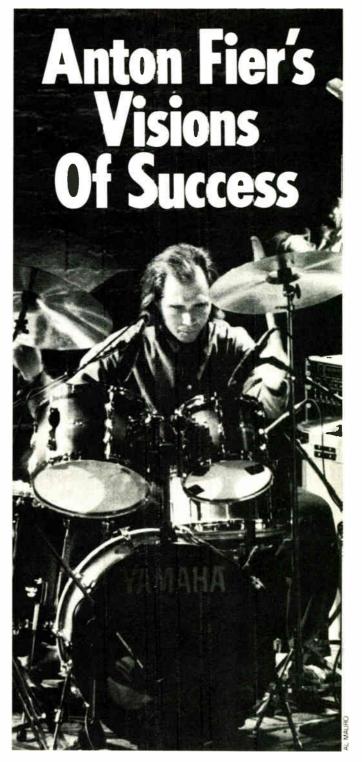
Spike Jones

Upon arriving in New York in 1978, Fier formed a hardedged rock group called the Feelies. Not long after that he was reunited with Thomas, this time in the company of the Pedestrians (which included guest guitarist Richard Thompson), when they recorded the first of two highly disciplined, "arty" albums. And also around that time he became a charter member of the Lounge Lizards, a notorious "fake-jazz" outfit led by saxophonist (and now actor) John Lurie. These three bands required three extremely different drumming styles, yet Fier felt at home in each one. "I just try to play whatever is called for. I never considered myself a jazz musician, and I don't really consider myself a technically great musician. I just try and play music—and I don't have a stand on any particular kind, that this is good and that isn't. I've never been a jazz snob; I always considered myself a rock musician, though I've listened to and appreciate jazz. I like to check out everything. I think in every category of music there are people who are sincere about what they do, and there are people who are insincere. And if I detect a sincerity or emotional commitment in the music, I can usually relate to it and contribute to it."

Fier left the Lounge Lizards soon after guitarist/vocalist Arto Lindsay quit the band. "Actually, when I first started playing with the Lounge Lizards, Arto and I wanted to call the band the Golden Palominos. We liked the name but Lurie didn't. Arto was the reason I joined the Lounge Lizards; I was a big fan of DNA (Lindsay's punk-noise band), and I wanted to work with him. I thought he was good, and actively sought him out. So when he quit I knew my next step was to start this other band with Arto-the Golden Palominos."

Which brings us back to their '82 debut. The gig has been highly recommended by the Village Voice's venerable rock scribe, Robert Christgau, who hath proclaimed the Palominos a "super group." I go to check it out, enticed to the gig more by the presence of Jamaaladeen's earthy funk basslines than anything else. And I did get a kick out of Arto's demented guitar skronking with the Lounge Lizards. So why not? I'm leery of hype, but this might prove to be a very interesting evening.

A sparse crowd is holding forth on Danceteria's ground floor performance space. The Palominos are on stage. Jamaaladeen is hopelessly lost in the funk, bobbing and weaving like a prizefighter, thrashing his Steinberger as he pumps out the relentless groove. Laswell remains typically stoic, holding the bottom down with dub-style bass accents and occasionally adding some nifty slide work to the proceedings.



By Bill Milkowski

Zorn is frantically blowing a duck call into a bowl of water while Van Tieghem mimes it up behind a set of timpani. Upfront, Arto is neighing into the microphone—a cross between Yoko Ono and Seattle Slew. And behind it all sits Fier, looking rather reserved at the traps.

Some in the crowd nod their heads and jump on the funk pulse. Others look on, aghast, trying to comprehend the meaning of it all. I'm amused, entertained, but not thoroughly converted. Despite Christgau's declaration, this is not the Second Coming. In his Voice review of the show, he admits to distrusting white funk, SoHo rhythm bands, and new wave super groups, though he confesses that Tacuma was "astonishing"

and Arto "flourished" as a frontman. He concluded his review with three words: They were super.

So be it.

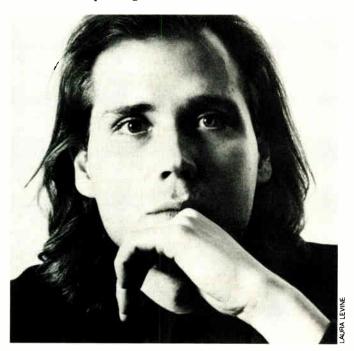
The Golden Palominos' debut album came out a year later on Laswell's OAO/Celluloid label and was instantly showered with accolades from every corner of the globe. Robert Palmer of the New York Times waxed enthusiastic. The Village Voice continued haranguing about this "new rock super group." down beat sang its praises, giving the album five stars. In the Jan. '84 issue of db, Jim Brinsfield wrote, "This album is a masterpiece. The Golden Palominos have put out an enormously important and satisfying album. Important, for this is as far as anyone has gotten in the fusion of funk and post-avant experimentation. And satisfying for their refusal to slide on the little things—no fillers, no half-hearted ditties."

Ironically, in spite of all the praise, Anton Fier—the straw boss and real inspiration behind the band—now considers that first edition of the Golden Palominos a failed experiment.

"On that first album I was working with a lot of improvisers—Zorn, Arto, David Moss, Fred Frith—and I wanted to put them in a song/rock context. It didn't work out that way in practice, and at the time I wasn't able to explain well enough what I wanted or get them to do it well enough. So basically, what you have there is a rhythm section with sound effects. That's how I consider the first record. I mean, it's a unique record. There's really nothing else like it. But I don't consider it a success either musically or conceptually. It was supposed to be more song-oriented, but the other people never really picked up on it. I wanted them to get more outside of themselves and their traditional roles of what they'd been doing, but it didn't work out that way."

Not quite. Arto does "sing" on six of the album's seven cuts, and he shares composer credits with Fier on five of them. On first listen it appears to be an Arto Lindsay album, and hardly what I'd call song/rock-oriented in the conventional sense. But Fier took great pains to get precisely what he wanted on his second Golden Palominos record, the recently released Visions Of Excess.

"After I finished the first record, I wasn't satisfied. I didn't think I really accomplished what I was going after. I didn't want to work with those people again, so I didn't—most of them, anyway. And I'm very pleased with this new record. I think it's the best thing I have ever been involved with. I chose the right people, and they wanted to do what I wanted. They worked hard at pleasing me and themselves. And I don't think



I've exhausted the possibilities or even scratched the surface of working with these people. I'm not finished with *this* band."

Of the original Palominos lineup, only Laswell returns in a significant role, appearing on all eight cuts. Arto Lindsay makes a cameo appearance on the album's closing number, Only One Party. The rest of the ranks are filled out by guitarists Jody Harris (Raybeats, see July '84 db) and Richard Thompson (Pedestrians, Fairport Convention, see Feb. '85 db), organists Carla Bley and Bernie Worrell (Funkadelics, Talking Heads). Hired guns like Henry Kaiser, Nicky Skopelitis, and Mike Hampton (Funkadelics) each get off wicked guitar solos on their respective showcase tunes. Guest vocalist John Lydon (formerly Johnny Rotten of the infamous Sex Pistols) snarls menacingly on The Animal Speaks, while special guest vocalist Jack Bruce sings with typical urgency and blows some honking blues harp on Silver Bullet. The lion's share of the vocal duties is handled by Michael Stipe (R.E.M., see Oct. '85 db) and newcomer Syd Straw, a strong singer with a captivating stage presence and a countrified feel in her melodious voice. Together with Stipe the two make a solid case for Fier's desire to play in a song/rock context.

"The first time I saw Syd Straw was with Van Dyke Parks at The Bottom Line," says Anton. "A mutual friend, Roger Trilling, introduced us, and I knew she was something special just from meeting her. It was when I was working on some tracks with Michael Stipe that I asked her to come in and sing some backgrounds. And that went good, so I asked her to write some words for the Jack Bruce song. She did that really well and sang backgrounds on that, so I asked her if she wanted to sing lead on one track. That went well and she did another one, and now she's kind of the main focus of the band, in terms of live performances. I really enjoy working with her."

At their recent performance at The Ritz in Manhattan, a packed house seemed charmed by Straw's easy-going bohemian demeanor. She wore blue jeans, an Annie Hall hat, and a leather jacket. Her long, straight, dark hair was reminiscent of hippie-era Cher and she donned Byrds-type granny glasses for one tune. At one point in the show she looked out into the audience, scouring the balcony for a face. Finally she stopped and said, "Dad? This is what I've been doing lately."

his was not the same crowd that attended the premiere performance of the Palominos at Danceteria back in 1982. Far from it. Rather than the see-andbe-seen scene setters who caught that first edition of the band, many in this audience were of the bridge-and-tunnel variety—that is, they drove in from Queens, from Staten Island, from Hoboken, New Jersey (Straw's old stomping grounds) to see the band they had been hearing on local college radio stations like WNYU or progressive biggies like WLIR on Long Island and WXRK in the heart of Manhattan. Yes, the Golden Palominos were getting airplay. Those stations were hot for Boy(Go), a Michael Stipe showcase. It was on the strength of that tune, and Stipe's association with the popular rock group R.E.M., that these hordes of college-age rock fans came to see the Palominos at The Ritz. I can't imagine what these same kids would've made of Zorn and Van Tieghem and that whole gang of noisemakers and renegades. But I did get an indication when Arto Lindsay came out for the encore to deliver his blistering scream-and-skronk on Only One Party. They were amazed and amused. Clearly, they had never been exposed to such fringe tactics before. But they got a kick out of the lanky, bespectacled frontman with the fire-engine red Danelectro 12-string. They laughed and urged him on with clenched fists as he unleashed his edgy, pent-up fury on that poor guitar. One Queens-dweller, a staunch R.E.M. fan, commented that Arto was like the spirit of James Brown and Norman Bates in the body of Barney Fife.

It was interesting to watch Fier's reaction to the whole proceedings. Instead of the somber "art-face" he put on at the Danceteria gig, he was smiling and grooving. He was enjoying the music

And he must be enjoying all the airplay and the respectable sales that *Visions Of Excess* has been garnering. That album is currently the biggest seller in Celluloid's entire catalog. "The record has been getting airplay in various markets," he says. "It's not a hit. It's not in the *Billboard* Top 100 or anything like that. I mean, it's really difficult for an independent label to get a record on the radio these days. But this record has had some success.

"And it's not as though I were aiming for success. I mean, this record was made basically to please myself. It wasn't aimed for radio-play. If I was cold and calculating I could've made a much more commercial record than I did. And, of course, I would like to make money off it. This is what I do. I don't want to be starving my whole life. But it wasn't like, 'Okay, I'm



ANTON FIER'S EQUIPMENT

Anton Fier presently plays a Yamaha Recording Custom Series set with a sunset-brown finish. His kit includes a 22-inch bass drum, 10-, 13-, 14-, and 16-inch toms. His snare is made by Noble & Cooley Co. Fier's cymbals are Paiste exclusively: a 20-inch 2002 Ride, 16-inch 602 Crash, 18-inch Sound Creation Short Crash, 20-inch Sound Creation Dark China, and a 15-inch 602 Heavy Hi-Hat

When he plugs in, Fier adds a DMX Drum Machine, though he says he plans on incorporating a LinnDrum 9000 secon. For live gigs with Herbie Hancock's Rockit band, the Golden Palominos, and Harry Hosona's Japanese tour, Fier adapted his acoustic kit with detonators that triggererd a Simmons SDS 7 electronic drum kit. As he explained, "It's a pretty common setup these days; one sound will be made from these two separate outputs. There's the acoustic sound and then there's this extra force that you can only otherwise get in a recording studio. I don't want to give up my acoustic kit, but I think the Simmons adds something to the sound."

ANTON FIER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

with the Golden Palominos
VISIONS OF EXCESS—Celluloid 6118

THE GOLDEN PALOMINOS—OAO/ Celluloid 5002

with the Lounge Lizards
THE LOUNGE LIZARDS—Editions EG 108

with Mick Jagger
SHE'S THE BOSS—Columbia 39940

with Herble Hancock SOUND SYSTEM—Columbia 39478

with Laurie Anderson

MR. HEARTBREAK—Warner Bros. 25077-

MR. HEARTBREAK—Warner Bros. 25077
with Yoko Ono

STARPEACE—Geffen 827 530-1
with Arto Lindsay
ENVY—Editions EG 39

with Pere Ubu SCNG OF THE BAILING MAN—Rough Trade 21 with Kip Hanrahan

VERTICAL'S CURRENCY—American Clavé 1010 DESIRE DEVELOPS AN EDGE—American

COUP BE TETE-American Clavé 1007

with Gil-Scott Heron
BEST OF ____Arista 19216

with David Thomas & the Pedestrians

VARIATIONS CN A THEME—Sixth International (no number) THE SCUND OF THE SAND—Rough Trade

with Peter Blegvad
THE NAKED SHAKESPEARE—Virgin 2284

with the Feelles
CRAZY RHYTHMS—Stiff 4

gonna do this 'cause I know it's going to be played on the radio or I'll get this person 'cause I know. . . .' I didn't use anybody for their name or for their commercial potential, really. I used them because they are good musicians and they're my friends, and that's why they are on the record."

As for his relationship with Celluloid, Anton adds: "Celluloid is definitely doing its best—basically for their own survival because they put a lot of money into it. And they also like it. If I were on a major label I would have that machinery behind me, but I would never be as high a priority as Michael Jackson or Dire Straits, and I wouldn't expect to be at this point in my career. But with Celluloid, I'm their main priority. They give it everything they have. So, for now, I'm happy where I am. The thing I really like about Celluloid is that they gave me a budget to make a record when nobody else would. They had no idea what I would do. They didn't ask me to do anything in particular. They said, 'Make a record, here's the money.' And I twice went over the original budget, yet they still paid for it. They trusted me to make the record, so I have to trust them as a matter of principle, as a matter of faith. I owe them that much. I am appreciative of people who give me a break, and they did."

Bill Laswell is someone else who gave Anton a break. The busy producer and longtime friend has called Fier on a number of occasions to play drums on various big-name projects, including Mick Jagger's She's The Boss, Yoko Ono's Starpeace, Laurie Anderson's Mister Heartbreak, and Herbie Hancock's Sound System. In fact, Fier toured as a regular member of Hancock's Rockit band throughout 1984 and '85, though by his own account, it was hardly an illuminating gig.

"The real reason I went on those tours was for the money," he says bluntly. "I was totally broke at that time. It was the first time I was able to go on the road and make decent money as a musician. And it was nice to go to places like Japan. But I really considered most of it a drag and not very musical—especially live. It was very show biz, very schtick-oriented. The music was generally exactly the same, down to the solos every night. It was real show biz."

That tour of Japan with the Rockit band resulted in yet another gig for Fier. Harry Hosona, bassist with the Yellow Magic Orchestra, caught Anton with Herbie's group and recently called him back to Japan to play a tour. Anton was delighted to participate.

He still does the occasional sideman gig, having recently played in Israel with Jack Bruce and also performing on his forthcoming album. He was involved with the Kip Hanrahan/ Jack Bruce band for both recording and performancesthough that relationship is undoubtedly over, considering Anton's rather stinging comments concerning Kip's methods of making records: "I have a problem with Kip in that a lot of the time he would have people come into the studio and improvise a song structure, then the records would come out listing him as the person who wrote the songs. And that's just not how it went down. It's all conceptual to Kip, and that's not how music is made. He thinks something is clever or unique, that it's never been done before so, therefore, do it. That's not how you make music. You do something because it's natural. Go out on the street and listen to music. It's not some college kid who thought that this would be conceptually interesting to put these two people together. They get together because they like each other or they have an affinity for playing together.'

He will, however, continue to do the occasional improvisation performance with those musicians he greatly respects, like Laswell, Zorn, Peter Brötzmann, Fred Frith, and Sonny Sharrock. "If the situation arises where I'm offered the opportunity to go and play with musicians who I think are great, I'd happily go and do it. But to do an improvised gig with John Zorn and Arto Lindsay at the Pyramid Club in the East Village is not what I really want to do right now. I really have the most fun doing what I'm doing now. I really like playing song structures right now. It's what I feel. It gives me the most satisfaction."

Allen Toussaint: New Orleans

Hit Man

By Don Palmer

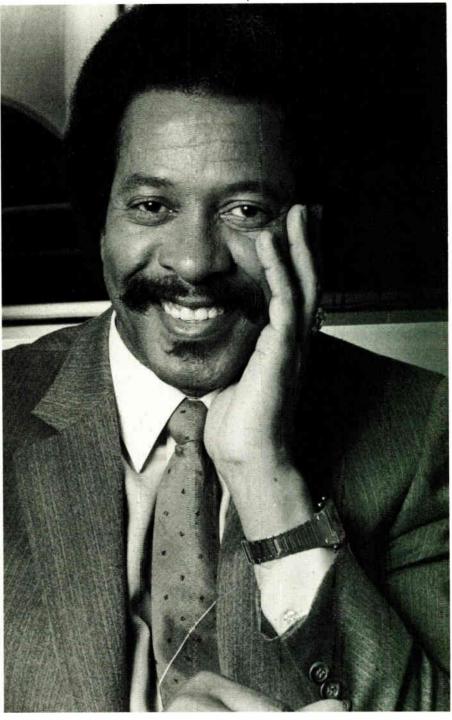
uring a brief visit to the famed Sea-Saint Studios in a quiet residential neighborhood of New Orleans called Gentilly, I watched producer Allen Toussaint work his magic. Toussaint instructed conga player Afro Williams in the music's rhythm and pacing while joking with his son Reggie. Surprisingly, Toussaint's taciturn public nature gave way as he ribbed Afro and Reggie about rushed beats and rock & roll volume. He even took a few minutes to pick out a few clusters and staccato figures on the piano so that Afro would be clear on his directions.

Toussaint's leisurely approach belies the fact that, like Duke Ellington, he's a pianist/composer who uses musicians as an extension of his personal cosmology. The irony was that this New Orleans funk and popmeister was producing a cover of the Commodores' Night Shift for an Ogilvie & Mather-designed Heileman beer jingle.

The carpeted halls of this two-story building bore testament to Toussaint's skill to pen a tune, lead a session, and work with people. Aside from albums by Dr. John, LaBelle, Joe Cocker, and Lee Dorsey, there were plaques from Billboard, the Urban League, ASCAP, and numerous others. Most prominent was Toussaint's award for Southern Nights, that sweet ditty that Glen Campbell rode to the top of the charts in 1977.

"New Orleans is aloof from the rest of the world when it comes to business and everything else. It never entered the mainstream of how things are done," mused Toussaint on a September afternoon before a rare gig at New York's Village Gate. "I've lived most of my life preparing, rehearsing with the musicians. After we do a take, I go into the control room and listen, become producer, then come back out and be musician. Back and forth.

"I didn't know any other way. It wasn't 'til much later in my career that I found out that there was a separate man to do all of these jobs. I thought one guy did it all everywhere. I remember going to another city and finding out that some of what I was doing took six people-make



the decision on the material, coach the artist, organize the musicians, call them, know who would be able to cut the session. It's done that way in New Orleans."

The New Orleans-born Toussaint, whose career as hitmaker stretches back to the late '50s, could well have gone on to explain that livin' always seems slow, painless, enigmatic in the Big Easy. The food is flavorful. The air enervating. The music plentiful. All of which require folks to amble rather than rush headlong into pleasure's waiting arms. In fact, excessive ambition and impatience go against the seemingly God-given credo of New Orleans.

Not to say that this city by the river lacks in accomplishment, it's just that its cultural heroes are as elusive and slippery as a sweet Gulf Coast oyster slithering down the back of your gullet. They are also known for the eccentric—Guitar Slim hanging upside down from the ceiling at the Dew Drop Inn, Ironing Board Sam playing keyboards in a tub filled with 20,000 gallons of water, Bobbie Marchan's transvestite act—which means that it's no small wonder that one of the Crescent City's most acclaimed music makers, Allen Toussaint, is something of a man in the shadows.

New Orleans has had more than its share of artists deserving wider recognition and some of whom earned the label Musical Genius. Of course we all know

ALLEN TOUSSAINT'S EQUIPMENT

"As far as pianos go, I like the Bösendorfer," says Allen Toussaint. "There's something magical about it. I also like Steinways, the action on it, the payback, the resonance, and how the hammer strikes the strings.

"I also use a Yamaha DX7 synthesizer. It has so many things at your fingertips. The sound through digital is great. And in the studio I have a Prophet 10." Of late, Toussaint has been using his electronic keyboards in the studio to work on a oneman LP to include guitar and sitar, as well.

ALLEN TOUSSAINT SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

WILD SOUNDS OF NEW ORLEANS-RCA Victor 1767 TOUSSAINT - available variously as Tiffany 14 or Wand 14 or Scepter 24003 FROM A WHISPER TO A SCREAM-Kent 036

LIFE, LOVE AND FAITH-Reprise 2062 THE STOKES WITH ALLEN TOUSSAINT-Bandy 70014 BUMP CITY-Warner Bros. 2616

MOTION—Warner Bros. 3142 SOUTHERN NIGHTS-Edsel 155 NEW ORLEANS JAZZ & HERITAGE FESTIVAL 1976-Island 9

with Kip Hanrahan
CONJURE: MUSIC FOR THE TEXTS OF ISHMAEL REED-American Clavé 1006

Allen Toussaint has performed on and produced numerous recordings by Lee Dorsey, The Meters, Betty Harris, Irma Thomas, LaBelle, Dr. John, Chris Kenner, Ernie K-Doe, and others. Some are available on imported reissue labels such as Charly, Ace, and Edsel. Though most of these LPs are out-of-print, they occasionally surface in cutout bins

Louis Armstrong and Fats Domino and Wynton Marsalis, but this mighty triumvirate is just a sampling of a whole slew of such one-hit wonders and regional phenoms as Jessie Hill, Chris Kenner, Guitar Slim, Johnny Adams, Irma Thomas, Robert Parker—and the list goes on.

Most remarkable, aside from what could be termed the relative obscurity of some of America's greatest treasures of urban music, is that a handful of men shaped New Orleans music from the '50s until its demise of fatigue in the '70s. Names such as Dave Bartholomew, trumpeter, A&R man, and Domino's bandleader; studio owner Cosimo Matassa; Wardell Quezergue, trumpeter and arranger of King Floyd's Groove Me and Jean Knight's Mr. Big Stuff in 1970 and '71, left their imprints on popular American music. But the most successful, by virtue of collaborations on over 35 gold or platinum records has been the reserved songwriter, producer, pianist named Allen Toussaint.

A softspoken man given to stylized yet conservative dress (e.g. the Nehru suits and medallions of the late '60s and early '70s or the white-collared shirts with tie bar of the '80s), Toussaint has often been questioned about his own ability to project in performance. One New Orleans critic, after a listless show aboard the Riverboat President, referred to Toussaint's "Holiday Inn consciousness" and "Nudie the Tailor" suits. And the summer before last, I wondered at Toussaint's juke box etudes and jokes about his membership in the Million-Aires Club during solo performances at the Public Theatre and Tramps. But a series of two-night stands with Dr. John's band at the Gate and Lone Star Cafe certainly removed some doubt. Though given to sentimental excess and lapses in energy, the Toussaint portions showed a flicker of the extroverted personality needed for an r&b/pop entertainer.

× * Born in the section of New Orleans known as Gert Town in 1938, Toussaint acknowledges that he always wanted to be a musician. "I had been in music since about five or six. When I reached consciousness, I knew that the piano was there. I took about two months of formal training, and I don't mean in succession. My sister studied classical piano, and she was a great help to me cause when I picked out boogie woogies and various things she could show me where the E was on the page. Sometimes as she would rehearse Chopin and Beethoven, I would mimic what I heard her play and I would ask her where was this on the page. I tried to pick out everything I heard.

"I remember learning Grieg's Piano Concerto. And of course when you have those early upright pianos that someone gives your family, it's flat and you have to play it up a bit to be [in tune] with the re-

cording. I learned the concerto by ear in the wrong key. It was very elementary but it was interesting. I felt I was obligated to play what piano players are playing."

Toussaint's first professional gigs were rewards for his ability to play the songs of the day. You might say that he was something of a human juke-box. "Early on as a teenager, I began playing as a sideman in the recording studio with Dr. John many times and with Dave Bartholomew who was a head honcho in our area."

Bartholomew was the Imperial Records A&R man "responsible for all of the Fats Domino hits, Smiley Lewis, many other folk. And Cosimo's recording studio was the place to do the recording. At that time, I was working at a club called the Dew Drop, so various people got to hear me play like everybody else cause I used to copy off all the records. So I was called into the studio to play like other people a lot; many times just because they knew I would be able to play the call of the day."

Bartholomew, whose sharp, riff-based arrangements and catchy melodies helped catapult Fats Domino to international stardom, left his mark on the young Toussaint. In fact, Toussaint has emulated Bartholomew's career in that he's made many more hits for others than for himself. As a sideman for "whoever was recording," Toussaint learned the tricks of the New Orleans trade under Bartholomew until a lucky break in 1959.

"When Minit Records was started by Joe Banashak and Larry McKinley in 1959, I went to play behind some of the auditions. Then they asked me if I would make the music for Minit temporarily until they could get Harold Batiste in. He had gone to the West Coast. I was 19 at the time, and I ended up staying on at Minit until I went in the service in 1963. By the time I came out in 1965, Minit had changed hands and wasn't being handled in New Orleans."

During those four years at Minit, Toussaint produced Ernie K-Doe's Mother-In-Law and Jessie Hill's Ooh Poo Pah Doo, which were national hits rising to numbers one and 28 on the Billboard charts. Toussaint's other artists included "Irma Thomas, who had lots of okay hits [It's Raining and Ruler of My Heart]. I recorded more things on Aaron Neville [including Over You] than anyone else at that time. During that time I was also recording people like Frogman Henry.

"In the early sessions, we always rehearsed at home in the living room or front room. All the artists—Ernie K-Doe, Benny Spellman, Irma Thomas, Chris Kenner—used to just hang all through the day everyday. I would write one song for Irma, and we would go over it a little and take it to the next room to practice. I'd write another song for Ernie K-Doe, and he'd go in the other room. Irma comes out and we'd go over her



EYE ON YOU: Dr. John (left) watches Toussaint at work.

song for improvements. Then I'd write a song for someone else. We just did that all day. It was a lasting party. When it was time to go to the studio, we just left from the house and sang the songs in the car on the way to the studio.

"The musicians seemed much more involved in the music. It was looser. In the studio, if a guy was soloing, the rest of the musicians would get up and dance around and snap their fingers. The songs that I wrote back then were much quicker than what I write now. I easily wrote six songs per day. Now I take more time, and I work in solitude whereas I used to work with people around me 'cause I was never alone. Now I make it a point to be alone, and when I think a song is through, I really get to work."

Although Toussaint may prefer solitude these days, it was his ability to discover local talent that made him invaluable to the success of Minit and Lew Chudd's Imperial records which acquired the label. Banashak also called upon Toussaint for his smaller label, Instant, which released Kenner's I Like It Like That, a number two hit on Billbaard and the "Rock 'n Roll Record of 1961."

Toussaint's brief flirtation with success was interrupted by a two-year stint in the Army. He served as the "piano accompanist with the soldier's chorus from 1:30 in the afternoon to 3:30. That was my total hitch, and I learned to be a pingpong expert. I stayed in a little longer than my two years because I had unfinished business. I had an Army band called the Stokes, and that's when I wrote the song Whipped Cream that Herb Alpert picked up later.

"I went back to Joseph Banashak after the Army. He was forming a company called Alon with just the two of us. I didn't feel the Alon association. It didn't feel progressive, and I came out of the Army feeling that I had been left by the world and I had better double-time. We were about to dissolve our relationship when Marshall Seahorn asked me to go into partnership with him. He was a gogetter, a promotion man who knew the territory very well."

Toussaint had worked with Seahorn when "Marshall was with Fire and Fury with Bobby Robinson. He would come down to New Orleans from time to time to record a session, like Bobby Marchan, and he would have me to play on and organize the session. He also had us, Instant and Alon, produce Lee Dorsey's *Ride Your Pony*, so Lee Dorsey had to be one of our first artists."

The new partnership, to be named Sansu Enterprises, started out well as Dorsey's Pony, Get Out Of My Life Woman, Working In A Coal Mine, and Holy Cow all received national attention from late '65-66. But aside from a one-shot soul ballad by Betty Harris, Nearer To You, the Sansu label struggled until 1969 when Toussaint discovered the Meters.

"When I first saw the group at the Ivanhoe, I heard them making a gig with a vocalist and doing all the songs that were out, like Marvin Gaye. They were originally called Art Neville and the Neville Sounds. I always knew Art. We were in elementary school together. I knew that he was always able to put together a good band, even with mediocre people. In the case of the Meters, they all were great musicians already. So I immediately approached them about recording."

The Meters—Art on organ, George Porter on bass, Zigaboo Modeliste on drums, and Leo Nocentelli on guitar—played in a funky, spare style well-suited to Toussaint's own lean arrangements. Throughout the '60s, Toussaint had pared down the heavy riffs popularized by Bartholomew. He allowed instru-

mentalists more freedom to improvise obbligatos. A Toussaint production featured stuttering, burping brass and trumpets in a punchy counterpoint anchored by solid second line rhythms.

Toussaint recalls, "They played with each other so automatically. A song just started and they all just locked in. Now the Meters were such a self-contained group and they were partial to their own material. I would rather like everything that they would come up with. But as a producer, it can be a sticky situation when you begin to evaluate and want to bring in songs from the outside. That's not taken in the right light sometimes. Producing isn't just what you do, but what you don't do, so many times I'd give the Meters carte blanche in the studio and make certain that the engineer fulfilled all of their desires."

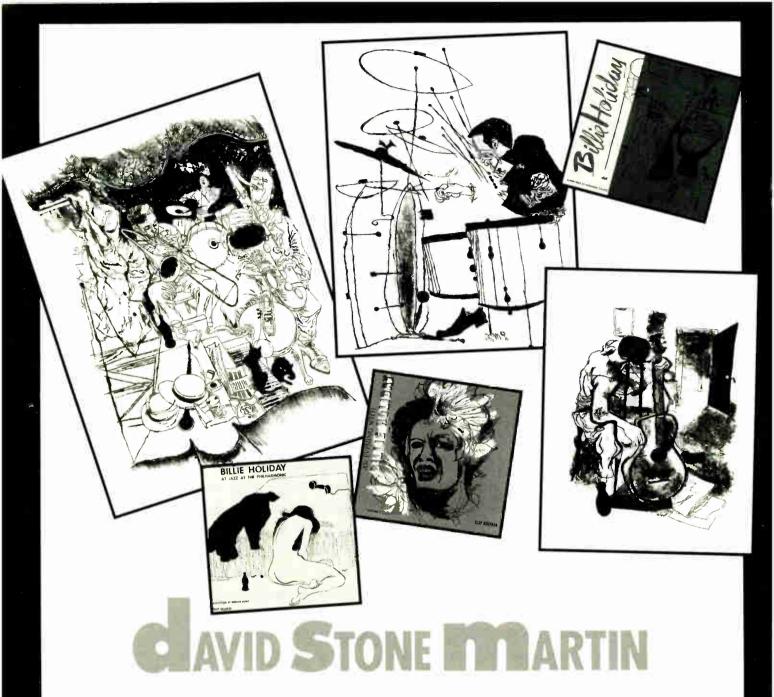
The Meters, whose jaunty, ratchet rhythms resulted in hits like Sophisticated Cissy and Cissy Strut, became the house band for Seahorn and Toussaint. They were also the musical foundation on which Sea-Saint Studio was built in 1973. Along with Toussaint, the Meters backed Dr. John on Positively and LaBelle on Nightbirds, which were huge hits and reinvigorated an interest in the New Orleans sound.

As Toussaint explains, "People approached us over the years because of the things that they heard about us being different and adventurous. We'd been very busy and even the recordings that were not giants still had a level of consistancy. At Sea-Saint, we rolled our first tape in early '73 with a group from England called Badger. We had another guy from England named Frankie Miller, and he was one of the highlights of my life. These people knew of us from Lee Dorsey's reputation and people like Ernie K-Doe. Even the mediocre hits sparked an interest in the company.

"Some people like Glen Campbell, the Pointer Sisters, and Little Feat just covered such songs as Southern Nights, Yes We Can, and On Your Way Down. Others like LaBelle came down to New Orleans to record. When I was asked to work with her, excitement jumped up all over me. It's interesting that when a company sends an artist to New Orleans, they're sending them for something that you have there. I must admit that sometimes I have been a little stubborn by wanting to go beyond what's most conventional for New Orleans. That has been a mistake at some moments. I won't call names, but I just know that in thinking that you're giving someone more, you may disappoint them because they already have something in mind."

In shopping Sansu's productions, Toussaint discovered that Steve Tyrell had something in mind for Toussaint. "He was with Scepter and Wand and he had been a fan of mine and New Orleans.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61



DAVID STONE MARTIN is one of this country's most prolific illustrators. He has drawn billboards, posters, and advertisements for Hollywood films, Broadway plays, and tv shows. His drawings have appeared in most major magazines and newspapers, including a half-dozen covers of *Time* magazine. But, as the 73-year-old artist is quick to point out, "jazz is sort of my specialty."

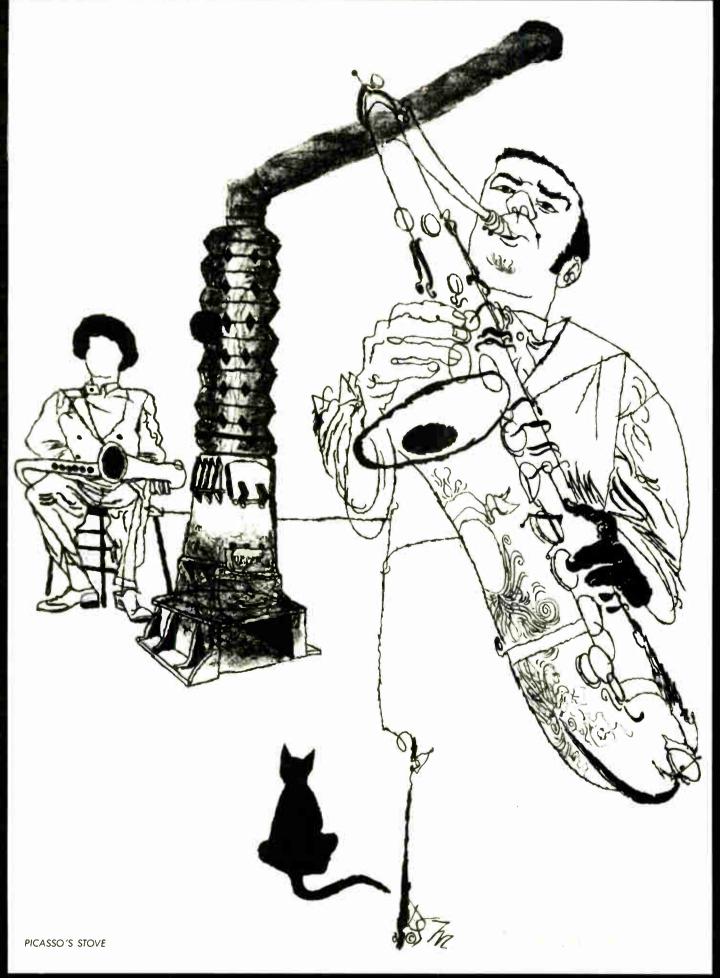
Indeed, over the past half-century Martin has drawn and designed hundreds of album covers for Verve and other labels, illustrated books (among them Nat Hentoff's now out-of-print children's book *Journey Into Jazz*), and displayed his artwork in galleries. Distinguished by the artist's use of heavy ink lines to create shapes, volume, and tex-

ture (there was a time when most art studios had someone on staff who could produce "D.S.M." lines), Martin's drawings have captured such subjects as Leadbelly, Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, and Miles Davis, to name but a few. He works mostly from photographs, but many of the drawings he did for Verve were done live at recording sessions.

Martin was born in Chicago, where he studied at the city's Art Institute in the '30s. During World War II he served as Art Director in the Office of War Information, where he met Ben Shahn, with whom he collaborated on U.S. military posters. Shahn introduced him to Moses Asch of Disc Records, and Martin started doing album covers featuring Coleman

Hawkins, Nat King Cole, and his friend Mary Lou Williams for that label in the '40s. Eventually, Asch introduced Martin to Norman Granz of Verve Records, and the rest is jazz illustration history.

So, Mr. Martin, out of all those hundreds of jazz drawings you've done over the years (and he's still at it full-time) are there any you're especially proud of? "That's hard to say. I love 'em all." Fair enough. Then how about a summing up of what being America's foremost jazz illustrator has meant to you? "It's always been my principal activity, just because I love jazz and the people in it." (For information concerning lithographs of these and other drawings, contact David Stone Martin, 867 Pequot Ave., New London, CT.)



RECORD REVIEWS



PIERRE DØRGE'S NEW JUNGLE ORCHESTRA

EVEN THE MOON IS DANCING—Steeple-Chase 1208: The Mooche; Suho Ning Samo; Bambia Jolifanti; A Rose For Laurent; Even The Moon Is Dancing.

Personnel: Dørge, guitar, ballophon, vocal, conductor; Jehn Tchicai, tenor saxophone, vocal; Morten Carlsen, tenor, bass saxophone, neyflute, taragot, clarinet, Istanbul zurna; Jesper Zeuthen, alto saxophone; Soren Eriksen, Doudou Gouirand, alto, soprano saxophone; Harry Beckett, trumpet, flugelhorn; Kenneth Agerholm, Niels Neergaard, trombone, African horn; Irene Becker, keyboards, caxixi, vocal; Bent Clausen, vibes, siren, percussion; Johnny "Mbizo" Dyani, talking bass, piano, vocal; Hugo Rasmussen, bass; Ahmadu Jarr, African drums, percussion, train flute; Marilyn Mazur, drums, bells, kalimba.

* * * * *

VIENNA ART ORCHESTRA

PERPETUUM MOBILE—hot Art 2024: SIGHS FROM SOUTH-CARINTHIA; WOODWORMS IN THE ROOTS; VOICES WITHOUT WORDS; LIFE AT THE DEAD SEA; LADY DELAY; ROMANA; A NATURAL SOUND; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; FRENCH ALPHORN; H.M. BLUES; ZOGE AM BOGE.

Personnel: Lauren Newton, voice; Hannes Kottek, Karl "Bumi" Fian, trumpet, flugelhorn; Herbert Joos, trumpet, flugelhorn, alphorn; Wolfgang Puschnig, alto, sopranino saxophone, piccolo, flute; Harry Sokal, soprano, tenor saxophone, flute; Roman Schwaller, tenor saxophone; Christian Radovan, trombone; John Sass, tuba; Woody Schabata, marimba, vibes; Uli Scherer, piano, electric piano, Yamaha DX7; Heiri Kaenzig, bass; Joris Dudli, Wolfgang Reisinger, percussion, drums; Erich Dorfinger, sound; Mathias Rüegg, leader, composer, arranger.

* * * * *

What is it about Europe? Do cup mutes, trombone slides, and saxophone slings grow on trees? Europe is a hothouse for large multinational ensembles in the "green eighties;" green as in growth not green as in inexperience. The Willem Breuker Kollektief, Misha Mengelberg's ICP Orchestra, and the Globe Unity Orchestra, along with the Vienna Art Orchestra and Pierre Dørge's New Jungle Orchestra, all renew and redefine the big band a la Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, and

Sun Ra. These units aspire to a European identity through the grafting of many musical forms besides jazz American style.

The Vienna Art Orchestra (VAO) has lightly altered its approach in the course of five "boxes" on the hat Art label. Perpetuum Mobile, a well-programmed set recorded live in 1985, is nearly indistinguishable from its highstandard predecessors—but that is nothing to worry about. Mathias Rüegg again plants variously elegant permutations in his compositions and arrangements, such as the speedup/slow-down "walking" variations on Woodworms, which poke fun at limiting ideas about iazz. Sections and soloists bring a preciseness to Rüegg's intelligent fantasies for big band that we have heard from them before. But Perpetuum introduces new elements too. Lauren Newton, whose voice gives the ensembles a hallucinatory treble edge, justifies her double features (Lady Delay and Voices), a VAO milestone. And electronic keyboards appear for the first time, their fresh textures complementing the bending after unlikely sounds of Newton's extended vocals.

Perpetuum Mobile lives up to its name, uncomfortable for long with any set style—whether festive rhythms from contrapuntal funk to shuffle (French Alphorn), or the ravishing progression from tone-color-melody to carnival percussion (Voices). Finding true content only within change, it capitalizes on the sort of jump cut mobility associated with smaller-sized ensembles.

The linking devices and head-turning segués of the VAO are influenced by Charles Mingus and the early electric Miles, among other sources. Sighs, the opening selection, blossoms toward cool swagger on one side and cool impressionism on the other. Reappearing brass and reed combinations of showbiz loudness uproot the dreaminess of early Weather Report-sounding interludes for sopranino and electric piano (replaced later by marimba), so that you almost miss the toocool ride cymbal bridging both moods. (Presto! The transformations are far from over.) Hammering downbeats for ensemble set free a swirling Kansas City saxophone collective tapering into an alto and piano-then ensemble-blues of (Gil) Evans-escence.

VAO's dazzling mutations spare the listener rigid formulas most big bands live by. Still, when flugelhornist Herbert Joos reads 'Round Midnight straight for the melody and related variations, we are reminded this green aggregation sustains growth from within the tradition too.

The New Jungle Orchestra (NJO) sounds less mutative and less flip in comparison. NJO plows the soil of global music for inspiration. It projects a stronger emotional relationship with their material, where the VAO expresses detachment. Led by young Danish guitarist and composer Pierre Dørge, its earthy sounds are a universal hybrid that set you off dancing regardless of your national or cultural background.

Even The Moon Is Dancing is the most ambitious and memorable of three NJO albums. On side one, traditional and contemporary Africa meet, and so do instruments and techniques by the bushel. Updating and Af-

ricanizing The Mooche, Ellington's circa 1929 composition for jungle orchestra (an NJO namesake?), Dørge the conductor balances a fertile succession of opposing yet sympathetic strains. Brass growls and steamy reed smears set against suspended synthesized chords; brief tonal-to-free solos set against African drumming. Closing out the vividly rich orchestration, a second Mooche theme salutes the Duke with period-correct choke cymbal and two contrabasses, including the rootsy "talking" bass of Johnny Dyani. Contemporary African pop is opened to improvisation on Suho Ning Samo. A celebratory ostinato, spacious melodic intervals, and a bright Mandinkan vocal chorus precede Dørge's ringing guitar lines. His solo captures the essence of African plectrists, though not without some Wes Montgomery octaves and free fretwork for good measure. Morten Carlsen's solo for taragot (wooden soprano horn) prolongs Suho's elation. And Bambla rounds out the side with a more radically reinterpreted Africa of Monk-like harmonic tartness, evolving from free designs to another solid ostinato.

Even The Moon's nonstop celebration (excepting the tender commemorative ballad A Rose) culminates in the title composition. Its inverted St. Thomas head inspires lengthy solos, charged band riffs, unaccompanied asides, and a concluding reprise of The Mooche. NJO's disciplined looseness combined with the players' interpretive zeal may borrow from sundry sources, Dørge seems to say, but the global circle closes with Ellington.

What is it about Europe? Greenness, whether VAO's or NJO's, bursts into deeper green. These sounds move you, feet to mind.

—peter kostakis



GOLDEN PALOMINOS

VISIONS OF EXCESS—Celluloid 6118: BOY (GO); CLUSTERING TRAIN; OMAHA; THE ANIMAL SPEAKS; SILVER BULLET; (KIND OF) TRUE; BUENOS AIRES; ONLY ONE PARTY.

Personnel: Anton Fier, drums, DMX, percussion; Bill Laswell, bass; Jody Harris, Richard Thompson (cuts 1, 5-7), Mike Hampton (2), Henry Kaiser (3), Nicky Skopelitis (7), guitar; Chris Stamey, guitar, piano, vocals (1-3, 6); Arto Lindsay, guitar, vocals (8); Bernie Worrell (1, 2, 4, 5), Carla Bley (7), Hammond organ; Michael Stipe (1-3), John Lydon (4), Syd Straw (1, 5-7), vocals; Jack Bruce, vocals, harp (5).

* * * *

The Golden Palominos—14 diverse mavericks studio-corraled by group mastermind/drummer Anton Fier—thunder rock & roll on *Visions*

Of Excess as if they'd been handed down Led Zeppelin's duty of inspiring adolescents to bang their young heads against the wall in 4/4 time. The Palominos are a wily bunch and their brontosaurus stomps come seasoned with an arty quirkiness that surely scares off the hardmetal throng. The album, then, is an offbeat hard-rock experiment by respectful hipsters out to have some fun.

Arranger/producer Fier has various singers and guitarists assert their identities above the crunch socked out by bassist Bill Laswell, guitarslinger Jody Harris, and his own drum thunder. Michael Stipe, on loan from R.E.M., dreamily cadences the fanciful words of Boy (Go) as Richard Thompson snakes patented folk-modal guitar in and out of the song. The singing conjurer whips up a more overt passion in Clustering Train while ex-Funkadelic Mike Hampton unleashes brutish guitar riffs and power chords to the others' crashing-anvil encouragement. Stipe's final contribution is to the remarkable version of Moby Grape's Omaha, which features renegade Henry Kaiser's inside-out guitar manipulations.

Elsewhere, little-known vocalist Syd Straw lends airiness to elusive love songs (Kind Of) True and Buenos Aires, her aching tenor providing effective contrast to the insensate song bottoms. Former Sex Pistol John Lydon rants his way through burning-down-the-house The Animal Speaks and avant-rocker Arto Lindsay assails ears with dissonant guitar and singing in Only One Party. Also, perennially strongvoiced Jack Bruce leads the Palominos down the much-traveled blues-rock trail on Silver Bullet

At times the Palominos are reminiscent of several past and present bands: R.E.M. (Boy), Robin Lane & the Chartbusters (True), Cream/ Jack Bruce Band (Bullet), you-pick-'em psychedelic groups (Train), Sex Pistols (Animal), Moby Grape, Led Zep, Derek & the Dominos, Groundhogs... This is all well and good—the record holds my interest from start to finishbut the Golden Palominos pack their strongest punch when they evoke their own past, when old hands Fier, Laswell, and Lindsay create fascinating, startingly novel avant garde-rock on the order of Only One Party.

-frank-john hadley



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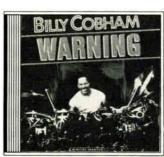


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RECORD REVIEWS



BIRELI LAGRENE

LIVE—Jazzpoint 1015: Bireli; Minor Swing; Spain; Paris; Rue De Pierre; Ornithologie; Sim; St. Germain Des Pres; The Night Of A Champion; I Can't Give You Anything But Love; Moll-Blues.

Personnel: Lagrene, Vic Juris, Garti Lagrene, Diz Disley, guitar; Jan Jankeje, bass.



DJANGO'S MUSIC VOL. I—Stash 253: BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA; PORTO CABELLO; MELODIE AU CREPUSCULE; DJANGOLOGY; VAMP; MICRO; HONEYSUCKLE ROSE; SWEET CHORUS; NUITS DE ST. GERMAIN DES PRES. Personnel: Lagrene, acoustic guitar (cuts 2, 4); Bob Wilber (1-5), clarinet, alto, saprano saxophone; Randy Sandke, trumpet; Herb Gardner, trombone; Bob Kindred, clarinet, tenor saxophone; Tony Regusis, piano; Bill Conway, bass; Ed Soph, Ed Stockmal (6), drums; Mike Peters, auitar.



BOULOU/ELOIS FERRE

RELAX AND ENJOY—SteepleChase 1210: PENT UP HOUSE; BODY AND SOUL; CON ALMA; RELAX AND ENJOY; 'ROUND MIDNIGHT; CELUI QUI DOIT VENIR.

Personnel: Boulou Ferre, Elois Ferre, acoustic guitar; Jesper Lundgaard, bass; Ed Thigpen, drums.



STRUNZ & FARAH

GUITARRAS — Milestone 9136: CURANDERO (HEALER); CHUMASH; SUENOS (DREAMS), PART I & II; ZAMBALERA; TROPICO; TALISMAN; THE FEATHERED SERPENT; MIRAGE.

Personnel: Jorge Strunz, Ardeshir Farah, Omaya al'Ghanim (2), guitar; Luis Conte, Miguel Cruz, percussion; Hugo Pedroza, charango; Ashish Khan, sarod; Hayadeh, vocal (9); Majid Ghorbani, dombak, percussion (9).



Acoustic guitar is following the "comeback" made by acoustic piano, and those who have learned from gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt and country-swing exponents are experiencing well-deserved "dawg" days. Champions of the hour from the former camp are led by a little child in these days of youth cult—that scruffy wunderkind of the gypsies Bireli Lagrene, who at 13 was able to mimic the master's sailing, duende-drenched lines with alarming detail

and panache. What's more, the Third World is entering the picture, not just with European gypsies like the Ferre brothers, but with unusual international mixes such as Jorge Strunz and Ardeshir Farah.

Lagrene has been playing the circuit and stretching his frontiers as he matures swiftly. and guitarist Mike Peters got him to sit in for a couple of the classics by Reinhardt that make up much of the book of his active New York swing ensemble named for and inspired by Django's own small band. This is a bright straight-up swing set, featuring seven short Reinhardt tunes, plus the opening Devil and a jam on Waller's Honeysuckle Rose. Bechetophile Bob Wilber excels in varying Melodie on his purly curved soprano and trombonist Herb Gardner gets a few gruff spots, while ensembles are crisp and neat. Leader Peters comps well, and on his tinny, crabbed solo track (Micro) bristles with Djangonian ideas. Lagrene's short but uplifting slots come on the speedy B section of Porto and the opening of Djangology.

On the live date—nearly an hour recorded hollowly before an adoring French concert hall crowd-Lagrene branches into extended bluesy improvisation more in the Hot Club of France quintet aspect of Django's playing (substitute Grappelli's rhythm guitarist Diz Disley for his fiddle). Opposite is Vic Juris, a long way from his fusion experiments with Barry Miles in the '70s, a capable foil with much chops and a flair for composition. The best originals on the date are his Bireli, a ripping unison line that starts things off bravely, and Sim, a lilting waltz. The finest playing is Lagrene's-unleashing those amazing, bigger-than-life long-limbed lines at breakneck speed with controlled passion. The plethora of plectra gather a mad momentum—the chugging train on Spain nearly goes runaway—and there's a hasty, jumpy, almost mugging quality about it all; like the Marx Brothers, it's guitarists' shtick.

The Ferres show a manic energy too, serving up their strongly individualistic interpretations of jazz standards with raucous abandon. Hearing Pent Up House and Body And Soul by these guys is like drinking too much rustic country red wine: the unbridled dissonances set your teeth on edge like tannin, and the unsettled awkward approach to melody can give you a big head in the morning. Sometimes the ensembles border on chaos, not helped by the bizarrely re-tuned strings, so that even ex-Oscar Peterson drummer Ed Thigpen has no place to go. Yet, a 12-minute 'Round Midnight has an exotic, ringing conviction to it, like the haunting cembalom in Orson Welles' Third Man. And Dizzy's Con Alma is intrepid, sinewy. Belly up, drink up, and hope for the best.

The Farah/Strunz connection is very Third World, no surprise with the principals hailing from Iran and Agentina. The similar selections are mainly heated vamp patterns for the very chop-wise guitars, lead and rhythm, embellished with Peruvian pipes, congas, muezzin chant, finger cymbals, Middle Eastern stringed instruments, and other ethnic elements, but the main thrust is fiery flamenco. Improvisation—primarily in the form of tightly curled embellishments—takes a back set to

theme and arrangement, not a hot predisposition with this writer. As a background for an international buffet, this record provides heat without ardor (like sterno), and leaves one with neither potent nourishment nor lingering aftertastes.

—fred bouchard



PETE TOWNSHEND

WHITE CITY: A NOVEL—Atco 90473-1: GIVE BLOOD; BRILLIANT BLUES; FACE THE FACE; HIDING OUT; SECONDHAND LOVE; CRASHING BY DESIGN; I AM SECURE; WHITE CITY FIGHTING; COME TO MAMA.

Personnel: Townshend, guitars, vocals; Pino Palladino, bass; Clem Burke, David Gilmour, guitar; Simon Phillips, drums; Simon Clarke, Roddy Lorimer, Dave Sanders, Tim Sanders, Peter Thoms, horns; Jackie Challenor, Mae McKenna, Lorenza Johnson, Emma Townshend, vocals.



Ever since his 10-minute mini-opera, A Quick One, from the 1966 Who album of the same name, Pete Townshend has shown a predilection for the grandiose. He has penned many an opus along the way, most notably the two-record set Tommy, released in 1969 and made into a movie in 1975. His solo outings have been less successful, though no less ambitious than his work with the Who.

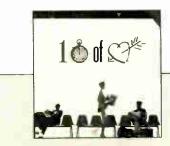
This recent Townshend release is perhaps the best thing he's done outside of the mother band since his fine album *Empty Glass*. It's certainly more upbeat, catchy, and urgent than 1984's melancholy and pessimistic *All The Best Cowboys Have Chinese Eyes*. In fact, much of it is as fresh as early Who.

Of his fellow countrymen and contemporaries (Mick Jagger, Paul McCartney, Eric Clapton, David Gilmour, Dave Davies), Townshend consistently takes more chances and often comes up with the most interesting results. A tendency to concern himself with matters spiritual has been his downfall on occasion (at least in terms of record sales), but the music he produces is never cliche, always challenging.

Apart from his literate, thinking man's approach to rock on White City, the best thing here is the rhythm tandem of drummer Simon Phillips and bassist Pino Palladino. They positively smoke on Give Blood and Face The Face, providing a thick foundation for Townshend's urgent vocals and layered guitar work. A hot Little Walter-esque harmonica solo (by whom?) and punchy horn accents (courtesy of the Kick Horns) give Face The Face particular hit ap-

peal.

Townshend doesn't brandish much axe here. A bit on the snappy Crashing By Design and the vampy Secondhand Love. But this is no guitar hero album. It's a finely crafted poprock project, heavy on hip harmonies and enigmatic lyrics. Throw in some hooks (Brilliant Blues), add a dash of Caribbean spice (Hiding Out), build up a Springsteen-like head of steam (Come To Mama), temper with some sensitive acoustic guitar troubadour fare (I Am Secure) and you have a highly ambitious, thought-provoking, and ultimately listenable LP. Who cohort Roger Daltry hasn't come anywhere near this effort in his last two solo outings. In fact, he's got a long way to go to even be seriously considered alongside the likes of such an accomplished rock composer as Townshend -bill milkowski



ROCHESTER/VEASLEY BAND

ONE MINUTE OF LOVE—Gramavision 8505-1: Showtime; Secret Weapon; Beat Bop; Tokyo Strut; The Feeling; One Minute Of Love; Give It To Me; Art Of Seduction; The Struggle (FREE SOUTH AFRICA).

Personnel: Cornell Rochester, drums; Gerald Veasley, bass, vocals; Willie Williams, tenor, soprano saxophone; Uri Caine, keyboards; Gene Terramani, guitar; James "Blood" Ulmer, guitar (cut 9); John Zorn, alto saxophone (7).



Prompted by Europeans' enthusiastic response to festival appearances with saxophonist Odean Pope, Philadelphian musicians Cornell Rochester and Gerald Veasley have formed a home-town group and worked out an eccentric amalgam of jazz, rock, and funk. This futuristic debut album, which explodes with rascally abandon and myriad sonic surprises, encourages spin-and-crash dance moves at the same time it invites dancing in your head. Their beat-bop, propelled in part by





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Record Reviews

harmolodics, has pop outreach and the capacity to appeal to assorted progressive-music camps

Powerful funk-drenched rhythms are the hallmark of the electrifying quintet's sound. Veasley keeps his electric bass clear of cliche; his saucy lines and fragmentations rumble forth to telling effect, revealing a kinship of sorts to premier bass-frontiersman Jamaaladeen Tacuma. Drummer Rochester, an alumnus of bands led by Blood Ulmer and Tacuma. shows a superabundance of technical skill and physical might, pounding out simple or complex patterns as if he were a musically inclined giant flailing enormous oil cans with clubs. Servile synthesizers and electric guitar. by Uri Caine and Gene Terramani respectively, provide additional lightning. Saxophonist Willie Williams' place in the funk swirl is less clear, only his wild jazz break-out in The Struggle makes a mark.

With the glaring exception of the weakkneed ballad Art Of Seduction, where composer Veasley seems in thrall of ex-employer Grover Washington, the Rochester/Veasley band pursues its crunching aural assault with no quarter given. Showtime strays into harmolodic territory, Veasley's jokey rap at odds with the crazily serious music. Secret Weapon spoofs edgy spy movie soundtracks while pulsing with an urgency that's startling—experience the bass' searing dynamism. The players' independent-yet-together lines on Beat Bop make for a fascinating romp and Tokyo Strut charges forward with its Nipponese melodic motif, interestingly mixed rhythms and unabashed rock spirit.

Despite the ludicrous funk come-on of Give It To Me, the aforementioned Art Of Seduction, and guest Blood Ulmer being denied enough room to get untracked in The Struggle, avant-pop dandies Rochester and Veasley's allbum is one of the season's unexpected, small triumphs.

—Irank-john hadley

that two of pianist Keith Jarrett's recent albums have been composed of standards, and we now also have an offering of standards from JoAnne Brackeen, another innovator who, temporarily at least, has returned to the common language of the keyboard.

To be sure, in recording this album Brackeen has not given up the essential elements of her style. As usual, her bent is rhythmically and tonally complex, as her deft touch fastens elastic phrases joined into intricate webs, spun by her own noiseless, patient spider. Brackeen's filaments of thought are, as always, wonderfully counter and strange and unreeled by a first-rate musical intelligence. And like a series of well-spun webs, Brackeen's mainstream-like designs hang in a delicate balance apportioned between emotionally charged vehicles, light swingers, and more languid material. As usual, all of Brackeen's work is informed by her fine sense of drama and integrity.

For example, consider her relentless romp through Cole Porter's *Just One Of Those Things*, a 10-finger balancing act. Yet, she never gives the impression that she is grand-standing. Instead, she seems to be unraveling these lines for a higher purpose, a sensation that is only partially quelled by this track's unhandy board fadeout.

Another balancing act is I've Got The World On A String, done in a laidback, fittingly euphoric groove which is teased along by Cecil McBee's fat, rich tone and Al Foster's snappy drumming. This is a performance which reminds us what the word sassy is all about. Thinking Of You is a study in nonchalance, whose intricate, never-snarled lines are helped along by McBee's taut statements. And just as Brackeen can play forcefully without hammering, so can she play pretty without tinkling. Emily, the Mercer/Mandel waltz, points this up; a long, pleasantly meandering introduction leads into the theme's statement, and even Brackeen's throwaway melodic embellishments seem graced with a certainty of pur-

While no single release will return us to the mainstream, this resourceful invention represents yet another reassessment of our tribal language of standards, and an intricate and welcome design it is.

—jon balleras



JOANNE BRACKEEN

HAVIN' FUN—Concord Jazz 280: THINKING OF YOU; I'VE GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING; EMILY; JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS; THIS IS ALWAYS; EVERYTHING SHE WANTS; MANHA DE CARNAVAL; DAY BY DAY.

Personnel: Brackeen, piano; Cecil McBee, bass; Al Foster, drums.



A recent **db** On The Beat (Nov. '85) suggested that the next movement in jazz may be a return to the mainstream. To add support for this idea from the keyboard arena, one might point out

BILL FRISELL/ VERNON REID

SMASH & SCATTERATION—Minor Music 005: Landscapes In Alternative History; Size 10 1/2 Sneaks; Amarillo, Barbados; Last Nights Of Paris; Burden Of Dreams; Dark Skin; Fr, Fr, Frisell; Small Hands; Black Light.

Personnel: Frisell, Roland GR-300 guitar synthesizer, Gibson electric guitar, Ovation acoustic guitar, Electro-Harmonix delay, DX drums; Reid, Steinberger guitar, Roland GR-700 guitar synthesizer, Korg Poly 800 synthesizer, Stratocaster electric guitar, six-string banjo, Les Paul electric guitar, DX drums.



An unlikely pairing, given Decoding Society axeman Reid's penchant for frenzied psyche-

delia and heavy-duty free-lancer Frisell's more ethereal nature. But the two guitarists make their differences work to their advantage on this highly eclectic, experimental package.

There have been numerous examples in recent years of such two-man shows (Fred Frith/Henry Kaiser on Who Needs Enemies, Robert Quine/Fred Maher on Basic, Robert Fripp/Andy Summers on Bewitched), where kindred spirits link up with with drum machines and find happiness through multiple overdubbing. Some have been more successful than others, dependent upon the team's adeptness at programming drum computers. While the Quine/Maher contingent had a distinct advantage in that department (Maher being a drummer as weil as a guitarist), the Frisell/Reid team suffers somewhat.

But drum programs are not the issue here. What Frisell and Reid lack in rhythmic grounding they make up for in sheer sonic inventiveness and an exuberance that permeates their music. At times they sound like two kids turned loose in a roomful of toys, and these boys are loaded with toys.

There are a few different bags on Smash & Scatteration. Landscapes In Alternative History and Dark Skin, both Reid's, rely on polyrhythmic funk vamps as a base for wicked, insane soloing. He gets off an especially stratospheric solo on Dark Skin, which sounds like George Clinton and the Funkadelics meet John McLaughlin and Mahavishnu.

On the eccentric side is Frisell's buoyant Size 10 1/2 Sneaks, a giddy little ditty with Frisell on prepared acoustic guitar and Reid on six-string banjo, locked in tuneful ostinato while Frisell overlays manic lead lines-Pete Seeger meets Frippertronics. Another oddity is Reid's Last Nights Of Paris, a Djangoesque romp with acoustic guitar and banjo. And Frisell's Tex-Mex-ish ballad, Amarillo, Barbados, would sound right at home in some cantina south of the border. Frisell shows his penchant for haunting melodies on the very evocative Small Hands, but on the other side of the coin is Black Light, a doomsday dirge that would serve nicely as a soundtrack for the apocalypse.

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CRITICS' CHOICE

Art Lange

New Release: Art Pepper, *More For Les* (Contemporary). Though the last decade of his life produced his most uneven as well as most adventurous playing, this fourth volume from a '77 Village Vanguard date provides enough jolts of inspired abandon to keep Pepper's reputation alive

OLD FAVORITE: Wayne Shorter, Schizophrenia (Blue Note). Extended sextet charts and the ever-underrated James Spaulding's squirting alto, added to Shorter's transcendent tenor, highlight this often overlooked session.

RARA Avis: Cootie Williams, *The Boys From Harlem* (Swaggie). Australia offers this set of '37-40 Ellington small group gems; Hodges, Bigard, Carney, and the Ducal piano make major contributions, no less than the nominal leader's regal trumpet.

Scene: AACM president/reedman Douglas Ewart's Clarinet Choir (including Mwata Bowden, Edward Wilkerson, and Ernest Dawkins) explored the emotional and technical limits of this neglected horn, at a Chicago Filmmakers recital.

Jim Roberts

New Release: Muhal Richard Abrams, *View From Within* (Black Saint). A brilliant, wideranging album from the pianist/composer who led the way in showing how to use the whole tradition as a palette for new works. Stanton Davis stands out on trumpet, especially on the deep blues *Down At Pepper's*.

OLD FAVORITE: The Meters, Cissy Strut (Island). A "Best Of" collection of their early material, this LP (or any of the several similar compilations) is an education in groovemaking.

RARA Avis: Pete Christlieb/Warne Marsh, Apogee (Warner Bros.). This uninhibited '78 date, produced by Walter Becker and Donald Fagen, paired straightahead swinger Christlieb with the sublime Tristano-inspired Marsh for some great tenor battles.

Scene: A two-hour tardy Albert Collins unleashed a *Frosty* blast in the cramped, sweltering confines of the Iron Horse in Northampton, MA. It was worth the wait.

Michael Bourne

New Release: Various Artists, *American Popular Song* (Smithsonian). Bing, Fred, Nat, Tony, Frank, Judy, Ella, Sarah, Lena, Billie, and then some: 60 years, 14 sides, 62 singers, 110 songs, countless musical wonders—all in one box.

OLD FAVORITE: Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers, 3 *Blind Mice* (UA Jazz). The best session (live in Hollywood in '62) of the best edition of Messengers: Jymie Meritt, Cedar Walton, Curtis Fuller, Wayne Shorter, and Freddie Hubbard blowing the *Blue*-est *Moon* ever.

RARA Avis: Tango Argentino at Broadway's Mark Hellinger Theater. A celebration of the world's most fiercely romantic music, with heart-bursting singers, bandoneons gasping the breath of life, and the most dangerous-looking (and sexy) dancers anywhere.

Scene: The Mystery Of Edwin Drood at the Imperial Theater on Broadway. The musical Rupert Holmes (The Pina Colada Song) adapted from the unfinished Dickens novel, complete with murder, lust, all the fun of an English music hall—and the audience votes who dunnit.

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Record Reviews

Something Borrowed, Something New

Some folks see this era of musical retrenchment as proof that leading younger players have (finally) rejected the ideas of the '60s avant-garde. But for many of these young lions and neo-classicists, free jazz and its offshoots are key if not dominant elements in new and inclusive styles which draw on workable ideas from every phase of the music. As exploratory players seek a greater sense of form, so do neo-boppers seek escape from the grind of endless strings of solos. Where both schools converge, the music often harks back to the '50s/transitional and '60s/hybrid units that first bridged bop, modal, and free styles: the Mingus and Roach combos, which tinkered with standard blowing formats, and used "spare" horns to back soloists; Coltrane's later groups, which married modal and free approaches; and the more radical Blue Note pickup assemblies.

But these younger musicians incorporate post-Ornette/structuralist strains routinely denounced by conservative critics, too. One or two high-profile buttoned-down types aside, players now in their 20s and 30s aren't much affected by the divisive debates of 25 years ago. Why should they be? The alleged 'dead ends' of modal and free music have been around all or most of their lives.

Most significant of the albums surveyed here is the Steve Coleman Group's Motherland Pulse (JMT 850001), for the way altoist Coleman reconciles post-Dolphy "square" and conventionally swinging "round" rhythmic concepts. He can borrow Braxton's precise articulation and dour stance, and still swing like a demon (Irate Blues), or display a breathy, lustrous ballad style that belies his tender age (On This). Wights Wait For Weights and The Glide Was In The Ride suspend Coleman's singing alto over a paradoxical, gracefully lurching rhythm section: new piano whiz Geri Allen, bassist Lonnie Plaxico, and drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith, who works with Coleman in Dave Holland's group. (Drummer Mark Johnson and trumpeter Graham Haynes make guest appearances.) But the best thing here is a lean reading of a twisting Afram art song, No Good Time Fairies-oozed by sultryvoiced Cassandra Wilson-which betrays an obvious and happy debt to Mingus

The **Dennis Gonzalez/John Purcell 8tet**'s Little Toot (Daagnim 13) unites for the second time the Texas-based trumpet/flugel man and the New York-based multi-reedist—two players whose fat instrumental sounds have plenty of presence. They're joined in this pianoless unit by a trio of well-deployed auxiliary horn players: Ron Blakeslee on brass, Jim Sangrey and Rob Ackerman on reeds. On the funky Hymn For Rivers and the gospel tune Hear Our Prayer, a choir of horns

swells up behind gutsy tenors, on the former, and Pat Peterson's fervent vocal, on the latter—as well as diving into collective squalling on both. The massed-horn sound on Dos Cosas, an old mariachi love song, is borowed from Special Edition (with whom Purcell sometimes works); on the title track, the sour, floating horns and Henry Franklin's walking bass recall the Art Ensemble of Chicago. (Drummer W. A. Richardson completes the group.) With so many borrowings from other groups and genres, Little Toot might have become a patchwork sampler, but this ad hoc group listens carefully enough to sound like a band.

That failure to attain a group identity mars the Herb Robertson Quintet's Transparency (JMT 850002), even with the participation of such striking players as guitarist Bill Frisell and altoist Tim Berne. (Lindsey Horner and Joey Baron play bass and drums.) As on previous LPs under Berne's leadership, Robertson reveals multiple musical personalities. Here, he plays mulled flugelhorn, clipped mute trumpet, raggy or piercing open horns, airy squeals and lowdown growls. The album's a fine showcase for Robertson's versatility, techniques, and expressive range; he's a classic do-it-all young player. But in search of appropriate settings, Robertson veers all over the map, from a pastoral waltz, drones, and a pointillistic meander, to the freebopping Flocculus, a charming latin bounce, and a brooding Little Ditty. Not even the last three, superb as they are, quite make up for

Drummer Mike Stephans' quintet Seventh Avenue—with Bob Ojeda and Bob Sheppard on horns, and Tom Garvin on piano—is the most conservative unit here, primarily in a modal-bop blowing vein. But as a working group—together two years when Heads Up (ITI 022) was recorded—they conscientiously vary solo orders, melody voicings, and ensemble density. (John Patitucci's bass leads off on Heads Up, for example, and duo exchanges are common.) Their case is the opposite of Robertson's: none of these unfailingly fluent players has a strikingly original sound, but their plainly apparent collective rapport makes up for that.

the album's lack of focus.

The Horizon Quintet, on Gumbo (Amigo 851), covers similar material, with fewer organizational quirks, but with heavier hitters: drummer Marvin "Smitty" Smith, new trumpet dynamo Melton Mustafa, and the co-leaders. bassist Curtis Lundy and ex-Messenger Robert Watson. Coltrane's once-pervasive influence is present, but only in disguise, masked as it is by tangy latin rhythms. Pianist Mularew Miller is out of the Tyner camp, but a distinctive player nonetheless: the way he and Lundy lock bass lines gives the ensemble a solid foundation. Hamiet Bluiett adds a gruff modernist presence to the title track. But it's Blakey's old musical director Watson -with skittery soprano on From East To West. and hoarse alto on Wheel Within A Wheelwho makes the most of the freedom the new musical climate allows. It's the freedom to appropriate whatever ideas he likes, old prejuon this eclectic LP are the solo showcases. Reid's *Burden Of Dreams* and Frisell's *Fr, Fr, Frisell* (both, amazingly, recorded live with no overdubs) are excellent examples of technology tempered with taste, chops, and imagination. Let these boys keep their toys.

—bill milkowski



GANELIN TRIO

NON TROPPO—hat Art 2027: ANCORA DA CAPO; NON TROPPO.

Personnel: Vyocheslav Gonelin, piano, bosset, Casio, electric guitar, trumpet, wooden flute, percussian; Vlodimir-Chekasin, alto, tenor saxophone, clarinet, boss clarinet, oboe, trombone, violin, percussion; Vlodimir Tarosov, drums, percussion.

* * *

CON AFFETTO—Le@ 137: SEMPLICE; 1st ENCORE
(MACK THE KNIFE); 2ND ENCORE; 3RD ENCORE.

Personnel: Same as obove.

BALTIC TRIANGLE—Leo 125: BALTIC TRIANGLE; MACK THE KNIFE; SUMMERTIME; RUSSIAN KADDISH. Personnel: Some as above.

The Ganelin Trio's self-described "lyrical avant garde" brand of jazz has evolved incrementally over the course of 13 years and 15 albums, few of which have been published by Melodiya, the state-operated label in their native USSR. Their modus operandi of lacing diverse materialsanything from baroque musings to mach-force free jazz-together in suites by such simple means as a rhythmic pulse or, as in Baltic Triangle, a C Major chord, has progressively become more seamless. The chronology of the four suites considered here bears this out to an extent: Con Affetto was recorded in '83; Non Troppo (formerly released on Enja 4036) in '82; Baltic Triangle in '81; and Ancora Da Capo in '80. Through their suites, the Ganelin Trio aspires to nothing less than balancing a classical sense of structure and a gut-level approach to swing. All conservatory-trained, the Trio has the skills, intuition, and passion to make such a proposition succeed on the strongest terms. They don't always; but even their near-misses brim with exhilarating intensity.

Ancora Da Capo and Baltic Triangle are two such near misses. The former suffers from rough transitions and lengthy segments that say little. Throughout the first half, engaging materials—Vyacheslav Ganelin's Bleyish metabop; Vladimir Chekasin's careening clarinet cresting on a groundswell of piano.

-kevin whitehead

dices notwithstanding.

and Vladimir Tarasov's magneto-like drumming—are truncated by often discursive color investigations. After a thunderous reading of a tedious two-chord figure and the piece's most flaccid "little instruments" interlude, the trio recapitulates the highlights of the first half: Ganelin makes impressive use of the basset (keyboard bass) in propelling his boppish reprise, and Chekasin unleashes his tenor for a fiery finale. Baltic Triangle sidesteps these pacing problems, but fails to introduce any materials comparable to the best moments of Ancora, relying instead on a thicker, more constant rhythmic flow and a more flexible structure in the mutative C Major chord leitmotif.

Non Troppo and Semplice fare better for similar reasons: the auxillary instruments—particularly Ganelin's guitar shimmers on Non Troppo—are integrated more seamlessly within the body of the work. This is especially true on Semplice—featuring a bracing shuffle in the mode of Keith Jarrett's quartet with Dewey Redman—where there is a greater distinction between swing and intensity; the portions of Chekasin's exciting double-saxophone technique and his scathing humour (the Mack The Knife on Con Affetto is more riotous than the Baltic Triangle version because of his gravitation towards a growling, pre-bop personae on Semplice) are more ample.

The novelty of their nationality catapulted the Ganelin Trio to prominent attention in the Western jazz press. The merits of their music and their musicianship assures continued attention. These albums don't present the group at their strongest, however. —bill shoemaker

trumpet; Vic Dickenson, trombone; James P. Johnson, piano; Jimmy Shirley, guitar; Crosby, bass: Sid Catlett, drums. Ed Hall All-Star Quintet: Hall, clarinet; Red Norvo, vibes; Teddy Wilson, piano; Carl Kress, guitar; John Williams, bass. James P. Johnson Blue Note Jazzmen: Ben Webster, tenor saxophone; DeParis, trumpet; Dickenson, trombone; Johnson, piano; Shirley, guitar; John Simmons, bass; Catlett, drums. Ed Hall Swingtet: Hall, clarinet; Harry Carney, baritone saxophone; Benny Morton, trombone; Don Frye, piano; Everett Barksdale, guitar; Alvin Raglin, bass; Catlett, drums. Sidney DeParis Blue Note Jazzmen: Hall, clarinet; DeParis, trumpet; Dickenson, trombone; Johnson, piano; Shirley, guitar; Simmons, bass; Catlett, drums. Johnson Blue Note Jazzmen: Hall, clarinet; DeParis, trumpet; Dickenson, trombone; Johnson, piano; Shirley, guitar; Al Lucas, bass; Al Trapper, drums. Sidney DeParis Blue Note Stompers: Omer Simeon, clarinet; DeParis, trumpet; Jimmy Archy, trombone; Bob Green, piano; Pops Foster, bass; Joe Smith, drums. Vic Dickenson Quartet: Dickenson, trombone; Bill Doggett, organ; John Collins, bass; Jo Jones, drums.

* * * * 1

Any "complete" collection of anything is bound to have a few Ethiopians in the woodpile. And this compilation of Blue Note sides made by Ed Hall, James P. Johnson, Sidney DeParis, and

Vic Dickenson gets no waiver on that. One of the set's 12 sides gives us five sleepy Vic Dickenson numbers. Even Jo Jones can't lift these up. The culprit is Bill Doggett's tired, plodding organ work, which is a tin can tied to the tails of both Dickenson and Jones. Also, seven Sidney DeParis Stompers cuts are a bit too huffy, puffy, and fundamentalist in their outlook. The somewhat formal ensembles are more characteristic of various Wilbur DeParis bands than those of brother Sidney.

On the other hand, a complete collection deserves ultimately to be judged by its best, not its worst, elements. And as a compendium of Edmond Hall, this set has no peer. (To complete the picture, don't overlook Hall's 1944 performances on Commodore/CBS 15356.) Hall reached his peak on these sides. This is one album of "traditional" jazz I would venture to recommend to those who insist they don't like such music-or more important haven't had the chance to hear the best of it. Here is music free of the cliches of formulaic traditional jazz because it's performed by musicians contemporary with the 1940s, not actors or archeologists. In fact, "traditional" is hardly the word for this music. It is small group swing which sometimes happens to have a traditional front line. This gives it, if not exactly a modern texture, a thoroughly mainstream one with an abundance of variety.

It's hard to know what to single out first.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

THE COMPLETE BLUE NOTE RECORDINGS OF EDMOND HALL/JAMES P. JOHNSON/SIDNEY DEPARIS/VIC DICKENSON-Mosaic 6-109: JAMIN' IN FOUR; EDMOND HALL BLUES; PRO-FOUNDLY BLUE (TWO TAKES); CELESTIAL EXPRESS; J.P. BOOGIE; BACKWATER BLUES; CAROLINA BALMORAL; GUT STOMP; MULE WALK; ARKANSAS BLUES; CA-PRICE RAG; IMPROVISATION ON PINETOP'S BOOGIE; HIGH SOCIETY (THREE TAKES); BLUES AT BLUE NOTE (TWO TAKES); NIGHT SHIFT BLUES (TWO TAKES); ROYAL GARDEN BLUES (TWO TAKES); BLUE NOTE BOOGIE; ROMPIN' IN 44 (TWO TAKES); BLUE INTER-VAL; SMOOTH SAILING (TWO TAKES); SEEIN' RED; BLUE MIZZ (TWO TAKES); VICTORY STRIDE (TWO TAKES); JOY MENTIN'; AFTER YOU'VE GONE; IT'S BEEN SO LONG (TWO TAKES); I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME (TWO TAKES); BIG CITY BLUES: STEAMIN' AND BEAMIN'; EVERYBODY LOVES MY BABY (TWO TAKES); WHO'S SORRY NOW (TWO TAKES); BALLIN' THE JACK; CALL OF THE BLUES; TISHOMINGO BLUES (TWO TAKES); WALKING THE DOG (TWO TAKES); EASY RIDER; AT THE BALL (TWO TAKES); WHEN YOU WORE A TULIP (TWO TAKES); MOOSE MARCH; PANAMA; PLEASE DON'T TALK ABOUT ME; GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND; WEARY BLUES; TENDERLY; GETTING SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU; LION'S DEN (TWO TAKES); IN A MELLOTONE. Personnel: Ed Hall Quartet: Hall, clarinet; Meade Lux Lewis, celeste; Charlie Christian, quitar; Israel Crosby, bass. Ed Hall Blue Note Jazzmen: Hall, clarinet; Sidney DeParis,



RECORD REVIEWS

Arbitrarily, I'll mention the fabulous ensembles of the Edmond Hall Blue Note Jazzmen, which perform perhaps the most astonishing High Society of them all. Here this hoary old march gets the sleekest, most swinging reading you'll ever hear. Sid Catlett's 4/4 high-hat work remakes accustomed expectations from the first beat, and DeParis plays one of the most perfect trumpet choruses ever played. Two alternates show you how he got there.

A Blue Note Jazzmen group under DeParis'

leadership finds Ed Hall lighting fires all over the place. Hall's was a unique clarinet-a wrenchingly hot intonation out of which would spring the most ripping, daring, and often precarious phrases. He swung with an intense, furious passion; notes were fired out in broad slashing smears. He could deliver a high note with the snap of a wet towel. Hall's low-register playing was rich and intimate. It would draw you near. But beware! He was setting you up for a sudden, soaring blast of fire (either take of

Walking The Dog). Other times he would hit the ground running. On Everybody Loves My Baby he comes crashing in at full speed, virtually trampling Vic Dickenson. Although Hall reflects the influence of Benny Goodman, no one could mistake one for the other.

The Ed Hall Swingtet is more open-ended small group swing, with baritonist Harry Carney and trombonist Benny Morton joining the clarinetist in the front line. Carney is sumptuous on two versions of I Can't Believe, a rare opportunity to hear him outside the Ellington sound.

Hall proves himself a superb solo front line in a quintet session with Red Norvo and Teddy Wilson and in the famous Celeste Quartet with Meade Lux Lewis on celeste and Charlie Christian on acoustic guitar. Out-of-print since the early '70s, this classic date alone would be reason enough to acquire this package. Christian's rhythm quitar is incessant, while his solos on Profoundly Blue are spare and airy. Hall is relaxed and less fiery outside the larger ensembles. The quartet was always his favorite format, and he recorded often that way later on in the '60s.

The other featured artist in this set is James P. Johnson, who leads an excellent septet in another Blue Note Jazzmen date. Ben Webster is the dominent soloist. Barely out of his Ellington tenure, Ben's Ellington spirit is present on Joy Mentin', a Johnson composition. The pianist is also heard in eight piano solos, which are among the major solo achievements of his career. In any other context they would be the centerpieces. Here solo piano can't help but be overshadowed by the astounding ensemble power of Hall, Catlett, DeParis, and Dickenson on the album's other tracks.

This is a collection of many moods, many combinations, and many colors. If some "complete" collections tend toward sameness, this one doesn't. The artists present themselves from many angles. Your ear will not be lulled by monotony. It's available by mail from Mosaic Records, 197 Strawberry Hill Av, Stamford, CT 06902. —iohn mcdonough



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GRIOT GALAXY

OPUS KRAMPUS-Sound Aspects 004: LIB-ERTY CITY RUNDOWN; DRAGONS; NECROPHILIA. Personnel: Faruq Z. Bey, tenor, alto saxophone, voice; Anthony Holland, soprano, alto saxophone, voice; Jaribu Shahid, acoustic, electric bass, voice; Tani Tabbal, drums, gembe, voice; Panda O'Bryan, percussion, gembe (cut 3).

* * * *

The penchant for face painting and costumes

by members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago has born fruit in the Griot Galaxy's depiction on the cover of their album recorded in the summer of 1984 at the Nickelsdorf Konfrontationen in Austria. The audience, as indicated by the applause, received them well and justly so.

The Griot Galaxy harkens back to the rugged discipline of early '60s free improvising, and discipline is the key here, for they exert control over their music's unfolding and they love to swing! Their rhythms constantly change, but an infectious quality remains. Their saxophonists have distilled the language and format presented by Archie Shepp, Bill Dixon, Ornette Coleman, Marion Brown, and Byron Allen with renewed vision and strength. Bassist Jaribu Shahid, on *Dragons* especially, shuttles between 12/8 and 10/8 ostinato figures that vibrate in the tradition of Scott LaFaro and Reggie Workman.

To rely solely on the hard-driving energy music of two decades ago seems somewhat anachronistic in today's eclectic musical scene, however, where the Art Ensemble continues to do all sorts of things, and other musicians have returned to the fountains of Ben Webster or Prez. All but a few have grown within this so-called avant garde and the Griot Galaxy, like Jemeel Moondoc's band, has eschewed pastiche eclecticism to concentrate more on possibilities rooted in the conventions of composition; yet they prefer expanding the structure and design of a work and Bey, the principal composer here, has orchestral con-

ceptions for where he and the group feel the music should go. No run-of-the-mill overblowing here. They, like Air and some other adherents during the '70s, seem to have picked up from the important period in this music up to 1964, just prior to the stage of free improvisation's jettisoning into pyrotechnics, a time when drummer Sunny Murray had recently broken the "time barrier," and when Ornette and Shepp in their own ways had built their improvisations off melodic foundations and achieved a spontaneity of shape and design. The Griot Galaxy follows improvisational structure and harmonic outlines in the solo sections derived from—but not strictly determined by—each composition. Their freedom is fresh and adventurous. In Tani Tabbal they have a drummer capable of speed and taste in percussive col-

The lengthy Necrophilia is the "freest" performance. Its accompanying poem, recited toward the end ("Tales of Zinjanthropus galacticus," which is printed on the back cover), is not well miked, suggesting a programmatic setting. Saxophinist Bey has the lion's share of the solo space. Anthony Holland has one soprano outing and also contributes collectively, but his alto solos on the other selections display quicksilver tone, fanciful lyricism, and agility.

Sound Aspects is a new West German label and fortunately they were receptive to the music of this swinging little band.

-ron welburn

WAXING ON

Blues × 2

FENTON ROBINSON: NIGHTFLIGHT (Alligator 4736) ★ ★ ★

PHILLIP WALKER: TOUGH AS I WANT TO BE (Rounder 2038) ★ ★ ★ 1/2

JAMES COTTON: HIGH COMPRESSION (Alligator 4737) ★ ★ ★

BYTHER SMITH: BIG SHOT SMITTY (Mina 1002)

★ ★ 1/2

FRANKIE LEE: THE LADIES AND THE BABIES (Hightone 8004) * * * * 1/2

(Hightone 8004) ★ ★ ★ 1/2

MAURICE JOHN VAUGHN: GENERIC BLUES

ALBUM (Reecy 100) ★ ★ 1/2

PREACHER JACK: 3000 BARROOMS LATER
(Rounder 3077) ★ ★ 1/2

THE BEL-AIRS: NEED ME A CAR (Blind Pig 1684)

SMOKEY LOGG: YOU CAN STAY BUT THE NOISE MUST GO (Gila Monster 1001) ★ ★

MITCH WOODS AND HIS ROCKET 88s (Blind Pig 1784) ★ ★

DUKE TUMATOE: DUKES UP (Blind Pig 1884)

★ ★

BARRENCE WHITFIELD AND THE SAVAGES (Mamou 11) ★ ★ ★

The blues has had its ups and downs over the more than six decades during which it has been documented on record, yet for most of that time it has managed to grow and deepen and prosper in direct proportion to the support

it has received from black listeners, who from the first have comprised its fundamental audience, to whose interests and concerns it unfailingly addressed itself. From the early 1960s on, however, the music has had less and less direct contact and involvement with this constituency, and while there has been little or no slackening of recording of blues and blues artists over the last several decades, it is apparent that the music currently is at something of an impasse.

Much of this stems from several interrelated phenomena. The first is the gradual erosion of the blues' black listenership, which increasingly has been drawn to alternative forms of black popular music—i.e., the soul music movement initiated in the early '50s by Ray Charles, among others, the rise of the Motown style and other more widely popular modern black musics, disco, rap, and more recent developments. In addition, talented young black performers who might once have brought their creative gifts to bear on the blues, taking it in more contemporary directions and, thus, renewing it, have elected to pursue these other musics with their considerably greater commercial potentials.

Finally, and not least in importance, is the replacement of the music's traditional black listener base with a white, middle-class, essentially collegiate audience, and the subsequent musical move towards the somewhat different perceptions and tastes of this audience. Among other things, this has seen a gradual shift in focus away from relevant, well-written lyrics—for black listeners always the

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RECORD REVIEWS

most important element of blues recordings to instrumental prowess and other aspects of performance.

In making these observations—none of which are new, by the way—I am not implying that there's anything inherently wrong with these current activities. Remember: the only constant in life is change, and any dynamic music such as blues must, after all, reflect and address itself to the concerns and interests of its fundamental audience. And these changes in attitude and focus have had an effect on the music, one that is readily apparent to anyone who has followed the music's course over a long period of time.

Fenton Robinson's most recent Alligator set maintains the high standards of his previous efforts for the label, so I suppose the almost seven-year wait since his last one was worth it. Tasty and, yes, even elegant, Nightflight offers an attractive set of nicely controlled performances notable for the principal's agile, liquid-toned guitar work, restrained, almost polite vocals, generally crisp ensemble playing on an enjoyable, intelligently varied repertoire which mixes earlier postwar-styled pieces (Little Walter's Can't Hold Out Much Longer, an updated version of Sonny Boy Williamson's venerable Good Morning, Little Schoolgirl) with more contemporary ones. Having long ago learned the value of understatement, Robinson makes his musical points, and tellingly too, through insinuation and expressive subtlety rather than engaging in the seemingly obligatory overkill of many of his guitar-playing peers, and this makes for an enjoyable program that, while scarcely essential, more than justifies frequent replaying.

The set by Los Angeles-based Phillip Walker is similarly satisfying, although his approach is a bit more fundamental and downhome in character than Robinson's restrained suavity. It's an approach well-suited to Walker's no-nonsense singing and corrosively biting guitar but, in truth, there's evidence here it's beginning to wear a bit thin. Good as they are, the performances miss by more than a hair'sbreadth the stinging urgency of some of his earlier recordings, many of which came from the same production team of Bruce Bromberg and Denis Walker. Phillip's never been much of a songwriter, so most of the material has been written or selected for him by his producers and, while it's generally well-matched to his performing strengths, he doesn't seem as comfortable or perhaps familiar with it as is necessary for stronger, more effective readings. Still, Tough As I Want To Be is an enjoyable program, the main strengths of which derive from Walker's mastery of Texas-styled modern blues, his fluent instrumental work and convincing, direct singing no less than the well-focused production values. Not Walker's best, but still damn good.

While scarcely known for innovative repertoire or performance practice, **James Cotton** has been one of the most dependable, vigorous, and authentic tradition-bearers in the modern Chicago-styled blues for some decades now. A formidably gifted harmonica player—one of the best in fact, and one of the few serious rivals of the great Little Walter Jacobs, who first set the instrument on the path



Fenton Robinson

it has followed since-Cotton is also an unassuming singer of great warmth, easy-sounding charm, and unerring conviction. His recent High Compression offers a satisfyingly punchy demonstration of thoroughly mainstream modern Chicago blues a la, say, the later Muddy Waters band (with which Cotton initially came to prominence) as well as some more contemparary-styled pieces, with strong, tight ensemble work supporting the leader's gritty, unassurning but wholly personable singing and marvelous harp work. Two separate backing units are involved—the James Cotton Chicago Blues All-Stars (guitarist Magic Slim, pianist Pinetop Perkins, bassist Aron Burton, and drummer Robert Covington) back him up on the five more traditional tracks, while the modern selections feature Cotton's working band (guitarist Michael Coleman, keyboard player Eddie Harsch, bassist Noel Neal, drummer Ray Allison, and saxophonist Douglas Fagen, here augmented by trumpeter Danny Fields and trombonist Johnny Cotton)-yet there's a real consistency of mood and performance quality to all 10 of the selections that make for extremely pleasurable listening, and often much more than that. High marks for High Compression, for it shows that emotional conviction is still what the blues is all about.

Big Shot Smitty, the recent album by Chicago's Byther Smith, pursues a similar grassroots approach for, while offering a program of nominally original songs, the music is rooted-if not mired-in the same mid-'50s/ early-'60s Chicago blues styles. Many of the new songs are in fact simply reworkings of various petter-known pieces from this period, and anyone at all familiar with that music will have little difficulty in sorting out Smith's sources. The major difference between his and Cotton's handling of the music is in the latter's far greater power, conviction, and individualism as performer There's no doubting Smith's sincerity or dedication to the music, which he performs capably enough. It's just that he seems not to have grown past his sources into the development of a music of real individuality, substance, or force of expression. Everything Smith does—here at least—has something of a second-hand quality to it. He's living too much in the past, and his recidivism offers nothing to bring it in line with the impulses of the present.

On the other hand, the album by Frankie Lee is a real joy, a stylish and generally effective mixture of blues and soul music in the vein mined so successfully in recent years by Malaco Records—contemporary in character yet with a genuinely earthy feel to it. The approach recalls that of the late Z. Z. Hill without ever being overtly imitative, for like Hill, Lee is a knowing, urbane singer who knows how to put a song across, who persuades without having to indulge in histrionics or straining after effect. Easy, relaxed, but right on the money. Lee has the benefit of a solid program of attractive, well-written songs, some covers, and topnotch backing. The production team of Bromberg and Walker are responsible for this one as well. and they've done themselves-and Leeproud. Hear this one, for more than any of the others it indicates where the contemporary blues is really at, defining and transmuting the past in terms of the present.

The remainder of these albums, with one exception by white interpreters of the music, mix blues with various other compatible genres, most frequently rockabilly and other early rock-influenced styles. None is, to my mind, a real killer in the sense that it makes a strong. compelling, or original statement, but several are quite appealing. Most of these groups are of the type generally described as bar bands, of which each major city has a fair number, and their abilities range from the inspired to the unexceptional, but none is less than competent. The effectiveness of such groups is usually but not always judged by how successfully they have assimilated their sources and moved on to the development of original approaches to making music.

From this perspective, Maurice John Vaughn's aptly titled Generic Blues Album is something of a disappointment. While Vaughn is a fluent and tasteful guitarist who makes each solo count, he is nowhere near as compelling a vocalist, phrasing awkwardly and saturating his singing with heavy echo to lend it the full-bodied sound and muscular punch it so clearly lacks. It's no substitute for the real thing. The most effective track is his original Girl Don't Live Here, which offers a fine example of his wordless humming in unison with his guitar, a la George Benson (and bassist Slim Gaillard before him), but otherwise the program is undistinguished, torpedoed by lackluster vocals and indifferent songs.

Only slightly better, to my mind, is the album by singer/pianist Preacher Jack (Caughlin), an unabashed Jerry Lee Lewis imitator who does a creditable job of summoning up something of the spirit of his mentor's style without, however, developing anything truly new or distinctive in character. Like Lewis' before him, Jack's music is a mixture of classic rock & roll. r&b, and country music that coheres fairly well but which never manages to catch fire or grab one's attention to the extent that Lewis' does. In addition to the vocals, there are two spirited boogie woogie piano performances-Albert Ammons and Pete Johnson's Boogie Woogie Prayer and the original Marc's Boogie Woogie-both of which are splendid. Not a

bad album, by any means, just a rather ordinary one in which nothing very compelling happens.

Better still is the set by the Bel-Airs, a Columbia, MO-based band led by singer/quitarist/harmonica player Michael Henderson, a fine Little Walter imitator whose mouth harp solos uncannily duplicate the sound and spirit of his mentor. Henderson also plays strong, idiomatic slide guitar in the style of Elmore James, and sings more than capably, with little of the aping of black vocal style so many white blues interpreters engage in. The four-piece band is tight and cohesive, developing a powerful rhythmic groove in which nothing is extraneous. Still, the approach is imitative rather than genuinely creative or original in character, and most of the band's influences will be readily apparent to knowledgeable listeners.

A similar approach is followed by Texas singer/guitarist **Smokey Logg**, currently based in Wisconsin, where he leads the fine four-piece band heard on his You Can Stay But The Noise Must Go. Logg is more impressive as an instrumentalist than a singer, for while he, like Henderson, eschews the aping of black mannerisms, his vocals lack more than a measure of conviction when contrasted with his various mentors. The program, a nice mixture of modern blues and rockabilly, benefits greatly from the band's crisp ensemble playing—perhaps the set's major asset.

The impulses and infectious spirit of rockabilly flow strongly through the album by **Mitch Woods** and his five-piece Rocket 88s. The leader, a fine singer, pianist, and organist, puts the program across with zesty conviction and lots of muscle, aided considerably by his Rockets; their performances are idiomatically assured enough for just about anyone, mixing six originals with such staples as Jackie Brenston's Rocket 88, Jimmy Liggins' Nite Life Boogie, and Wynonie Harris' All She Wants To Do Is Rock. Nothing new or strikingly original here, but lots of fun and high spirits.

Much the same is true of *Dukes Up*, similar to Woods' set but a bit more varied in its stylistic mix. The group's leader, **Duke Tumatoe**, is a good, convincing, generally unforced singer who puts the music across with enthusiasm and power to spare. The repertore mixes a number of fine older selections—*Barefootin'* and *The Hunter*, for examples—with compatible originals, and the whole coheres pretty nicely. It's standard bar band fare in the main, but the band itself is a particularly good one, and there's plenty of crackling excitement in the way it goes about its business making for enjoyable listening, but little more than that.

Finally, there's the self-titled **Barrance Whitfleld** And The Savages, a kick-ass Boston bar band led by a black singer, that concentrates on classic-styled r&b and rock & roll of the '50s and early '60s. They perform it well, with plenty of spirit, muscle, and idiomatic authenticity, their tight, focused ensemble work generating a powerful rhythmic impetus. The group's major drawback, however, is its lack of originality for, with the exception of bassist Phil Lenker's nicely written and performed Walk Out, everything it does sounds recycled. Then too, since there's an unrelieved feel to all of its performances, with little real variety in tempi, feel,

pacing, and the like, the group's music is best taken in small doses. —pete welding

JIM THACKERY/JOHN MOONEY: SIDEWAYS IN PARADISE (Seymour, no number) * * CAREY & LURRIE BELL: SON OF A GUN (Rooster Blues 2617) ★ ★ ★ ½ SUNNYLAND SLIM BLUES BAND: CHICAGO Jump (Red Beans 007) ★ ★ ★ ½ **DUKE ROBILLARD AND THE PLEASURE** KINGS: Too Hot To HANDLE (Rounder 3082) * * * % KOKO TAYLOR: QUEEN OF THE BLUES (Alligator 4740) * * 1/2 ROY BUCHANAN: WHEN A GUITAR PLAYS THE BLUES (Alligator 4741) * * 1/2 **BIG DADDY KINSEY AND THE KINSEY** REPORT: BAD SITUATION (Rooster Blues 2620) SAM MYERS/ANSON FUNDERBURGH: MY LOVE IS HERE TO STAY (Black Top 1032) * * EDDIE "CLEANHEAD" VINSON: . . . SINGS THE BLUES (Muse 5310) ★ ★ ★ ½ PROFESSOR LONGHAIR: ROCK 'N' ROLL Gumbo (Dancing Cat 3006) ★ ★ ½ LITTLE WALTER: THE BLUES WORLD OF LITTLE WALTER (Delmark 648) # # # KATIE WEBSTER: YOU KNOW THAT'S RIGHT (Arhoolie 1094) ★ ★ ★

The blues boom of recent years has peaked and faded. Stevie Ray Vaughan and George Thorogood are still stars in white rock circles; Z. Z. Hill's untimely death leaves B. B. King and Bobby Bland as the potential black favorites. But mainstream response is fading, generally, and a cult core again constitutes blues' main market. The market has shrunk somewhat, but new releases keep on coming.

This latest batch is a bit underwhelming, though, apart from two brilliant young talents. Let's start with them, instead of leaving the best for last. John Mooney has forged an intensely personal style by merging electrified country blues with New Orleans second-line rhythms. His fiery command of old-time rural styles, especially slide guitar, is partly due to a long association with blues pioneer Edward "Son" House. House also influenced Mooney's tortuous, passionate vocals, with their growls, falsettos, and quirky embellishments. Mooney is his own man, though, not a mere revivalist, and this is most obvious in the many creative ways that he toys with rhythm. He stands out as a major talent, and one of the most distinctive blues artists working today. Mooney appears here with Jim Thackery of the Nighthawks in an informal acoustic set called Sideways In Paradise. This loosely produced album has its share of unfocused moments, but offers a glimpse of Mooney at full strength on the frantic Jitterbug Swing. Thackery's solid if less dramatic talent is effectively showcased on the wistful I'll Come Running Back. Lately the New Orleans-based Mooney has been working with former Meters George Porter Jr. and "Zigaboo" Modeliste; he has yet to make a record which captures the power of such live sets.

Another dazzling young luminary is Chicago guitarist Lurrie Bell. Like Mooney, Bell is a

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RECORD REVIEWS

tense singer whose every phrase suggests coiled springs of emotion. Bell's fleet-fingered guitar work is equally edgy, and technically impressive as well; there's a definite Magic Sam influence, but Bell is even more dexterous, with a penchant for facile 16th notes. He appears here with Chicago's leading harmonicist, his father, Carey Bell. In addition to a fluid, modern style that's based on both Big and Little Walter, Bell Sr. expands his instrument's scope with some highly unusual effects. He's also a forceful singer. The album, Son Of A Gun, is very poorly recorded, but recommended nonetheless for some gripping performances, especially the Jimmy Noleninfluenced Better Break It Up. Lurrie gets into a powerful vocal groove on the sensual jazz-walk My Baby, a potential classic which is inexplicably cut short. Carey's acrobatic harp can be best heard on the subtly titled Ballbuster and Kick Me In The Pants. Though this album is only a somewhat successful showcase, the Bells represent '80s Chicago blues at its best.

Another strong group from the Windy City is the Sunnyland Slim Blues Band. At 78, and still going strong, this singing pianist is the godfather of the Chicago blues scene. For some four decades he has helped launch the careers of such then-struggling bluesmen as Muddy Waters, B. B. King, and Jimmy Johnson. Sunnyland is a soulful, incredibly powerful vocalist, with thick country diction and exquisite falsettos. His piano work also reflects rural, barrelhouse roots, but has some urbane Chicago touches and a dash of Count Basie. He appears here with some of Chicago's most accomplished, though least-known, blues players. Bassist Bob Stroger played for years with guitar genius Otis Rush. Robert Covington swings effortlessly, both as a singer and drummer. Steve Freund's fiery blend of Freddy King and Django Reinhardt, by way of Robert Jr. Lockwood, ranks him among blues' most impressive young guitarists, and one of the few with a real feel for pre-'60s concepts. Saxophonist Sam Burckhardt has also worked with zvdeco accordionist Fernest Arceneaux. This unit has played together for several years now, and the intuitive chemistry is obvious. What's more impressive than the great groove here, though, is the varied repertoire. Along with the usual slow blues and shuffles there is r&b, jazz, jump tunes, and everyone gets a turn in the limelight. The recording quality is a bit muddy, especially for the Red Beans label, but it's great to hear a master like Sunnyland Slim in such diverse, inspired company.

The rest of this batch ranges from decent to disappointing. One of the better offerings is Duke Robillard's Too Hot To Handle. Robillard, formerly with Roomful of Blues, is a tasteful, agile guitarist; while indebted to T-Bone Walker, he also incorporates a wide range of other blues, jazz, and rock influences. The album is a well-balanced mixture of blues and quality original rock. Both Robillard's writing and vocal style recall British roots-rocker Dave Edmunds; his voice is thin but effective, and grows with repeated listening. Notable cuts here include Someone and She Made My Mind. While this well-crafted set is a definite success. Robillard's playing at times seems a bit too controlled and careful.

Koko Taylor is a modern blues icon, so it may seem like heresy to call her a boring singer without much soul. But, just like Taylor's earlier albums, there's little genuine emotion on Queen Of The Blues. Taylor's gravelly voice is a stereotypical bluesy device, but to these ears it fails to pack an authentic punch. Only once, on I Don't Care No More, is there any sense of real involvement. Fortunately the excellent band here does its best to compensate. Guitarist Criss Johnson and keyboardist "Professor" Eddie Lusk add inspired fatback professionalism throughout: drummer Ray Allison pushes hard, as usual; there are excellent guest guitar solos from Lonnie Brooks, Son Seals, and Albert Collins. The basic problem remains, though: Taylor's vocals are simply not convinc-

Speaking of heresy, the same goes for **Roy Buchanan**'s *When A Guitar Plays The Blues*. Buchanan's innovative technical brilliance have made him a cult figure among guitarists and rock stars alike. The complex pyrotechnics here seem cold, harsh, and strident, though, with a cumulative effect of massive overkill. It's all a matter of taste, of course; if you like your blues *Star Wars*-style, go pick this one up. Fortunately there are some down-to-earth moments on *Mrs. Pressure* and *Hawaiian Punch*

Life is a bit more mundane in the world of Big Daddy Kinsey and the Kinsey Report. Kinsey hails from Gary, Indiana, the easternmost outpost of the Chicago blues scene. He was once a full-time, traveling musician, but sounds more like an earnest amateur; there's a certain naive charm, for instance, in his lyrical couplets which come nowhere close to rhyming. Both Kinsey's slide guitar work and gruff vocals are soulful but limited, while his harp blowing is horribly off-key. His son, Donald, formerly with reggae star Peter Tosh, plays much of the lead here, adding a sophisticated Albert King touch. Nevertheless this Chicago blues and funk set is far more sincere than it is professional.

A similar situation prevails on My Love Is Here To Stay, which pairs guitarists Anson Funderburgh with singing harp-blower Sam Myers. Myers is an odd choice for an album frontman; he's a harsh, stiff, off-key singer, with limited range and painfully flat tone. His derivative harp playing, mainly from Little Walter, doesn't sound much better. Accordingly, the first side of this album is pretty rough going, despite Funderburgh's fine Texas guitar work and Doug Rynack's aggressive piano. Side two hits some good grooves on Poor Little Angel Child, Take Me When You Go, and My Love Is Here To Stay. Given Myers' limits, Black Top might have delayed releasing this until Sam got happy for an entire two sides' worth.

By contrast, there's plenty of pleasant consistency on **Eddle "Cleanhead" Vinson**'s Sings The Blues. This is a compilation which stresses Vinson's vocals but features extended soloing as well. The album draws on three sessions; one with the late, dapper pianist Lloyd Glenn and tenor saxist Rashid Ali, another with tenor aces Arnett Cobb and Buddy Tate, and a third with Roomful of Blues. Vinson's alto work is in fine form throughout, as are his witty, declamatory jazz-blues vocals, re-

plete with his trademark cracked squeals. One outstanding cut is the risqué He Was A Friend Of Mine, with a fine guitar solo from Roomful's Ronnie Earl. As expected, Cobb's segments are also a joy.

Professor Longhair (Henry R. Byrd) doesn't fare so well on Rock 'N' Roll Gumbo. This '74 session had not appeared domestically until West Coast pianist George Winston issued it as a labor of love. Given Winston's devotion-he has organized and performed at Byrd family benefits in New Orleans-it's a shame that this poorly recorded session finds "Fess" in unsympathetic company. The drummer, known only as Shiba, has no concept of the second line/rhumba New Orleans idiom, and neither does guest guitarist Gatemouth Brown. Considering Brown's reputation and talent, such a pairing had definite summit conference potential. Gatemouth does play some nice fiddle on Jambalaya, though. Fess himself is excellent throughout, but there are plenty of other sessions which catch him in equally fine and less-cluttered form.

Another less-than-brilliant reissue is The Blues World Of Little Walter, a collection of early-'50s Chicago tracks. Little Walter and J. B. Lenoir appear in decent but pre-peak form, while Sunnyland Slim turns in a typically fine piano and vocal performance, with excellent tenor work by New Orleanian Oliver Alcorn. The gem here, however, that's well worth the purchase price alone, is Baby Face Leroy's Rollin' And Tumblin' (Parts 1 and 2). It's a loose collection of traditional blues verses, sung over Leroy Foster's double-time drumming, with Little Walter on harp and Muddy Waters on guitar Foster's vocal leads, and Muddy's vocal back-ups, are driving, primal, and wailing; the rhythmic instrumental work is relentlessly funky, and the song just never lets up. This classic performance also offers great insight into the rural/urban transition which Chicago blues was making at the time.

Let's close with an impressive talent, singer/ pianist Katle Webster. Webster was based for years in Lake Charles, LA, where she reigned as the Gulf Coast's leading session pianist, playing blues, r&b, swamp-pop, gospel, zydeco, and a touch of country. Needless to say, she has ample two-fisted chops, and is also a soulful and personable, though limited, singer. The album at hand mixes hits and misses. Webster has relocated to the West Coast, and recorded You Know That's Right with San Francisco's Hot Links. This band could stand to push harder, and the flat recording doesn't help. Nancy Wright's raw, rhythmically twisting tenor solos are outstanding, though; Wright has also worked with guitar aces Albert King and Lonnie Mack, and could well be a name to watch. As for Webster, the title track and Jimmy, Jimmy are the set's finest moments, with passionate vocals and Little Richard-style gospel piano, respectively. Much of the other blues/boogie material is routine and derivative, though lively enough. There's one corny regional piece, Voodoo Bliss, but some genuine Gulf Coast numbers might have added variety and put the set across. Sooner or later, however, Webster is bound to make a major musical statement.

-ben sandmel

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.)

MILESTONE/ CONTEMPORARY

Hank Crawford, juke-joint atmosphere exudes from the grooves of this quintet-plusriffin'-horns date, ROADHOUSE SYMPHONY. Arthur Prysock, warm and wooly vocalist returns with ballads and blues—plus brother Red's tenor, A ROCKIN' GOOD WAY. Art Pepper, fourth volume of the altoist's '77 NYC gig, w/Cables, Mraz, and Elvin, MORE FOR LES.

CONCORD JAZZ

Dave McKenna, uncompromising keyboarder concentrates on unaccompanied readings of compositions by Arthur Schwartz, dancing in the dark. Ray Brown All-Stars, bass-led quintet jumps on the Night Train lane, don't forget the blues. Jon Faddis, Dizzy-ing trumpeter covers classic material with classy accompaniment, LEGACY. George Shearing/Mel Tormé, mellow atmosphere project by the pianist and vocalist, an ELEGANT EVENING.

FLYING FISH

David Holt, Nashville banjoist joined by Doc and Merle Watson, REEL & ROCK. Evo Bluestein, autoharpist adapts Appalachian songs and ballads, EVO'S AUTOHARP. Tom Paxton, longtime folk chronicler of everyday events attacks yuppies and others, ONE MILLION LAWYERS AND OTHER DISASTERS. Sweet Honey In The Rock, a capella quintet performs spirituals, FEEL SOMETHING DRAWING ME ON. Sally Rogers, vocalist/dulcimerist/guitarist sings her own songs and others', LOVE WILL GUIDE US.

INDEPENDENTS

Anita O'Day, live Carnegie Hall celebration of her 50 years as vocalist, from Emily Records, BIG BAND CONCERT 1985. Bess Bonnier, another Motor City pianist of high quality, from Noteworks Records, AND OTHER JAZZ BIRDS. Nat DIXON, hard-working and versatile saxman's second leader LP, from Sax Rack Records, ROSE COLOURED. Nabil Totah, bass vet with impeccable credentials fronts a trio (Mike Longo, Ray Mosca), from Consolidated Artists Records, DOUBLE BASS. Eric Allison/Jack Keller, Miami reed/piano duo attacks jumpin' standards, from Wonderland Jazz Records, LIVE AT ZIEGFIELD'S. Karen Young/Michel Donato, singer and bassist

make designs on original sounds, from Justin Time Records, YOUNG/DONATO. Vince Andrews, saxist debuts with all-original outing, from Gerard Records, VERY CONVINCING.

UZEB, eclectic, electric album from an upand-coming Canadian band, from Paroles & Musiques, BETWEEN THE LINES. David Borden/New Mother Mallard Band, unclassifiable sounds from the electronic music composer and cohorts, from Cuneiform Records, ANATIDAE. The Muffins, idiosyncratic song structures and improvisations newly discovered, plus Fred Frith, from Cuneiform Records, OPEN CITY, David Benoit, keyboarder, some strings, plus heavy fusiod characters, from Spindletop Records, THIS SIDE UP. Doug Cameron, the man with the blue violin plugs in with pals, from Spindletop, freeway mentality, Lyman Woodard. popular Detroit Organization offers latin and jazzy sounds, from Corridor Records, DEDICATION, Oliver Whitehead Quintet, Canadian fivesome leans on electric sounds. from Justin Time Records, PULSE/IMPULSE. Afterglow, "high energy blend of pop, jazz, & r&b" originally written for movies and tv. from Riza Records, MUSIC PARTY.

Larry Vuckovich, trio and quintet sides from the straightahead San Francisco pianist, from Hot House Records, BLUES FOR RED. Curtis Clark, pianist composes a portrait of his musical environment, from FMP Records. SELF TRAIT. Peter O'Mara/Wayne Darling/ Bill Elgart, guitar/bass/drums trio explores individual concerns, from RST Records, sun DIAL. Didier Levallet Quintet, French bassist fronts a formidable contingent of improvisers, from Evidence Records, quiet DAYS. Loose Tubes, young, irrepressible Britons bark out big band charts, from Loose Tubes Ltd., LOOSE TUBES. Espoo Big Band, Jukka Linkola's extended composition played through to the Finnish, from Polydor Records, GRAND MYSTERY. Unifour Jazz Ensemble, community-bred big band from the mountains of North Carolina, from Unijazz Records, FIRST STEPS. dh

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PROFILE

The Long Ryders

Classic American themes and solid musicianship fortify this gutsy band's trek to the top.

BY GENE SANTORO

If their name seems to reach back to other times and values, it's no accident. "We're populists in every sense," asserts guitarist/vocalist/songwriter Sid Griffin of his band, the Long Ryders. "Our heroes are as much the young Huey Long or Robert LaFollette as they are Roger McGuinn or Otis Redding. That's one reason we have, a basic down-to-earthness in our lyrics and music, and I'm really proud of it."

That down-to-earthness was amply demonstrated on their 1983 EP, 10-5-60 (PVC 5906), and their 1984 indie LP, Native Sons (Frontier 1013). On those discs, the lyrics tackled time-honored themes like prisons and trains while the music featured chiming 12-string guitars derived from the Byrds, Everlys-via Burritos harmonies, and the mid-'60s L.A.psychedelic-country feel that helped shape the touch-of-punk arrangements. But with the release of their major label debut, State Of Our Union (Island 90459-1), the implicit politics of the Ryders' brand of rock has become explicit. Pan over the tracks' titles: The Creedence-meets-the-MGs tune WDIA is about a law student who gives it up for life as a musician, thanks to that famed Memphis black music station; Mason-Dixon Line depicts a truck driver's complaints about the dwindling profits of his road-weary life; the self-explanatory You Just Can't Ride The Boxcars Anymore or Good Times Tomorrow, Hard Times Today; the single, Looking For Lewis And Clark, which takes a classic American threechord progression as the springboard to launch a search for lost heroes and values, invoking the ghosts of Gram Parsons and Tim Hardin along the way. Whatever your own musical and political perspective, you've got to admit that the Long Ryders have cut a unique and provocative trail from their roots to their present.

That trail began back in Kentucky, whence young Sid Griffin split for L.A. in 1977 because, "I wanted to be a novelist and a pop musician but I figured no-



body becomes a pop musician at 40, so I thought I'd try that first." After bashing about in the Frosties and the Unclaimed, he placed a newspaper ad "looking for people to play Creedence-meets-the-Clash music. That got a lot of people who wanted to play one or the other." The exception was Stephen McCarthy, who shares songwriting, arranging, and guitar chores with Griffin, as well as doubling on lap steel, dobro, and banjo. For a while the lineup shifted around, but when drummer Greg Sowders climbed aboard in early 1982 and Toni Stevens strapped his bass across his saddle in late '83, the Ryders were ready to roll.

And when they hit the tour circuit behind *Native Sons*, they drew positive reactions from U.S. audiences and critics alike, though ironically the characteristically hyperbolic and hyper-trendy British press went hog-wild over this American roots-based band so clearly opposed to the ideologies of synth-pop, the New Romantics, and other Anglo-grown product. As a result, *Looking For Lewis And Clark* climbed up the U.K. charts: as Griffin tells it, "We came within a hair of having a hit single with it."

Maybe that's because, unlike the dozens of garage-band clones who simply worship and recycle '60s sounds and material, the Ryders dig their roots so thoroughly that they can cultivate them into a unique form of their own. Like Jason and the Scorchers, with their Stones-play-metal-in-Nashville hybrid, or Los Lobos' mix of two-steps, Bo Diddley, and Hendrix, the Ryders are rightly keen to avoid the "revivalist" tag. Griffin puts it this way: "Look, a band starts out imitating whoever their heroes are, but then as you go along you get your own musical legs going, vou have your own idiosyncratic, individualistic stance for each tune. When the Temptations

formed they were just imitating the Five Blind Boys of Alabama and the Soul Stirrers, but once they got going they became the Temptations. When we formed we were sort of crossing the Sex Pistols with Buffalo Springfield, but as we got going we realized it wasn't either any more, but it was getting up on its own two feet and walking. So although we take part and parcel from so many different styles of music—'40s jump blues or rockabilly, for example—we try to make them come out as a thematic unit. Final Wild Son off Native Sons has a Dylan vocal on a rockabilly beat and a rockabilly theme with a chord progression not unlike garage-punk bands of the Nuggets/Pebbles era. Add a little country seasoning because of Stephen's Clarence White-style picking, and you have a Long Ryders song. That's a cold-hearted analysis of what I do for a living [laughs], but that's what we did. So I get angry at this crap about, 'I've heard it all before,' because that's just superficial. There's nothing totally new under the sun, those elements have always existed; I hear some new technology when I turn on my radio, but I don't hear any new music. There are different ways of polishing the apple, but it's still the same apple, and I like it."

Not surprisingly, the Ryders' approach to songwriting adheres to similar principles. "We try to work from the old Berry Gordy/Motown riff that every song should have a beginning, a middle, and an end, have characters, and tell a story," explains Griffin. "You have to have economy and discipline, you have to have a certain spirit and sense of style and place. We try to adapt those to 1986, not tell a story like it's 1965 or 1958, because it's not. Soup it up a little, throw out what's dated, keep what's good, then put your own personal stamp on it. And make sure it's something you can whistle."

Which is just what they did for Lewis And Clark. "All our songs begin biographically," continues Griffin. "I was in Mabuhay Gardens, this punk club in San Francisco, on Washington's Birthday in 1980 because the Go-Gos were going to play there. But the five bands on before them were atrocious, nihilistic, not even fun-thrash punk. They just wanted to titillate and shock and be jerks. And I thought, 'They're preaching to all their converted punk friends who are already death-warmed-over.' The funny thing was, they thought they were being so rough by being so crude, but they weren't playing to Republicans. And I thought to myself, if Tim Hardin-who was still alive then—walked onstage with an acoustic guitar and sang Misty Roses or



STAGE RYDERS: From left, Sid Griffin, Greg Sowders, Tom Stevens (not pictured, Stephen McCarthy).

The Lady Came From Baltimore. he'd get'em agitated—they'd be up in arms."

Griffin is outstanding as an agent provocateur, and the band delivers even more than he promises—or threatens. Take the ending of Looking For Lewis And Clark as an example, where the final chorus goes, "Lou-ay, Lou-ay, Lou-ay, Lou-ay Lou" in an ironic look back; or the feedback-opened backwards-guitar solo on Years Long Ago that follows verses full of words like "return" and "turn back" and "backward." "And there's a backwards vocal on there also," announces Griffin, recalling the late-'60s technique. "When you play the record backwards you hear Greg Sowders say, 'You're going the wrong way. hosehead."

To keep themselves going the right way in the studio while they were cutting their road-tested arrangements, the Ryders avoided extensive overdubbing. "We still try to record as an ensemble as much as possible," Griffin explains. "We don't believe in piecemeal recording, except for overdubbing solos or lead vocals. So we try to have bass, drums, guitars, keyboards, and horns all together, like on WDIA. We want people to imagine little Long Ryders in the headphones, like you do with a Rolling Stones record." Given the Ryders' considerable prowess onstage, this as-live as-you-can-get-it recording style seems the perfect complement to their straight-from-the-shoulder stance.

As is their approach to equipment. Greg Sowders pummels a basic Slingerland kit—a kick, a floor tom, a rack tom, and a metal marching-band snare—with Zildjian cynibals for his crash, ride, and hi-hat. Tom Stevens relies on his Fender Precision '68 to deliver the goods via a new Carvin cabinet; he uses mediumgauge Rickenbacher strings. Stephen McCarthy plays Teles—either his '69 or

his '85 reissue—both armed with the Hipshot, a variation of the Clarence White/Gene Parsons B-string Bender; he runs them through a Fender Twin Reverb, occasionally routing the signal through a '60s Tonebender and a Boss delay pedal. For lap-steel he uses his '48 twin-necked Fender, while for pedal steel he has a one-necked Fender; he also calls on his Gibson mandolin and Gibson banjo for coloristic touches. Sid Griffin favors Marine Band harps, an Oscar Schmitt electric autoharp, a '67 Rickenbacher 12-string, and a '60 Fender Strat, which he runs into a Vox AC-30 amp via a '60s Vox Wah fuzz. Strings for both axemen are light-gauge Super Slinkys, picks are Fender medium, and fingerpicks are Dobro thumbpicks and Dobro metal picks.

However you look at them, though, this is one band that's clearly more than the sum of its parts. "Right now in the record industry there's this big trend toward glamour, with Prince and Sheila E and Madonna; other than Fogerty and Springsteen everybody in the megaleagues is dressing to look uptown and slick," concludes Griffin. "We're going the other way."

Kelvyn Bell

The avant garde meets the funk when this St. Louis-born six-stringer lets his fingers do the talking.

BY BILL MILKOWSKI

To hear Kelvyn Bell tell it, there's a new age a'comin'. A whole generation of musicians has arrived with the same remarkably wide-ranging musical tastes and influences, and they're now blending all those elements together into a mature statement, a sincere expression of who they are.

"We grew up listening to funk as well as jazz and blues and the whole Motown scene," says the striking leader of Kelvynator, a New York-based jazz-funk fusion group. "I remember watching James Brown and the Jackson Five on tv as a kid back in St. Louis. That was inspiring to me. And so was hearing Wes Montgomery for the first time—and B. B. King and Albert King. I mean, I love Charlie Parker as much as I love Jimi Hendrix as much as I love the Art Ensemble of Chicago and Louis Armstrong. I see 'em all as the same energy. You know—takin' a scale and makin' it wail. That's what the music is about. But it's also about letting go-eliminating your conscious mind from playing. That whole intuitive aspect of music is very important to me. So we're dealing with the physical, emotional, intellectual, and intuitive aspects of music. That's what this generation is about. We're playing music that is going to set the standard for the second half of the '80s and prepare us to go into the '90s."

Fellow musicians like trombonist Joe Bowie of Defunkt, alto saxophonist Steve Coleman, electric bassist Melvin Gibbs, and many others around New York City would heartily echo those sentiments. They're all around the same age (late 20s to early 30s) and they're all into the same bag-melding idioms and using the physical presence of funk as their foundation. Several of New York's finest exponents of this fresh sound were recently showcased at a two-day Funk Festival held at the chichi nightspot Danceteria. It was a joyful affirmation of the funk, a rousing orgy of fatback rhythms laced with dissonant wails, Hendrixian screams, non-tempered smears, and all manner of avant garde, atonal shrieks. (The proceedings were recorded by Cachalot Records with plans for a compilation album called This Is The Funk.)

Joe Bowie was there fronting Defunkt (with special guest appearance by vocalist/saxist James Chance). Melvin Gibbs was singing and thumpin' with his M.G. Factor. Prince Charles was there with his funky flute and lyricon. And Kelvyn Bell made perhaps the biggest impact of the weekend with his avant-funk outfit Kelvynator (Ronnie Burrage on drums, African-born Victor Edimo on bass, Rod

PROFILE

Williams on keyboards, and Bell picking his trusty Yamaha SG-2000 guitar and adding vocals). If the crowd's reaction was any indication, I'd say funk is definitely the music of today—and tomorrow.

After the concert, Bell spoke enthusiastically about his band and this whole movement that seems to be picking up steam both here and abroad. "It's a really exciting period. Very hip period. We're bringing the avant garde music, this highly intuitive-type music, back through the funk in order to give people a foundation to understand it. So we're creating music that is dealing on all these levels—physical, emotional, intellectual, intuitive. And I think it's something that's needed right about now. People want to hear something else. That's why rap music is coming up so big. They're tired of the same old thing.

"And as a musician, you get tired of playing in 4/4 all the time, dealing with the same old rhythms. It all becomes very cliche. But when you can open up the time signatures, something else happens. The same statement takes on another dimension. It's a very refreshing kind of thing and I think the people can sense that. Let's just say it's a music whose time has come."

Kelvynator, Defunkt, and several of these bands like to deal in odd time signatures. Steve Coleman, a member of Dave Holland's quintet, among others, whose own band the Five Elements recently cut an album for JMT Records, is a particularly staunch advocate. "I played on that album," says Bell, "and I think it's a strong representation of what this whole thing is about, as well as a strong representation of what I'm about. Steve's a really incredible writer. I mean, this cat is into 61/4/4-type meters. And it's funny how natural something that awkward can become, once you start to feel it."

Feeling the music has been an important factor in Bell's musical evolution. Born in St. Louis, he began playing guitar as a pre-teen and soon came under the collective wing of several musicians associated with the revolutionary Black Artists Group (BAG). Oliver Lake was an especially important mentor.

"He doesn't remember this, but I took my first guitar lesson with Oliver when I was 12 years old," he grins. The horn-playing Lake had a situation with the St. Louis school system whereby he'd travel from high school to high school during the week, doing private lessons with the kids. As Bell fondly recalls, "He was like a real hip man to us cats in seventh and eighth grade. He had different ideas than our other teachers. So you'd go



down there and Lake would be playing all this crazy stuff and you'd say, 'Wow, what's that?!' So I was pulled into the avant garde thing very early through that experience with Oliver."

Three years later, Bell would be playing in an ensemble with his first teacher and hanging out at the Black Artist Group space on weekends. "I could go down to BAG as late as 11 at night and there'd always be somebody there playing-Hamiet Bluiett, Julius Hemphill, or whoever. You could take lessons from them. Everywhere else in town vou had to pay three dollars for a half-hour, but they had a thing at BAG-it was three dollars a month and you could come at any time. And it wasn't lessons in the traditional sense, like running through scales and patterns. The lesson was in just playing with these cats. Just stretch out, man.

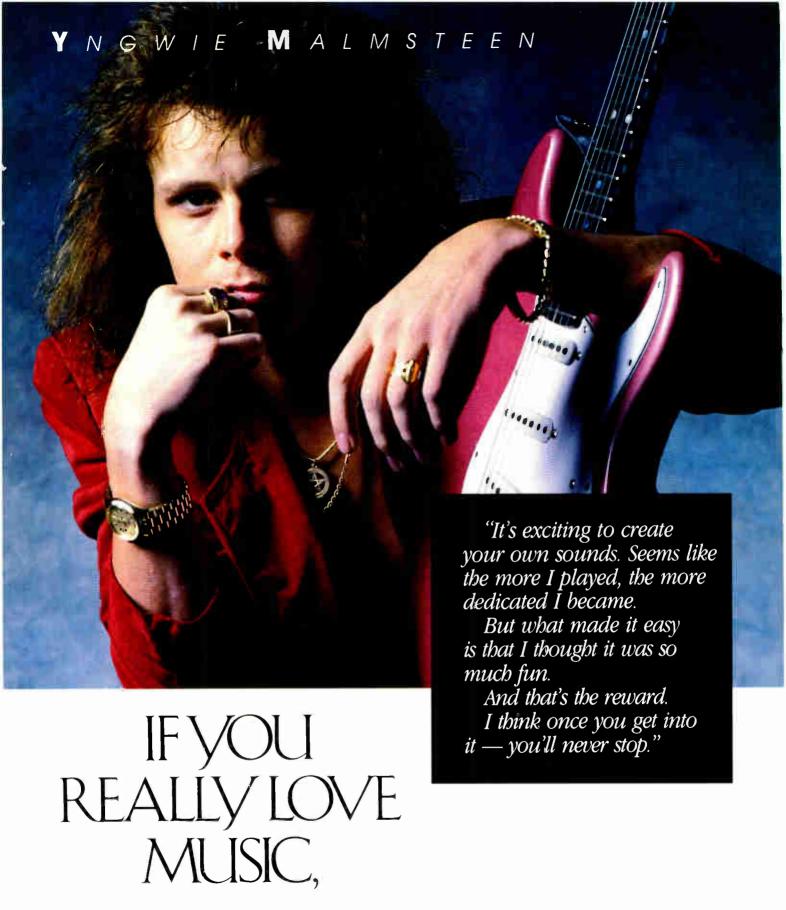
Bell eventually hooked up with trombonist Joseph Bowie and saxman Luther Thomas in their Creative Arts Ensemble. Like his older brother Lester, Joe Bowie was at the forefront of the St. Louis avant garde scene. "That's when I really discovered how hard it is to play so-called free music," says Bell. "I remember the first concert we did. In the first 15 minutes I played everything I knew, then I thought, Where do I go from here? What do I play?' And that's when I started listening to the sound of the whole room and trying to interpret what was going on. I started thinking, 'What can I play to connect up to that?' And that really gets you to thinking beyond scales and patterns. It's then more of a thing of feeling colors, recognizing colors, and just dealing with vibrations when it's at that level, that intuitive level."

He came to New York City in 1978 and, at the recommendation of Bowie and Thomas, landed a spot right away in Charles "Bobo" Shaw's Human Arts Ensemble. "Six weeks after I moved to New York I was in Europe, touring all the major jazz festivals over there in Bobo's band. It was the time of my life. We went to places I never even heard of. So that got me off to a good start in New York and gave me a lot of inspiration."

That band included Shaw on drums, John Lindberg on bass, Marty Ehrlich on reeds, Bowie on trombone, Thomas on sax, and Bell on guitar. A recording of their performance at the '78 Vienna Jazz Festival, featuring special guest soloist Albert Mangelsdorff on trombone, exists somewhere in Austria but has never been released stateside. Bell's first recorded work in the States came in 1979 in a band led by Gato Barbieri's drummer, Fabiano, including Carter Jefferson and Clifford Jordan on saxes, Marvin Hannibal Peterson on trumpet, T. M. Stevens on bass, and Steve McCall on drums. Later that year he appeared on a Japanese release by pianist Shunzo Ono, a date which also featured Marcus Miller and Wayne Brathwaite on basses, Kenny Kirkland and Onaje Allen Gumbs on keyboards, and J. T. Lewis and Ronnie Burrage on drums.

But perhaps his first real spot in the limelight came with Defunkt on their 1980 Hannibal Records debut. Since then, Bell has appeared on two subsequent Defunkt records as well as four Arthur Blythe albums (Blythe Spirit, Elaborations, Light Blue and a forthcoming, asyet-untitled LP, all on Columbia). He also works occasionally with pianist Michele Rosewoman in her New-Yoruba band and with Steve Coleman in the Five Elements. But Kelvynator remains his most personal outlet for expression.

"I feel that the Art Ensemble of Chicago is the premier band in this whole intuitive-type music. They're my favorite group. And what has happened is, they developed the music to such a high level that it's gone beyond a lot of people. It's gotten away. And following history, just like when the beboppers took the music to such a high level that it was considered to be going beyond a lot of people, and resulted in a movement swinging back to a more commercial-type jazz like organ trios and electric guitars and more commercial-type piano players like Ahmad Jamal and Ramsey Lewis and Roy Merriweather-type cats—that's what I'm doing with Kelvynator. We're bringing the avant garde back through the funk." db



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CAUGHT

ENDANGERED SPECIES

CARAVAN OF DREAMS

FORT WORTH—The sign on the door of the ornate Caravan of Dreams entertainment center said simply, "Endangered Species Tonight." Such a cryptic announcement wouldn't ordinarily draw a packed house in any city in America, but in Ornette Coleman's hometown the word was out and the club was overstuffed to see the debut of a special Ornette Coleman/Pat Metheny/Charlie Haden/Denardo Coleman quartet.

The audience was a mixed collection of mainstream fushion Metheny fans and hardcore harmolodic partisans, all of whom were curious—and if the truth be told, a trifle skeptical—of what would happen when the guitarist's rounded tones and melodic sensibilities collided with Ornette's hard-edged angular logic. They shouldn't have worried.

Metheny has maintained a conspicuous interest in Coleman's music for many years, both on record (the excellent 80/81, ECM 2-1180) and in his live Pat Metheny Group performances. While his attention to the music has been admirable, and often musically meritorious, his work within the Endangered Species context, with the original harmolodic master himself present, was a quantum jump forward from the best of his previous forays into the exotic territory—and bodes well for the quartet's imminent LP, Song X (Geffen Records).

Although clearly a cooperative venture, Ornette nonetheless occupied the center of both the stage and the music. Resplendent in a sparkling blue silk suit and purple cowboy hat, Ornette guided the music with his geodesic sax solos, but also felt confident enough in his musical method to go outside it sometimes for some strong Texas blues flavorings—including one segment that sounded almost like a nod to fellow Fort Worth saxist Dewey Redman.

The group's extended first set was an intense, occasionally nervous, but surprisingly successful endeavor. After an impromptu Auld Lang Syne in honor of the New Year, with Metheny's ringing lead that would have delighted Jimi Hendrix, the group settled into a second set that lasted until early morning. This one was a more comfortable and cohesive affair, with the band cruising for stretches behind superb solos or splitting into duets before returning for a crunching unison finale.

The generous exposure of the band's music made several facts apparent, fore-



most of which is that Denardo is no longer just a familial cog in his father's harmolodic machine. He has become a bold, expressive drummer capable of infusing his personality and influences—such as occasional reggae-oriented fills and sharp, post hip-hop punctuations—into the musical mix. He sometimes became a bit overbearing in the quartet format, but that is most likely a residual effect of regularly playing in the sevenman Prime Time musical maelstrom.

Haden, as the music's most significant bassist since Mingus, shouldn't continue to surprise the listener, so established is his reputation. Nevertheless, he remains as intriguing as he is amazing, and his performance with the quartet was a showcase of his abilities. His agile rhythmic foundation managed to hold the center with such grace and firmness that

during Prime Time tunes like Harmolodic Bebop and Sex Spy it was hard to remember that one accustic bass was ably substituting for two high-powered electrics. His duets with Metheny brought out the best in the guitarist, demonstrating his continuing musical maturation.

Ornette seemed to enjoy the music, even applauding one particularly fleet-fingered Metheny solo, and offered a catalog of his own styles. Blues-drenched lyricism alternated with crisp geometric bursts, and while all of it was undoubtedly advanced it was music that didn't require vast compositional knowledge to be enjoyed and appreciated. His genius may qualify him as an endangered species, but his music, and musicianship, is vital, vibrant, and poised for the acceptance and recognition it has long deserved.

—michael point

HELEN MERRILL

15

NEW YORK—The film historian and lecturer Bill Everson covers his walls with autographed photos of the great movie stars and directors, his only unadorned shot being of Marilyn Monroe. After asking him why this should be the only non-autographed picture in his gallery, he told me to look at the man sitting next to Marilyn. Sure enough, it was Bill. Helen Merrill's singing used to affect me the same way. On her classic recordings from three decades past, the accompaniments of Gil Evans, Clifford Brown, and Quincy Jones attract too much attention away from the vocalist they're allegedly supporting; you could get through one of her EmArcy albums without even noticing the act in the center ring

I say "used to" because Merrill has apparently been frightened away from

sharing her spotlight again, though, ironically, it's exactly what she needs to do. She is a sufficiently better singer now to hold her own and the piano/bass/ drums trio—a vehicle I'd recommend to only a handful of singers, many less talented than Merrill-is clearly not the right framework for her. You'd think that—as was the case for this performance—such a well-grounded rhythm team as Torrie Zito, John Miller, and Mel Lewis (who aiways seems bored when he backs singers) would help Merrill keep her feet on the ground. Instead, they only emphasized the anti-melodic qualities of her work. She wound up sounding like a beatnik poetess transforming Cole Porter into Allan Ginsberg in front of a pad-full of goatees and berets snapping their fingers on the afterbeats.

Still, it's not an insult to say that an artist who's been working at this as long as Merrill has not yet fulfilled her potential. She's released her best album in decades this year (No Tears, No Goodbyes, with

pianist Gordon Beck, on Owl Records from France, distributed by PolyGram Special Imports) while a forthcoming PolyGram box will make all of her classic '50s discs available again. Furthermore, her new management is the sharpest she's ever had, as the current neo-bop movement spills over into renewed interest in '50s singers like Annie Ross and Merrill. She's got a lot of good ideas and class, now all she needs is the right presentation.

—will friedwald

KRONOS STRING QUARTET

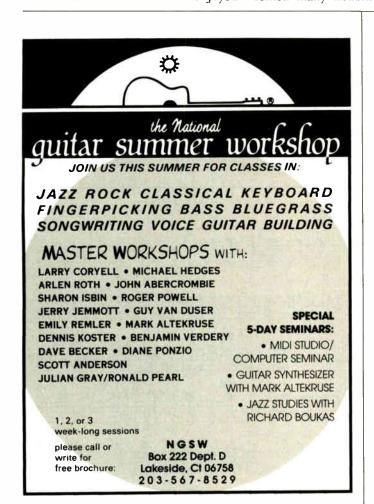
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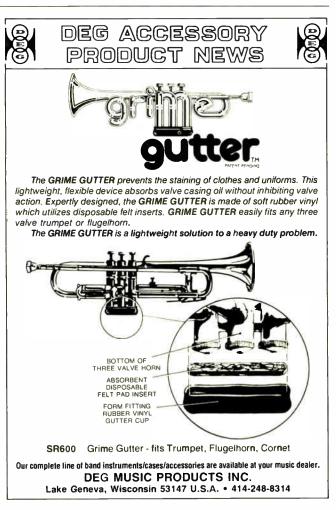
NEW YORK—Thanks to the support of the Composers Forum and the dedication to 20th century music by the Kronos String Quartet, Muhal Richard Abrams, Anthony Braxton, Leroy Jenkins, and Leo Smith—yes! jazz-associated, nonacademic, black musicians—enjoyed impeccably rehearsed, thoughtfully interpreted performances of their uncompromising and ambitious works for the "serious" chamber idiom. Kronos—comprising Hank Dutt, David Harrington, Joan Jeanrenaud, and John Sherba—didn't let the swiping of their concert costumes from their dressing rooms deter their concentration; with the utmost attention to detail and obvious respect for the composer's scores and intents, they demonstrated an egoless unity that allowed each piece to reveal its own virtues.

That violinist/composer Jenkins' dramatic chase of nearly comic, quasi-romantic themes was the most satisfying effort of the evening seemed natural—Jenkins didn't need the opportunity to explore string possibilities so much as employ them with purpose. Braxton's quartet also focused on a particular sound aspect: the tension of four planes grinding and gliding together as though shifting in geometric space.

By contrast, the quartets of Abrams and Smith sounded diffuse. Both presented many notions, as though they might not have this chance again, and while students of the AACM school's founders might distinguish singular characteristics of both composers—Smith's isolation of piquant phrases for instance, or Muhal's plenitude of noble, if extracted, ideas—neither made as strong a statement as they do writing for their more usual instrumentations.

Though not a night of four masterpieces, the concert was certainly intriguing, worthwhile, and provocative, a too-rare collaboration between two communities-advanced thinkers from the jazz tradition and open-minded exponents of Western classical values-who have much to offer each other and listeners as well. Contemporary chamber music can use the fearless originality of Abrams, Braxton, Jenkins, Smith and their like, while those composers and their many colleagues wouldn't suffer from a little more respect. Kronos encored with Tom Darter's arrangements of Monk's Mysterioso and Ellington's Black And Tan Fantasy-obviously American classics in empathetic, knowledgeable musicians' hands. -howard mandel







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Pro Session

Wayne Shorter's Solo on Who Goes There!—A Soprano Saxophone **Transcription**

BY SCOTT FOSTER

Scott Foster is a New York-based composer and multi-instrumentalist who performs with various groups, including his own. He can be heard on Speak Of The Sun by the David Sidman Quintet, on the Global Village label.

ong-term admirers of Wayne Shorter's improvisational skills may be disappointed with the brevity and scarcity of soloing on Atlantis (Columbia 40055), his first album as leader since 1975's Native Dancer (Columbia 33418). To dismiss the new disc on these grounds alone, however, would be characteristic of today's jazz neo-conservative. It's Wayne Shorter the composer who dominates this record, and given his stature in that regard, the extended composition format arouses intriguing expectations.

Nevertheless, the excellent solo on Who Goes There! is certainly up to Shorter's high standards, and it perfectly matches the spirit of the material. Sixteen measures in length (one of the longest he plays here), he makes the most of it—not by trying to slip in as many notes as he can, but through his "economy of means" approach. Each phrase has a sophistication of structure that is surprising upon examination, in contrast to the relative simplicity one may perceive on first listening.

Performance notes:

- •1) Who Goes There! alternates between a light, airy straight-eighths feel and a romping triple-division of the beat. The solo is played over the latter.
- •2) Shorter plays Bb soprano sax on this tune. The transcription is in that instrument's key and register.
- •3) The harmonic structure of this section of the piece is based on non-root position pedal points, as the split chord symbols indicate. Chordal functions carry across the measure when not immediately followed by a new symbol.
- •4) The form is 12 measures long. Shorter blows for a chorus plus one-third, then reunites with the melody.





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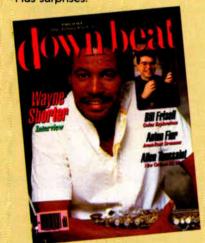
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the job with Sonny Stitt he played in every key except those three. [Laughs] He could tell. He'd heard about me from playing around Newark. Stitt wanted two of the most adventurous players in that area to sit in with him and create a pyramid of sound. The other saxophonist, Herbie Morton, had a real nice tone and was well advanced. That night taught me that I'd better learn the other keys. I'm still trying to learn them. [Laughs]

SY: When did you start playing in New York?

WS: I worked in a factory for a year, saving up money so I could study music in college, and during that time I played gigs on weekends, parties for wealthy people. I then went to NYU, graduated, and then got my greetings from the U.S. Army. I had just started playing jam sessions in New York. Everyone used to tell me how hard it was to get in these jam sessions—that you had to know someone. I was a bit worried about going in the service. I thought maybe my life was all over, even though it was peacetime then. So one day during this period I went to the Cafe Bohemia and in that club were these people: Oscar Pettiford on bass; Kenny Clarke was alternating on drums with Art Taylor, Art Blakey, and Max Roach; Jimmy Smith was there on organ; Cannonball Adderley; Bill Hardman on trumpet; Jackie McLean; Walter Bishop on piano. I was standing at the bar by the door, and Max Roach, whom I'd never met, came up to me and said, "Hey, you're the kid from Newark." He'd heard about me through the grape-vine. "Come on up and play," he said. I did what I could but wondered what kind of contribution I could be making with all of these giants up there. I started to leave the stand, but someone grabbed me by the back of my shirt—I think it was Max—and he told me to play more. It was a great night for me.

Horace Silver called me while I was in the Army, since he'd

heard about this kid from Newark too. That grapevine sure helped me; I did a few gigs with him. When I was discharged Lee Morgan called, and he said, "We've been waiting for you to get out of the Army." All these people I hadn't met were waiting for me, and for a while I used to wonder how I could live up to their expectations.

SY: Art Blakey is so renowned for his ability to nurture and bring out the best in younger players. What are some of the lessons you learned from him?

WS: Art and Miles never told us how or what to play. One thing Art would suggest was that when soloing one should tell a story. This was especially true at concerts where, unlike nightclubs, we didn't have three or four sets to get around to telling our message. Sometimes in front of a television camera you'd have maybe three minutes. Art would say that we had "three minutes to upset the world." After saying that he'd add, "Now you figure out how to do it." [Laughs]

SY: Do you have any favorite records from your period with Miles Davis?

WS: Among the nicest ones were the two volumes from the Plugged Nickel, done around Christmas 1965. We threw caution to the wind on that one. But there is something to feast on in each of those 13 or 14 albums I did with him. I still talk to Miles often. He calls me from wherever he is. Recently in talking about us in those days he said, "We sure covered a lot of ground!"

SY: What caused you to start playing soprano in 1968?

WS: I wanted to see if I could get another feel to my music. I liked the sound of the soprano, and it was kind of an extension of when I originally played clarinet.

SY: How has your compositional style changed through the

WS: When you see people like Charlie Parker—I saw him play four or five times—Lester Young, and Billie Holiday who sang at the Sugar Hill in Newark not far from where I lived, it



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becomes part of your music. A lot of the songs I wrote in the early '60s had a lot of the New York nightclub feel to them. As I matured I think my songs began to look back farther, to things in my childhood. For example, the first time as a child I saw a lake, I couldn't tell the difference between the lake and the sky, where one ended and the other began. That memory and others like it became part of my music, too.

Traveling with Art Blakey, Miles, and later Weather Report, the world started becoming a part of my music because I got to see more, and experience more. Due to all the traveling by musicians, the world becomes a bigger influence on the music contained by the word "jazz." For the past five or six years I've been telling people that my idea of what jazz means is simply "no category." When I first went to Japan with Art, I remember him saying that he was glad Japan was starting to mix in with the world again. It's the same way with jazz. If you become frozen in a style, a way of playing dictated by the word, it's like a lake without any inlet or outlet. Anything that lives in that lake eventually becomes sterile and dies. Jazz or creative music has to mix with other musics to remain viable.

SY: That was true in the earlier days, too. Jazz originally came from a mixture of five or six styles of music and has always been a little influenced by, and in turn influenced, popular music. I think the problem musicians have is that using categories makes it easier to *describe* music, but when listeners expect a musician to always fit a specific style, it robs the player of his versatility and evolution.

WS: Yes, that's true. Like it was great whenever John Wayne or Gary Cooper broke away from doing westerns all the time and would appear in a suit. They brought to other types of movies a different approach, and the results were often fresh. There is so much happening simultaneously that it is wrong to try to partition everything into its own area.

SY: Has Weather Report evolved through the years as you

originally thought it would?

WS: Yes, it's been a satisfying experience. But it had come to the point where Joe Zawinul and I were standing behind the big word "Weather Report." Now that we're breaking away a bit, we're standing in front of that word again. People will see what the individuals of that group are about.

SY: Are there any players who you have not had a chance to

play with that you'd like to in the future?

WS: I have been a bit spoiled. I'd gotten to the point where I'd played with most of the greats, and I had to wait for the next generation to grow up. For example, I got a chance to play with Don Byas in Norway in 1966. I jammed with Stuff Smith and with Bud Powell at the Lincoln Theatre in Paris. But now the younger generation is out there and coming up. Terri Lyne Carrington, a young drummer, is quite impressive. I'm going to be playing with Richard Stoltzman, the great young classical clarinetist. L. Subramaniam wants me to put something together with him. While I have my own band I can schedule more extra activities, like writing for a classical orchestra.

SY: Do you have any thoughts about the film 'Round Midnight? WS: It was one of my greatest experiences. Getting to know Dexter Gordon better was great. He makes me wish that more of his contemporaries were still around. What was good in this film is that if the dialog didn't sound to us like something we would say, they would gladly change it. And each musician had a few lines. We got to be part of the movie rather than just be performers.

SY: Do you have any future goals that we haven't covered? WS: Yes, I want to learn more of what goes into motion pictures music-wise, and create something special. I'll be reading a science fiction screenplay pretty soon, and quite possibly writing the music for it. It's too early to get specific at this point. I also have some plans to get into producing in the

I guess my main goal—the hopeful end result—is to create music so strong and uplifting that it will inspire people to want to be as good in their jobs and in their lives as the music makes them feel. That's the bottom line.

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Latin Percussion's Jr. Congas

LATIN PERCUSSION INC. (Garfield, NJ) has released junior congas that are between congas and bongos in size, measuring eight and nine inches in diameter-by-15 inches tall. The junior congas are available in Asiatic white or wine red wood. Chromed hardware stands are included.

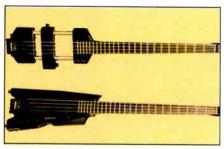
KEYBOARD COUNTRY



Yamaha's KX88

YAMAHA INTERNATIONAL CORP. (Buena Park, CA) offers the KX88 MIDI Master Keyboard, a digital keyboard controller providing MIDI functions on a touchresponsive 88-key keyboard capable of driving the complete range of MIDI instruments. Effects are assigned through 19 types of controls, and up to 192 types of parameter changes may be defined, including control changes and system-exclusive data. Control of aftertouch, breath control, and modulation wheels is also possible, and factory-programmed defaults put the keyboard in a user-friendly performance mode on power-up. The KX88 can be combined with the company's TX816 FM tone generator to become a powerful synthesizer, or with an QXI Digital Sequence Recorder to become an advanced music programmer.

GUITAR WORLD



Westone's Headless Basses

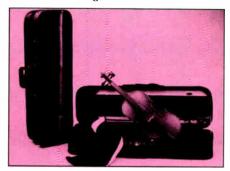
WESTONE (St. Louis Music Supply Co., St. Louis, MO) has introduced two new headless basses. The Rail features a variable position pickup that glides on tuned steel rails, allowing the bassist to customtune his sound. The Quantum uses two Magnabass fixed pickups directmounted to its tuned body. Each pickup has its own volume control for blending the sound of the pickups. The body and neck are made of Canadian maple for good sustain and projection. Both models feature specially designed bridges and tuning machines, the latter riding on bearing supports behind the bridge to reduce friction. A heavy-duty gig bag is provided with each bass at no charge.

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Knilling's Embassy Cases

KNILLING STRING INSTRUMENTS (St. Louis, MO) is offering the Embassy line of violin and cello cases. Violin cases are made from black nylon oxford covered with a full-length zippered music pouch. They include two swiss-style bow holders with bow ribbons, large accessory compartment oversize for shoulder rests, Velcro neck tie, and center locking latch. The cello cases include rugged three-ply construction with black leather grain exterior, two bow holders, accessory compartment, string pouch, Velcro neck restraint, and scroll loop. The exterior is reinforced at critical stress areas and exposed corners, and the case also includes three handles, multiple shoulder strap rings, and screw-attached feet. db

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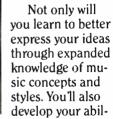
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AWARDS 1984-85

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FRISELL

continued from page 21

his shyness to play solo guitar concerts. "The only time I don't feel comfortable is when people aren't really listening to each other," he explains. "It doesn't matter what kind of music it is-even conventional bebop; if it's happening, then this isn't the case, but it's so easy for people to fall into, 'Okay, this is the tempo, these are the chords, drums play time, bass plays this, piano player plays this, boom! You, noodle over the top of it.' I don't feel comfortable with that, because when that music was happening everyone was really listening and responding to each other. But if I play something, and nobody in the band is listening or responding to it, I feel uncomfortable and it's hard for me to play."

In Frisell's attack—that easy rising, pedal steel moan that seems so often sad and lonely, or fills the empty cracks between other instrumentalists' ideas like an unguent-one can sometimes hear the clarinet, with all its woodsy warmth.

"It's true," the guitarist agrees. "There's a certain feeling I'm trying to get, it's almost a physical sensation. Like when you're blowing that instrument, and your whole body is vibrating as you focus that sound through the tube. It's not exactly conscious, but when I make a sound on the guitar, I guess I try to get my body vibrating the same way, to focus the sound, and also to blend with the other instruments, as I used to when I'd play in a woodwind quintet. To get that buzzing thing happening.

And he's often successful, though "that buzzing thing," that almost physical sensation, may be coming from the strings' vibration coursing through complex electronic circuitry while Frisell twists knobs faster than the speed of conscious thought, or from his calling forth some dimly remembered voicing of his youth, or from his heedlessly tossing out music's usual language to just play what he feels, even if it's frustration at not being able to hear through the studio headphones (check out his remarkable solo of squiggles and roars on trumpeter Herb Robertson's album Transparency—the cut's Flocculus). Like reedist Zorn playing only mouthpieces, or drummer Motian composing songs in open time, or guitarist Jim Hall finding the right other thing to play with just his hands and an old amp (though his former student says he's been talking to Hall recently, and the older man seems interested in what can be done with the latest electronic gear), or even Bird trying to fly higher, Bill Frisell is looking for something, and he won't stop when he finds it—assuming he recognizes it when it's come. Bets are he'll keep looking, if just to find something

TOUSSAINT continued from page 27

He knew everything that I had ever sung background on and songs that I had thrown in the garbage can. He told me, 'We're not interested in this artist or that artist, but we would be interested in you recording because I love your singing behind Lee Dorsey on Working In A Coal Mine.' My first album, Toussaint, was on Tiffany Records. [Note: The Wild Sounds Of New Orleans that includes Java, recorded in 1958, was actually Toussaint's first recording.] After that I moved on to Warner Bros., where I recorded three albums.

Like the Meters, whose recordings Toussaint leased to Warner Bros., his records Life, Love And Faith, Southern Nights, and Motion were not commercial successes. By the end of 1977, the interest in New Orleans music by new Orleaneans had begun to subside, although Sea-Saint did produce a hit with Dorsey's Night People in 1978. And this album included not only Toussaint on piano, but the legendary James Booker on organ.

This is not to imply that Toussaint stopped working. He didn't. Projects by Ramsey Lewis, Eric Gale, and Joe Cocker found their way to Sea-Saint. He also continued to work with his own groups such as the ATG Group and local pro-

grams and benefits for such New Orleans luminaries as Professor Longhair or the fledgling New Orleans for Africa, a fundraising project for the hungry and homeless.

Looking back over his career, Toussaint expresses little regret. He does, however, sense a change in his own attitudes. "I've been accused of being a perfectionist and a taskmaster. It's both a curse and blessing. When you put your blinders on, you miss little accidents that would have been a spice of life. Now I'm looking for those little gifts that make life interesting. Uniformity is still a good word for me. I like order. But once I get a plan, I can now relax and be open to the little gifts which I know will come."

Though Toussaint seems optimistic about his future prospects—in addition to making concert appearances in New York, he recorded on *Conjure*, a tribute to the poet Ishmael Reed produced by Kip Hanrahan, and completed a demo tape for possible release—he still needs to consistently exhibit the dynamism of a performer. All too often, Toussaint's eclectic and curious tastes emerge at the cost of excitement. But time will only tell if Allen Toussaint can bridge that chasm between the studio and the stage. He seems determined to try because, "A live audience, that's the maximum. Well, heaven is the max, but for earthly endeavors, a live audience is max."

Auditions

down beat spotlights young musicians deserving wider recognition.



CHRIS POTTER, 15-year-old saxophonist, appeared on a Jazz Educators' Journal cover when he was in the sixth grade. At 12, he won the National Association of Jazz Educators' Young Talent Award-an honor usually reserved for high school and college students. Since then, he's continued improving while winning jazz fellowships to the Aspen Music Festival in 1984 and '85, a scholarship to the Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Clinic in 1983, and firstchair alto saxophone berths in the South Carolina All-State Jazz Ensemble and All-State Band (for two and three straight years, respec-

Potter performs regularly on alto. soprano, and tenor saxes with the Columbia Jazz Quartet, as firstchair tenor with the U. of South Carolina Left Bank Jazz Band and the Ed Crosby Big Band, and with the John Emche Quartet. His teachers include professors Emche and R. Doug Graham of the U. of South Carolina and his first teacher, Bryson Borgstedt (Potter attends Dreher H.S. in Columbia). His influences include John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis. "I listen to things over and over until I exhaust all the meaning from them," he says. "Then one day I get sick of it and move on to something else."



THOMAS PAYNTER, 17-yearord futist/keyboardist, started out on piano at age eight. Paynter is

first-chair flutist with the Rolling Meadows (IL) H.S. Symphonic Band and pianist for the school's jazz ensemble. In the past year, he has been selected for Who's Who Among American High School Students, played piano and flute at the Columbia College Jazz Festival with the best overall performance-winning Rolling Meadows Jazz Ensemble, played flute in his school district's Concert Orchestra, and been named pianist for the Illinois All-State Jazz Band.

Paynter continues studying classical and jazz flute with teacher Kay Ragsdale and piano with James Matteoni (he has also played synthesizer). He has played with several rock groups and currently performs with a jazz combo. His influences include Jethro Tull flutist lan Anderson, Jean-Luc Ponty, Jim Walker, Garry Niewood, and Steve Kujala.



FLOYD PHELPS, 21, was born and raised in Chicago, where he started playing bass at age 15. At 17, he moved to Phoenix. His first musical interest was rock, but he soon switched to jazz, fusion, latin, and funk. After recording his original compositions with fusion guitarists Scott Henderson (a Jean-Luc Ponty sideman) and Frank Gambale (Afterburner), Phelps began concentrating mainly on jazz.

Phelps is currently attending the Musician's Institute in Los Angeles, where he and one of the school's instructors, Norman Brown, are co-writing a book dealing with bass improvising and progressive, three-finger slap style. His goals are to improve his songwriting and playing, to perform, and to teach at the Musician's Institute; his technical interest is to MIDI interface with digital sequencers. Phelps' influences include Jeff Berlin, Ron Eschete, Frank Gambale, Scott Henderson, and Carl Schroeder.



YOSHIHIRO ARITA 28 was first-prize winner in the banjo division of the 14th National Flat-Picking Competition, held recently in Winfield, Kansas The Tokyo native, a sophomore at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, was awarded a trophy, \$2,000, and a deluxe handcrafted five-string banio from the Imperial Banio Company. Arita took top honors on the strength of his outstanding performances of Earl Scruggs' Dear Old Dixie and Shuckin' The Corn, Jerome Kern's All The Things You Are, and Charlie Parker's Confirmation.

Arita and Berklee alumnus John McGann, who won the mandolin division at the same event, are currently entertaining audiences throughout New England with their critically acclaimed duo performances.



DAN WOJCIECHOWSKI, 20year-old drummer, was promoted to North Texas State University's One O'Clock Lab Band last fall. A transferee from Wayne State University (Detroit), Wojciechowski has done a good deal of studio work and played with dozens of big bands, orcnestras, rock groups, and jazz combos in his young career-most notably with the 1984 All-American College Marching and Show Band at Floridas Walt Disney World. He has also drummed at a number of special events, among them the Randy Brecker Lecture Series at NTSU, Zildjian Day '85 in Dalas, and the National Trombone Convention in Nashville.

Wojciechowski has won numerous awards, including a 1985 down beat "deebee" award for Outstanding Performance, an NAJE Outstanding Musicianship Award at the 1985 Wichita Jazz Festival, first place in the 1984 PAS Drum Line Competition, first and fourth place awards in the 1983 National Drum Battle Tour sponsored by Mattel Synsonics Drums (in regional and national competitions), and a first place in the 1980 North American Invitational Drum Competition.



MIKE MURLEY, 23, has been one of the busiest saxophonists on the Toronto scene in the past year, covering the spectrum of contemporary jazz from big bands to free ensembles. Originally from Windsor, Nova Scotia, and Torontobased for five years now, he lists Don Palmer, Pat LaBarbera, Bob Mover, Dave Liebman, and Lee Konitz as his saxophone teachers; Acadia University (Nova Scotia), Humber College and York University (Toronto), and the Banff School of Fine Arts Jazz Workshop (Alberta) as his schools; and Liebman, Bird, Rollins, Trane, David Murray, and Coleman Hawkins among his influences.

Murley is a regular member of the Tribal Unit and Brigham Phillips big bands and of such small groups as Time Warp, Silk Stockings, Screef and, most prominently, the Shuffle Demons, a colorful street band that worked its way through Europe in the summer of 1985 and will appear at Expo '86 in Vancouver during the summer months. He was a prominent soloist in a recent Kenny Wheeler orchestra project in Toronto and has been heard in various local clubs with his own quartet.

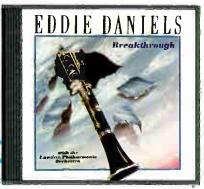
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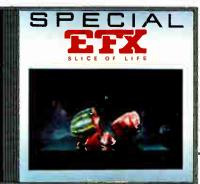
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