

STEVE MORSE  
*Solo Transcription*

For Contemporary Musicians

# down beat

April, 1987 \$1.75 U.K. £2.00



**JEFF BERLIN**

*Beyond The  
Bas(s)ics*

**EVAN  
PARKER**

*Sax Master*

**BILLY  
COBHAM**

*On The  
Attack*

**Steve  
Morse**

**GUITAR POWER**



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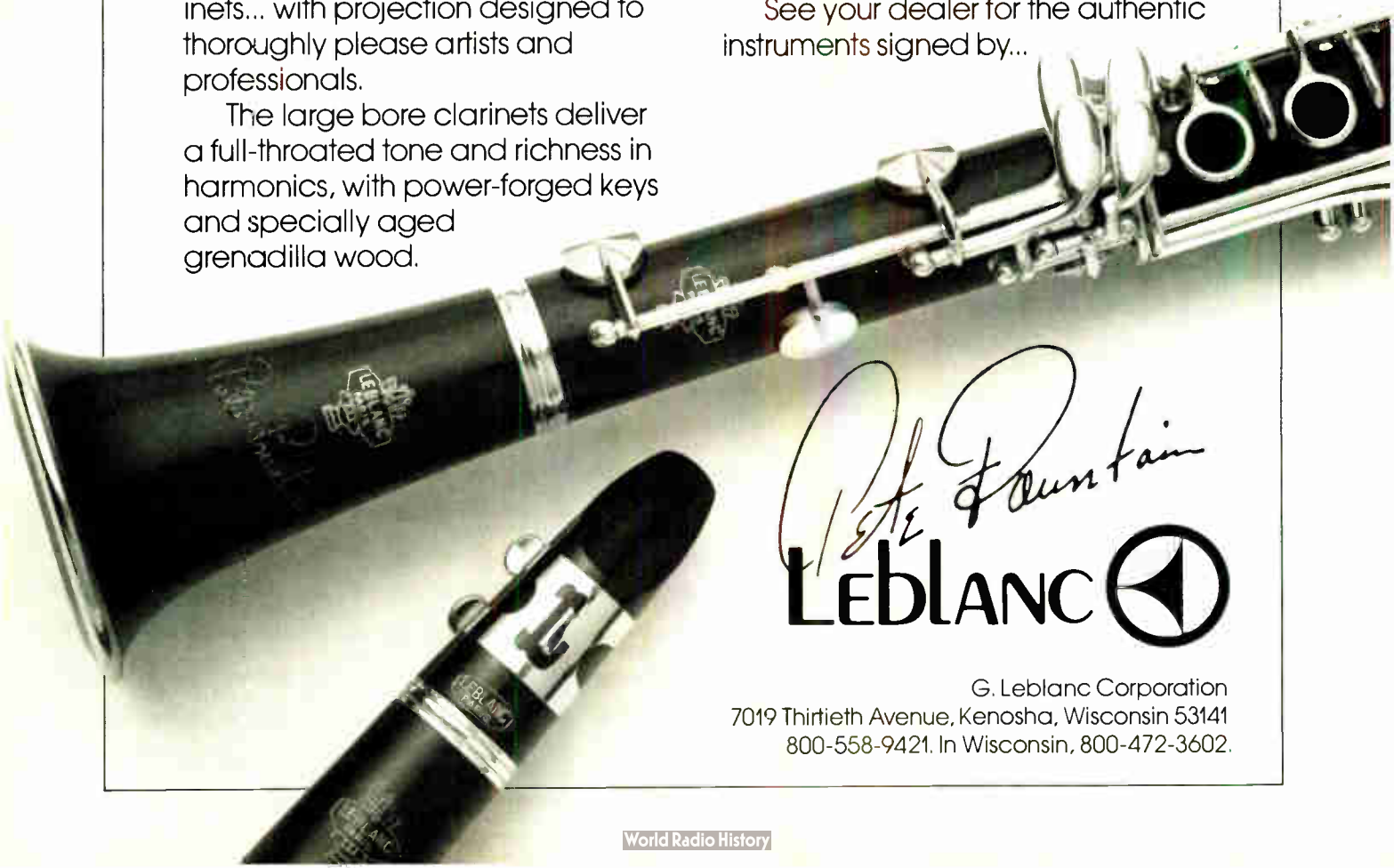
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Steve Morse

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Billy Cobham

STEVEN GROSS



Jeff Berlin

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## down beat

For Contemporary Musicians

APRIL 1987

VOLUME 54 NO. 4

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222 W. Adams St., Chicago IL 60606

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**down beat** (ISSN 0012-5768) is published monthly by Maher Publications, 180 West Park Ave., Elmhurst IL 60126. Copyright 1987 Maher Publications. All rights reserved. Trademark registered U.S. Patent Office. Great Britain registered trademark No. 719, 407. Second Class

registered trademark No. 719, 407. Second Class postage paid at Elmhurst, IL and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: \$18.00 for one year, \$31.00 for two years. Foreign subscriptions add \$5.00 per year.

Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, photos, or artwork. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without written permission from publisher. Microfilm of all issues of **down beat** are available from University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. **MAHER PUBLICATIONS:** **down beat** magazine, **Up Beat** magazine, **Up Beat NAIMM Show Dailies**.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please allow six weeks for your change to become effective. When notifying us of your new address, include current **down beat** label showing old address.

**POSTMASTER:** SEND CHANGE OF ADDRESS TO **down beat**, 180 W. Park, Elmhurst, IL 60126.

**CABLE ADDRESS:** **downbeat** (on sale Mar. 17, 1987) Members, Audit Bureau of Circulation, Magazine Publishers Association



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## Berklee

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## IS IT LIVE OR MEMOREX?

by Bill Milkowski

**A** controversy is brewing. The players have chosen sides, pro and con, and the battle rages on. It's the Great Tape Debate.

With the advent of digital recording techniques and the significant improvement of hush technology (dbx being far superior to dolby in eliminating tape hiss), more and more musicians have begun performing in concert with backing tapes rather than using flesh-and-blood sidemen. These prepared tapes may be as simple as a drum pattern and bass line accompaniment, or they may contain a complex web of guitar parts, synth fills, horn pads, vocal backing—the whole bit.

Sometimes it works, often it doesn't.

The first time I witnessed an artist performing live to taped accompaniment was back in 1977. Grace Jones, the disco diva, had not yet attained the lofty level of celebrity that she currently holds, but she was hot underground property on the international disco circuit. Back then, the girl just couldn't afford to take a band on the road, so she packed her sidemen in her

suitcase, in the form of a pre-recorded reel-to-reel backing tape. It was a keen idea that went awry.

Grace made her outrageous entrance on a motorcycle, dismounted, then cued the soundman to start the tape. She launched into her big hit at the time, *I Need A Man*, and the crowd ate it up, so mesmerized by her stunning presence that they didn't even notice the lack of live musicians. That is, not until the tape suddenly came to an abrupt and rather embarrassing halt in the middle of the tune. Poor Grace looked lost, like a drowning woman waiting for someone, anyone, to throw her a life preserver. She stood there, humiliated, while the soundman worked feverishly to repair the glitch. She threw up a smokescreen with some X-rated banter to divert the crowd's attention from this technological hangup, but it was too late. Her hip-exotic cover was blown. Then some wiseguy in the back yelled out, "Why don't you introduce the band?"

A lot of improvements in tape technology have been made since then. It's a less risky proposition these days to perform live with backing tapes. But the relative success of this practice raises certain ethical questions.

In a solo performance at Carnegie Hall a while back, guitarist Steve Morse caused

controversy with his use of taped accompaniment. Though most of his extraordinary set involved self-accompaniment (tape loops created on the spot with a digital delay unit, which allows for multiple layering effects), Morse shocked the purists in the crowd by performing one piece with a tape of his erstwhile bandmates from the Dregs. He announced to the capacity crowd at Carnegie that this particular tune had never before been performed live, simply because it was too difficult to pull off in concert. So what Steve did was put up a studio-quality tape of the band accurately performing this tricky number (sans his own guitar parts). He let the tape roll and played along with it. And *voilà!* With the flick of a switch, there were drummer Rod Morgenstern, bassist Andy West, and keyboardist T Lavitz, right there on stage with the long-haired guitarist. I mean, they were there in *sound* and *spirit*, but not in the flesh. It was eerie.

This spectacle raised some questions in my mind. Take the logic one step further. If you're going to be basically playing your "licks" live on top of a tape of musicians who aren't really there, where do you draw the line? Do taped musicians necessarily need to be living musicians? After all, it's just tape. Why limit yourself? Especially when you have such a wealth of taped talent to draw on—past and present.

Consider the ramifications and possibilities. Through the miracle of tape and present-day technology, you could stage a "reunion" concert with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. Just cue up Bird's solos on an ultra-high bias, digitally remixed tape, pipe it through some top-of-the-line speakers, and let Diz play along. And to fill in the visual void, maybe you could prop up some lifesize cut-out of Yardbird himself, standing there side-by-side with his old partner Birks. And just wait until holograms become household items. Think of it! A 3-D Charlie Parker up there on stage, his glorious alto sounds pouring through the speakers. The crowd could conceivably be fooled. Is this live or is this Memorex? Only the soundman knows for sure.

Through the magic of tape technology, Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding might stage a reunion tour with Jimi Hendrix. Beatles fans could finally have the reunion tour they have been clamoring for all these years. And while you're at it, bring back Philly Joe Jones in his prime to anchor the rhythm section with a taped Paul Chambers. Put up a taped John Coltrane and a taped Red Garland, trot out a live Miles Davis and—bingo! Instant mid-'50s quintet.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

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otherwise creep into your sample. What's more, the SM94 offers exceptionally high SPL capability—up to 141 dB—all but eliminating distortion on transient peaks.

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And for voice sampling, we suggest the new SM96 with its vocal contoured response and built-in three-stage pop filter. Both these fine microphones can bring a new dimension of realism to your digital sampling.



# Vandoren meets the wild man from Borneo.

Photo credit: Keri Pickett  
Coloration: Susan Hall



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## chords & discords

### SAX TALK

Thanks for the review of Bruce Springsteen's box set (Feb. '87). I am curious if you have ever interviewed his sax player, Clarence Clemons. If so, please tell me in what issue. If not, do you have plans to in the future?

Thanks for your effort and time in producing this magazine. I really appreciate it. But I would like to see the return of (or more of) the Sax Doctor.

Bob Barry  
Flagstaff, AZ

Clarence Clemons was featured in our April '84 issue. —Ed.

I have enjoyed reading your fine publication for many years. (My father was featured in an advertisement for Titano accordians in your July 14, 1954 issue). My favorite features include the articles written by Mr. Emilio Lyons, the esteemed saxophone and clarinet master repairman. I have talked to many professional saxophonists across the country, and Mr. Lyons enjoys the reputation as being the best. I find his articles most informative and would like to see more of these gems in **down beat**.

Stan Basgall  
Hays, KS

### AUNT CHARLIE'S CHOICE

Thank you, thank you **down beat** for the excellent review of the Doc Severinsen *Tonight Show* Big Band album (Feb. '87). It is the first LP that all the generations of our family (15 to 75) love. I do so appreciate your letting us know about it and its quality. The lad at the record shop told us that the album is selling in larger amounts than any jazz LP in years and years. Perhaps it will set a record. Rumor has it that there are so many fine arrangements in the *Tonight Show* Band's book that they are planning a three-record album with both swing and modern arrangements. Lordy, I hope the rumor is true.

Charlotte (Aunt Charlie) Mulford  
Sanford, NC

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

For love of who knows what, jazz musicians continue to subject themselves and their music to the most disrespectful circumstances of performance and audience appreciation. Jim Roberts' report on the Pullen/Adam's Quartet in the Record Reviews in the January 1987 issue restarted the fires under my pot! "A tiny nightclub . . . the dinky spinet piano . . . off to the side, on the floor . . . George Adams with no place to stand." Does this seem like respect to professional, internationally acclaimed performers presenting a part of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



## The Ensoniq Piano . . . Intimacy on a grand scale

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our nation's cultural heritage? No classical musician, no matter how amateurish, would subject the music of the classical masters to such an environment.

James S. Dorsey  
Fort Walton Beach, FL

## CORRECTING CHARLIE

I enjoyed your interview with Charlie Watts (Feb. '87) almost as much as I enjoyed the Charlie Watts Orchestra's concert at the Ritz in New York City last December. However, on behalf of one of my colleagues, I must correct the statement Watts made about Max Weinberg's book on drummers, *The Big Beat* (Contemporary Books). The jacket and spine of the book clearly state that the book was written by Weinberg with Robert Santelli, not by Weinberg alone, as Watts stated. Bob did a great bit of the research and legwork for the book, traveled with Weinberg to conduct all of the interviews (even that with Watts!), and even transcribed most of the interview tapes. I'm sure Max would be the first to point out that the book was definitely not a one-man job but a collaboration. Jeez, don't you think he's busy enough working for Springsteen? Who'd have time to put a whole book together singlehandedly?!

Jeff Tamarkin, Editor  
Goldmine magazine  
New York, NY

## A/G HUNT

I enjoyed Kevin Whitehead's big band "Back to the Future" article (db, Feb. '87), but I cannot locate the Austin/Gallivan LP *Ailana* (Hannibal 1314). Do you have an address for ordering it?

Austin/Gallivan have made some fine records with original synthesizer/reeds duets. Has *down beat* ever reviewed them? They seem a well-kept secret.

David Heymann  
Mountain View, CA

Try obtaining *Ailana* directly from Hannibal Records: 36 Berwick St., London W1V 3RF, England. *Austin/Gallivan* records reviewed in db include *At Last* (reviewed Mar. 26, '76) and *Expression To The Winds* (Oct. 5, '78).

—Ed.

## MARSHMALLOW ROAST

In reference to John McDonough's ill-informed critique of our latest album in the big band review section of your December 1986 issue—we beg to differ! *Superband II* was dismissed in one quick paragraph as "curiously bland." Our music cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be called "bland." That's like calling the last Mets vs. Boston game "boring." Not

applicable.

Apparently Mr. McDonough was immersed in a room full of marshmallows, causing all auditory sensations to be blandly rendered. This hindrance may also account for his "two unspecified tenor players," namely Bill Saxton and Orpheus Gaitanopoulos, who were *not* hiding behind pillars of marshmallows, but were plainly visible in the album's credits.

In short, we of Superband find this *down beat* review to be curiously bland itself, and remarkably inappropriate, especially in light of our placement in the Big Band TDWR category of *down beat*'s own Critic's Poll in the August issue.

We do not object to constructive criticism—McDonough's wimpy paragraph did not offer any. We do object, however, to being summarily dismissed in so spurious a fashion. Next time, *listen* to the album first.

Charli Persip & Superband  
New York City

*I appreciate Charli Persip's discomfort. He's a fine drummer, and by many accounts he has a fine band. But it was not so much a band I was reviewing as a record. And after rehearsing the record I stand by my review.*

*So let's assume the band was not well captured on the LP. Goodness knows, the artificiality of multi-track studio recording has had a deadening, homogenizing effect on the natural energy and presence of many an orchestra.*  
—John McDonough

## SUGGESTION BOX

I have just received the January '87 issue of your excellent publication after an inadvertent lapse of several months in my subscription. Since, during those months, I added a compact disc player to my stereo system, the section on CD reviews was particularly interesting and useful.

I have two suggestions which would enhance my, and perhaps other readers', enjoyment of your magazine: 1) To prevent those inadvertent lapses, a reminder or renewal form would be most useful before a subscription expires. 2) A note with each record review indicating availability on CD would be useful to a growing number of readers enthusiastic with the medium.

Again, thanks for the outstanding articles and reviews.

Dewey P. DeBrusk  
N. Grafton, MA



#

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## REFINEMENT, INNOVATION DISPLAYED AT NAMM

**ANAHEIM**—Imagine, if you can, a music store that covers the size of approximately four-and-a-half football fields, carries nearly every model of every instrument currently being manufactured, and features product demonstrations by well-known professional musicians. That's a rough idea of what the recent National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) convention, held at the convention center here, was like. The musical products industry displayed all of its new wares to over 32,000 music store employees and other industry personnel who attended its three-day run.

The highlight of this season's NAMM show was the continued development in electronic musical instruments. Music technology has been advancing by leaps and bounds in recent years, and many manufacturers have chosen this show as the place to introduce their major new products. The trend continued to a certain degree this year as well, but the primary emphasis seemed to be on refinement over innovation. A perfect example of this came in the form of two of Yamaha's eagerly awaited new products, the DX7IID and DX7IIFD. These new synthesizers are second-generation DX7's with dual tone generators for splitting and layering sounds, enhanced real-time controls over those sounds, and the capability for micro-tonal tunings. The DX7IIFD also contains a built-in floppy disk drive for storing patches and other MIDI system exclusive information. Neither of these keyboards are radically different from the original (nor are their prices much different), but both represent a definite improvement of the popular DX7.

Following a somewhat similar approach, Ensoniq unveiled the Mirage-DSK, a repackaged Mirage with stereo outputs and a \$400 price cut. Also in the area of

sampling keyboards, Casio upgraded the technology of the incredibly popular SK-1 to make the jump to the professional market with the 16-bit FZ-1. The instrument features eight individual outputs and an LCD that can display the sampled waveforms.

A few companies did unveil innovative new products, including Roland and electronic drum pioneer Simmons. Roland's impressive D-50, the company's first completely digital synthesizer, features on-board digital signal processing and a new method of synthesis the company terms Linear Arithmetic, or L/A. On a very basic level, L/A synthesis allows the user to create sounds by combining four PCM-sampled or synthesizer waveform "partials" into one of seven possible combinations or "structures." Roland also introduced the VP-70 Voice Processor, which is a combination four-part pitch-shifter and pitch-to-MIDI interface. The unit accepts any monophonic input and allows horn players or vocalists to both access MIDI products and produce up to four-part harmony from a single note.

New from Simmons is the SDX electronic drum kit, which features 16-bit user sampling, an integral video display in the control unit, and zone-intelligent pads. The Silicon Mallet is an electronic mallet instrument with a built-in digital synthesizer and a MIDI interface. Finally, Group Centre Inc., Simmons' parent company in the U.S., introduced the Stepp DG-1 digital guitar from England. The guitar has a switched fret-tracking system to avoid triggering delays and a built-in digitally controlled analog synthesizer.

All told, it was an extremely successful convention with a number of interesting developments, creating an upbeat atmosphere for the balance of 1987.

—bob o'donnell



KEN FRANKLING

**SWINGING PREVIEW:** The Scott Hamilton Quintet and special guest Duke Robillard gigged at the Woonsocket, RI, club Chan's recently as a preview to the new Robillard/Hamilton album, *Swing*. Pictured left to right are drummer Chuck Riggs, guitarist Christ Flary, bassist Phil Flanigan, Hamilton, pianist Mike LeDonne, and Robillard.



**NAMM ARTISTS:** State-of-the-art instruments weren't all that was on display at this year's winter NAMM Show. Among the many musicians to turn up was Doc Severinsen, shown above with members of the Fernand L. Petat All-Industry Memorial Marching Band, including NAMM president Alfredo Flores Jr. (l) and executive vice president Larry Linkin (r). Others included Danny Gatlief, Beach Boy Brian Wilson, and Susanna Hoffs of the Bangles.

## Mus Ed Report

The first annual **Musicfest U.S.A.** festival, hosted by **down beat**, will be held in Chicago April 10-11 at the McCormick Inn Hotel. The Festival will feature 100 school and community jazz bands and combos from all over the country in live competition. More than 30 hours of clinics and workshops will be conducted by world-famous educators and musicians. In addition, evening concerts are scheduled featuring nationally known groups such as Jim Walker's Free Flight. The competition and clinics will be open to the public. Admission is \$5 per day or \$10 including admission to the evening concerts. For more information call Laura Keeler at 312/941-2030.

The **North Texas State University School of Music** has received a Yamaha Music Award for the school's contributions to the world of music, becoming the second school to achieve the honor in the three years that Yamaha has presented the award (the award is normally presented to individuals). Dr. Marceau Myers, dean of the School of Music, accepted the award at this year's NAMM winter convention in Anaheim.

The **Berklee College of Music** in Boston has announced the appointment of two new faculty members. Composer and vocalist Dennis Grillo, who came to prominence as a member of the Four Freshmen, has been named associate professor of jazz composition. His background also includes work as a trumpeter and

arranger with the bands of Stan Kenton, Charlie Barnet, Claude Thornhill, and Jimmy Dorsey.

Trombonist Hal Crook, who has performed, composed, and arranged for Doc Severinsen and the NBC-TV *Tonight Show* Orchestra as well as the bands of Woody Herman, Louie Bellson, and Clark Terry, has been appointed instructor of jazz composition. A 1971 Summa Cum Laude graduate of Berklee, Crook has also worked with the bands of Thad Jones, Lew Tabackin and Toshiko Akiyoski, and others.

The **Grove School of Music** has announced the appointment of two new faculty members, and that it will be relocating to new facilities in time for the July '87 quarter. The new home for the school will be the former *Daily News* building at 14539 Sylvan St. in Van Nuys, CA, about four miles from the school's present location. The school's new faculty members are Nick Perito, a composer/arranger/conductor with six Emmy nominations to his credit, and Allyn Ferguson, composer of soundtracks for over 35 films and numerous television shows, including the Emmy-winning underscore for *Camille*.

The **International Trombone Association** will hold its annual workshop May 25-28 at Belmont College in Nashville, TN. Faculty members include Ray Premru, Erik and Bart Van Lier, Bill Watrous, and others. For more info, contact Dr. Neill Humfeld, East Texas State University School of Music, Commerce, TX 75428.

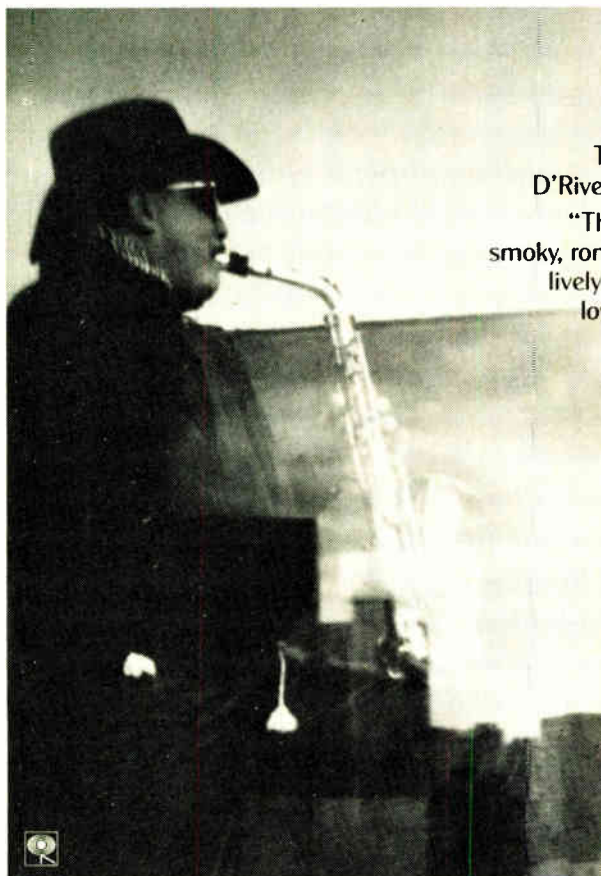
# Potpourri

**B**ullish on Bullock: **Hiram Bullock** will join the **Miles Davis** band for a brief tour of four American cities this spring; when that's done the guitarist will be back touring with **David Sanborn** and producing for Atlantic Records . . . Jackson tracks: **Joe Jackson** has finished up basic tracks for his upcoming all-instrumental album, *Will Power*; the rocker wrote string and woodwind charts for a 50-piece orchestra for the album, which was recorded at the cavernous RCA Studios . . . Prince projects: **Prince** is purportedly planning to release a new single any day now, to be followed by a double-album in late spring and, quite possibly, a tour with a new band to include **Sheila E.** on drums; the purple one's also rumored to have contributed more than just his Paisley Park imprimatur to the record 8, by **Madhouse** . . . Geldof gelt: **Bob Geldof** was recently

awarded the \$100,000 Third World Prize by the London-based Third World Foundation for his efforts to help the hungry; meanwhile, **Michael Jackson** has quit his spot on the board of directors of USA for Africa, apparently miffed by delays in distributing food and supplies to African famine victims . . . jazzy dj: **Branford Marsalis** was guest host recently on the rock video channel VH-1; the saxist spun mostly jazz videos—his own and some by **Miles Davis**, **George Howard**, **John Scofield**, **Bill Evans**, **Mark Egan**, and the **Blue Note All-Stars** (**Herbie Hancock**, **Freddie Hubbard**, **Joe Henderson**, **Ron Carter**, and **Tony Williams**). Branford and brother **Wynton**, incidentally, have both been nominated as best jazz soloist in this year's Grammy Awards, the first time brothers have battled each other for the honor; other nominees in the category are **Dizzy**

**Gillespie**, **Miles Davis**, and **Eddie Daniels** . . . Hennessy search: 4/1 is the deadline for sending a 20-minute cassette to the **Hennessy Cognac Jazz Search** (Suite JAZZ, 2801B Ocean Park Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405) to compete for \$1,500 prize money, free transportation to the finals competition in Los Angeles, and a free master-quality demo recording courtesy of **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's** Cranberry Records; semi-finalists in each of four cities (New York, L.A., New Orleans, and Detroit) will receive \$500 each, with the winners from each city receiving an additional \$1,000 in expense money, plus the trip to the finals at the Hollywood Bowl in June . . . stone polls: the results are in for the 1987 *Rolling Stone* critics' and readers' polls; the rock mag's readers tapped **Bruce Springsteen** as top artist, his *Live: 1975-1985* box set as top album, and **Wynton Marsalis** as top jazz artist, while the critics'

choices were **Peter Gabriel** as artist of the year, **Paul Simon's** *Graceland* as best album, and **Dexter Gordon** as best jazz artist . . . Swiss bliss: an exciting musical tour package is being offered for the **1987 Montreux Jazz Festival** (7/3-19); for details on this special tour package, contact Danielle DeVito at Danmar Percussion, 818/787-3444 . . . spring happenings: the Marine Band gala concert at the Kennedy Center (3/31) salutes the PanAmerican Games in Indianapolis this summer; April happenings abroad include fests in **Turku, Finland** (4/3-5) and **Tubize, Belgium** (4/25); and Florida plays host to the 1987 **Pensacola Jazz Fest** (4/11-12, featuring **Ira Sullivan**, **John Blake**, **Bill Watrous**, and **Milt Hinton**) and the **Sarasota Jazz Festival** (4/22-24, featuring **Al Cohn**, **Al Grey**, **Jay McShann**, and **Buddy Tate**) . . .



## WHERE THERE'S PAQUITO, THERE'S FIRE.

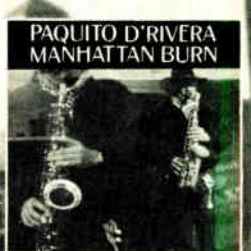
The sizzling sax of Paquito D'Rivera has the critics glowing:

"The Cuban emigre blends a smoky, romantic passion with clean, lively technique and a bopper's love of free, wild blowing..."

"D'Rivera is an impressive soloist on both alto sax and clarinet, a talented composer and a master of both Latin and American jazz styles."

Paquito's new album, "Manhattan Burn," includes songs by Chick Corea, Daniel Freiberg, Jerome Kern, and explosive originals with enough fire to light up the whole country.

**"MANHATTAN BURN."**  
PAQUITO D'RIVERA AT HIS  
BLAZING BEST.  
ON COLUMBIA RECORDS,  
CASSETTES AND COMPACT DISCS.



PAQUITO D'RIVERA  
MANHATTAN BURN

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**THE HEAT HITS THE STREET: WATCH FOR PAQUITO D'RIVERA NOW ON TOUR!**

## KEITH JARRETT

**"T**here was almost no thinking going on—you can sort of eliminate thinking," explains

Keith Jarrett, as he discusses the process of his unlikely new record, *Spirits* (ECM 1333/34). It's a powerful, intimate diary that may startle those who see Jarrett as the aloof artiste and demanding perfectionist.

In 26 short vignettes, *Spirits* traverses a world of sound and images. Although there's no specific attempt at ethnicity, there's an inherent World Music feel to Jarrett's improvisations, using Pakistani flutes, acoustic guitars, recorders, tablas, soprano saxophone, *naz*—and very little piano. Playing away from his strengths, *Spirits* is at once childlike in its simplicity, and haunting in its ritual atmospheres.

Playing in his home studio, Jarrett overdubbed himself, bouncing from one stereo cassette to another. Like his solo piano improvisations, it was spontaneous, but even more direct. "After playing one track I would immediately know what I wanted to do next," he explains excitedly. "Occasionally I did one thing more and came back and listened and said, 'No, no, I destroyed this entire piece.' So



TOSHINARI KOINUMA

I'd go back to the last track."

Jarrett's attitude towards improvisation was reinforced after a lengthy period of performing his own classical works and those of Bach, Bartok, Stravinsky, and others. "I was doing classical recitals and concerts, and I'd seen that world of music—the world of musical frustration," Jarrett laughs ruefully. His reaction was to go in the complete opposite direction, to get as primitive and basic as he could. "So I was at home after some concerts," he recalls, "and I got up and

came in the studio and picked up a recorder, which I hadn't played for a while because I was playing classical piano things, and I realized I had been missing something. It was like if you haven't prayed or something—like you just didn't have time to pray? I don't know any other way to explain it. I came into the studio and used the recorder to get into that state."

Jarrett was surprised that the music felt as powerful when he listened as when he played. "Something started happening that was so strong that I thought I would be a fool not to turn on some kind of tape recorder," he explains somewhat incredulously. "I just wanted it as a document of my state, whether that state was really coming through. As days went by and I kept coming to the studio, I realized that state was coming through. It was really there."

Jarrett sent copies of the tapes to ECM's Manfred Eicher as a gift. Even though they were recorded on cassettes—and even had some distortion, since Jarrett was also the engineer—Eicher insisted on releasing them as a two-record set. Jarrett felt so protective that he flew to Germany to personally hand deliver them to Eicher.

Those who expect Jarrett to return to the piano will have to wait a little longer. His next LP, already recorded, is a set of double clavichord improvisations. —john diliberto

## HÜSKER DÜ

**F**ile under the hard-to-believe department: 1987 marks the eighth anniversary of this roaring

Minneapolis-based trio, whose relentless compound of punkish bashing and politically charged lyrics have—well, they haven't exactly *mellowed*, but they certainly have evolved. As one of the group's two songwriters, guitarist Bob Mould, sees it, "I guess every band has a different reason for starting up what they do, and I guess back then we were bored with what was going on in music, as far as the mainstream went, and we were excited about what was going on in the underground. So in a way our evolution can best be described as taking the different emotions that we may have had at that time—whether it was anger or just a lot of energy—and having it diffuse itself over the years into different emotions. Now there's love songs, and not so many blatant hate songs [*laughs*]. That's dispersing the energy and refocusing it through new emotions."

The band's musical movement has kept pace with its lyrical development, shifting from its early proto-hardcore pummeling to a more sophisticated, if no less raunchy, mix of rock idioms. Their new LP, *Warehouse: Songs And Stories* (Warner Bros. 25544-1), documents the growth of Hüsker Dü's musical scope, as echoes of the Yardbirds' psychedelic raveups and the Byrds' chiming guitar drones collide with post-punk frenzies and explode into a powerful blast of primal rock & roll. Mould puts the band's changing



DANIEL CORRIGAN

emphases into perspective: "Musically we've become more literate, in the sense that we put songs together now and arrange them for maximum impact, really trying to get musical styles to correspond with lyrical ideas. We understand our instruments better, what their limitations are."

The limitations of their trio format also have turned into a source of ideas rather than frustration. As Mould explains, "If I'm writing from a musical starting point, I'll go into the shower in the morning and get a bunch of ideas that are all of a sudden this huge arrangement for strings and brass and cellos [*laughs*]. Then you obviously have to redefine it—which has a lot to do with our style now. When you hear the guitar and bass voicings, for instance, you can hear the bass take on one of two forms. In [drummer] Grant Hart's songs the bass takes on a vocal line, a melody that Grant will sing the accompanying harmony to—so what sounds to the listener like the lead vocal may be the

lead or the harmony to the bass line. When I'm writing stuff it's more guitar-oriented, so I tend to use the bass as another rhythm guitar, almost, and then extrapolate the guitar from that, using a lot of droning and repetition in the playing to fill in the gaps to try to set up something for the listener."

According to Mould, the band's listeners have mostly picked up on that something and held onto it through good times and bad. "We've got a lot of people who've been with us from the beginning; we may have met them in '81 when they were one of the eight people who came to see us, and now we see them and they're a foot taller and pre-law or pre-med, where before they were on skateboards smashing windows or something [*laughs*]. I like that; it's really cool. In some small degree you can almost see the changes in yourself through other people." In the case of Hüsker Dü's smoking onslaught, those changes have all been for the better.

—gene santoro

## HERMETO

**A**bout this time of year the States begin to miss Hermeto Pascoal. Is it 12 months—or 24—since the Brazilian multi-instrumentalist, composer, arranger, and bandleader last chatted over lunch at a Cariocas-in-exile cafe, with keyboardist Jovino Santos translating his Portuguese?

Hermeto's septet was appearing at SOB's in New York, as the American leg of a two-month, 40-concert European tour, and performed impossibly well-rehearsed but totally unpredictable sets to the delight of appreciative listeners, including Gil Evans. "We're used to playing concerts that last as much as five hours," Santos remarked proudly. "Then we can show the different colors of the music—all the versatility and variety we can do. At home we play with sewing machines, and rocks, and metal pans, all sorts of things, but Hermeto says it's easier for a pop group to travel around with 30 tons of equipment than for him to travel with half-a-ton."

Santos adds, "Hermeto says he's never really gotten along well with record companies; their outlook doesn't fit well with his. They want quantity, and he wants quality." Hermeto's made eight quality albums since his eponymous debut for Cobblestone (now on Muse) in 1971. He's currently signed to SoM Da GentE, a small,

independent Brazilian label. Without major label support, his North American reputation grows dim, but in the '70s he spiced up Miles Davis' *Live-Evil*, and created the ambitious, compelling *Slave's Mass* with Aíro Moreira and Flora Purim, for Warner Bros.

Hermeto's music often features soccer chants and parade marches, crowing cocks and squealing pigs, along with the intertwined counterpoint of electric keyboards and guitars, the beat of traps and folklore percussion. Barnyard and industrial noises weren't missed at SOB's, since the 48-year-old, self-taught albino maestro—originally from a remote mountain town and now as pan-global a leader as Sun Ra and as surefooted an individualist as Rahsaan Roland Kirk—switched from alto flute to bass clarinet to tenor sax to accordion to synthesizer, demonstrating advanced techniques in the service of rhythmically propelled, harmonically complex, crowd-pleasing melodies.

"He says harmony is the strong point in music, and rhythm is what makes music different from one person to another. Melody comes after. He says music is as if to build a house: you have to have the foundation first—and the foundation is rhythm and harmony. You add the theme when the foundation is ready."

"Most of the musicians in Brazil follow the work Hermeto's been doing, and it stimulates them to keep studying, evolving, and improving," Santos explained, while Hermeto beamed through thick glasses, agreeing without false modesty. "Because he feels that



HYOU VIELZ

New York and Rio de Janeiro are the two musical centers—the hearts of the world—and since his work is so important worldwide, we'll be returning many times. He likes it here; it's active, lively. He says New York is a very romantic city. Romantic New Yorkers will eagerly be awaiting his return.

—howard mendel

## MIKE METHENY

**T**he guy with the hat and the funny music stick eases his way through a tasty samba at a posh hotel club. The club is the Regattabar (in the Charles Hotel in Cambridge, MA), the samba is *Saudade* (Walter Booker wrote it for Cannonball Adderley's band), the stick is a Steiner EVI, a sort of electrified wide-range trumpet, the hat is a touch of genial relaxation, and the guy, who usually plays trumpet around these parts, is Mike Metheny.

That's right, Mike's the brother of guitarist Pat, and the switcher is that Mike, born in 1949, is five years older. Neither Metheny seems the least bit hung up about careers. "Hey, man," Mike says levelly, "I've been Pat's big brother for the last 32 years, and I've known for half of that he's in a class by himself." And when Pat gets off the plane from Brazil or Bombay, he usually shows up (unannounced) at Mike's regular gig at Ryle's in Inman Square and sits in. They've been jamming since childhood.

The jazz influence was a two-way street with the brothers Metheny as they grew up in placid Lee's Summit, Missouri. Coming from a family of trumpeters (pa Dave and ma Lois pa both played), Mike played in brass sections right through the Army. First idols? Rafael Mendez and Don Jacoby. Yet he



DONNA PAUL

brought Miles Davis and Clark Terry records home from MU, where he was on band scholarship; Pat grooved on them, and they'd duet in the basement on "fake-book tunes, blues, standards."

"I dusted off a few Clark Terry licks," said Mike, "but as a classical player, I was too inhibited to go for it, loosen up. We're taught mistakes are not good: everybody in the room'd know. But once Pat came back from Boston [Berklee College and a spot in Gary Burton's band, circa '74], he taught me specific chords and techniques that woke up

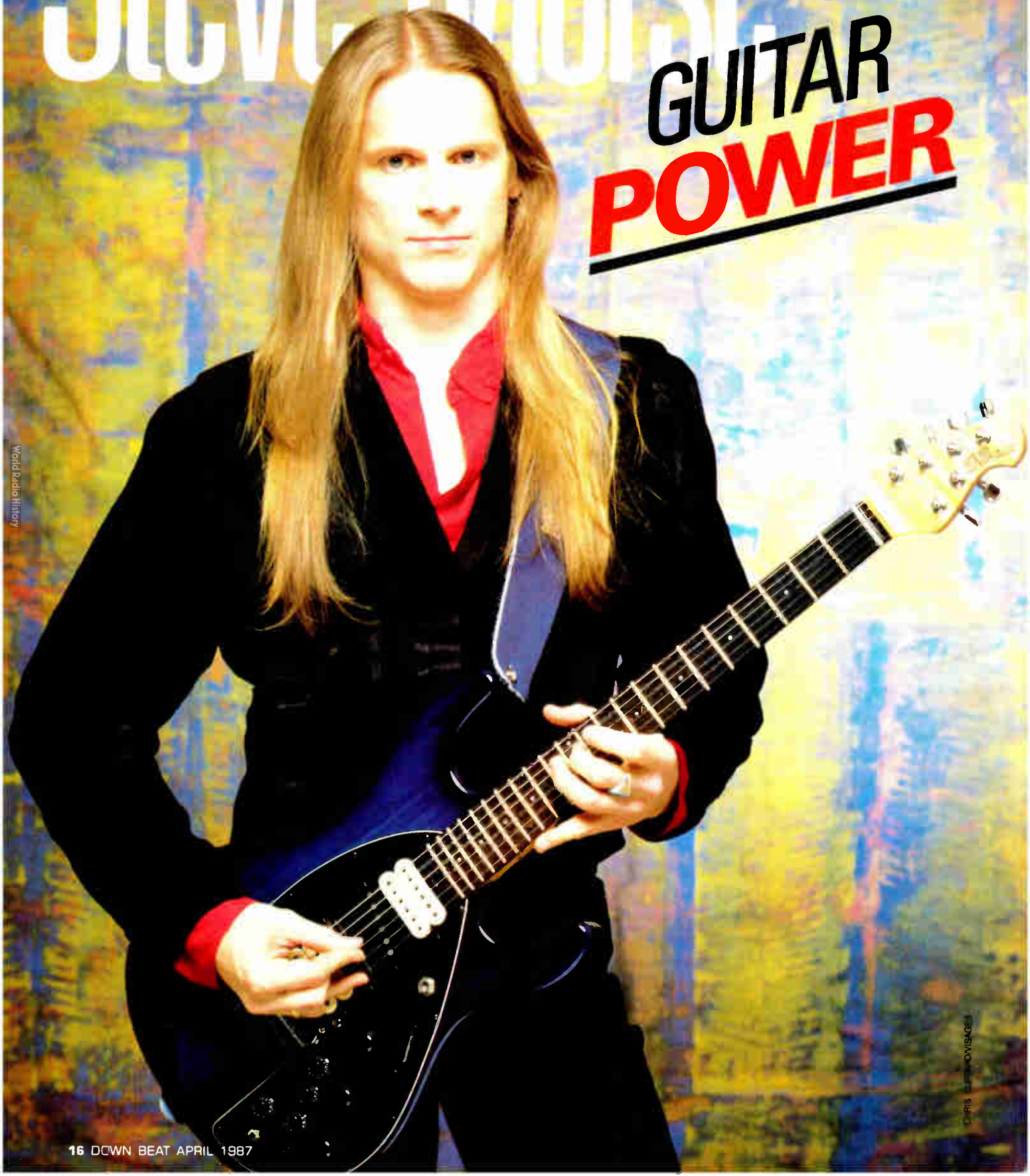
the closet jazzman in my musical personality. It has something to do with the first-born following rules and the younger sibling asserting individuality. That was a fork in the road for me." So Mike took Pat's advice to come to Boston and Berklee and plant his jazz seedling.

Mike's tree grew sequoia-slow, Pat's grew like kudzu. "Pat's evolution," mused Mike, "was a focused linear ascent, where my stylistic evolution zigged and zagged." Among a kaleidoscope of influences, Mike mentions Maurice Andre, Doc Severinsen, and Art Farmer. On his first album for MCA/Impulse (*Day In, Night Out*), you can hear a touch of bebop, baroque, Brazil. The disc made both *Billboard* and *Cashbox* charts. MCA will also reissue Mike's debut disc, *Blue Jay Sessions* (see *db*, Nov. '82); Pat plays on the former, produced the latter. Mike recorded again in February, featuring keyboard compatriots Dick Odgren and Brad Hatfield; like Art Farmer, he rightly regards himself as a better tune-finder than composer.

Goals for Mike, who eventually left Berklee to concentrate on playing but still enjoys private teaching, are steady and simple. "It's a daily challenge to take the horn out of the case, hope those two vibrating pieces of flesh called lips make the notes come out right at the end of the horn, and play things that make people feel good. After that come the attempts to reach your potential and the loftier challenges of artistry." —fred bouchard

# Steve Morse

**GUITAR**  
**POWER**



Some night while you are asleep, Steve Morse will, without warning, fly over your house, guitar in hand, working on licks that most guitarists dismiss as impossible. He may be laying back in Kansas' chartered plane, as he joins that group on the comeback trail, or piloting his own band along as opening act on a Rush tour, or heading home to his 40 acres near Atlanta after a solo stint opening for Joe Zawinul. "Sometimes at night when there's no traffic and the weather's good, and I don't need to talk to anybody on the radio and I'm by myself, I'll pull out my guitar, put the seat back, turn on the auto-pilot, and practice," says the soft-spoken Georgian.

Most people were probably surprised to hear that Morse had joined Kansas. It's the first group that he's actually been part of that wasn't his own since leaving the University of Miami with the Dixie Dregs in the early 1970s. He forged a reputation exceeded by few (winning *Guitar Player* polls consistently over the past five years), despite the Dixie Dregs, The Dregs, and the Steve Morse Band all being unable to crack through to a major market a la Rush, Roth, or Van Halen. Dreg fans are a fanatic bunch—just ask any band that ever had to open for them—but there were never quite enough of them. Never mind that the group's music was a particularly strange blend—like the Mahavishnu Orchestra crossed with the Allman Brothers at their rowdiest, blazing instrumental riffs over seamless odd-time shifts, then twangy, uptempo, cowbell-splitting boom-chuck with guitar and violin flying at breakneck tempos; a bald bass player with mirror shades grabbing a beer with one hand while continuing a country riff with the other, and a wide-mouthed drummer with hands that mixed it up on the snare as fast as his long black hair danced over his shoulders. Morse was definitely the centerpiece of this action, which could just as easily fall into a classical guitar and piano section, his tight tank-top now soaked through, his flowing blond hair starting to stick to his muscular back. But Morse hasn't really compromised his sound or style on the new Kansas record, *Power*, as much as he has served it up full-throttle. Nothing much seems to have changed about the idealistic, technically breathtaking 32-year-old—his long hair, his love of dirt bikes, or his devotion to his art.

For Morse, what started out as an invitation to make a guest appearance on a record has blossomed into a full share of a band on the rebound. "I was a fan of the band from before, and had definite ideas about what they needed to do," says the guitarist. "Anybody who has a band, if you talk to them candidly about a band that's one of their favorites, they'd say, 'Oh wow, they really need to do this, or need more of that.' But for Kansas, just doing a song like *Silhouettes*, which we started the album with, adds a little bit more musical emphasis." If '85 belonged to Yes and '86 to Genesis, '87 may do it for Kansas.

The Morse touch is in evidence all over *Power*. The new Kansas is like the best of both bands—Kansas and the Dregs. "Basically my job was to bring in musical ideas," Morse says, "and Steve Walsh would mainly do lyrics. It's pretty easy for me to make musical changes right during rehearsal. I enjoy doing that, because it's a fast-paced way of composing. You don't want to sit there and think about it too much, because you'll lose everyone's attention. It's a real challenge."

One big attraction to Morse was that Kansas' original lead singer, Steve Walsh, was back in the fold. The Morse/Walsh combination paid off right away, with what would become the new group's first single. "Steve had almost finished *All I Wanted*, and I just threw in those instrumental breaks and helped change the end. That was the first tune we worked on, in a motel room," Morse recalls. "Phil [Ehart, drummer] and Steve and I had just met about the idea of working together."

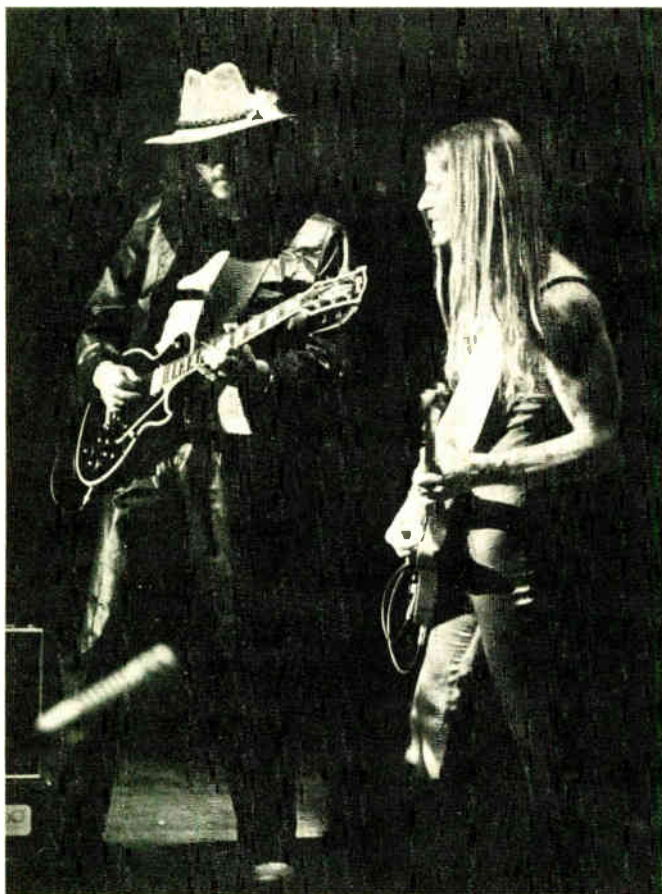
After developing a loyal following—if not a visible enough one for the record company executives, considering over a decade with the [Dixie] Dregs and the Steve Morse Band—the guitarist was feeling the strain, perhaps as much due to the standards he set and refuses to waver from as anything else. The invitation to join Kansas was a relief from that pressure. "When everyone in my band decided they wanted to do something on their own it was okay, because we had all done it for a few years, and it was a lot of work. Rewarding—I'd still do it again—but at the time it seemed like we could all use a break," the guitarist says. "One of the reasons I enjoy this Kansas thing is for the education of it—seeing how a band which was once very successful, and is still successful to some extent, goes about revamping their image and conducting day-to-day business. So I enjoy seeing it more from the outside. Of course, the frustration comes in when you feel a little differently about an opinion that's going down, and you have only one-fifth of the vote. But that's okay."

Being a member of Kansas does not mean that Morse has given up his solo career. In fact, he has a solo record coming out on MCA in the spring. "I don't know how I'd feel if I couldn't do my solo stuff," he says. "I'd always want to keep that individual freedom." For Morse, freedom has come as a result of mastering his craft and bonding to his instrument. "I was always interested in the guitar as a kid, but it wasn't until I was 15 or 16 that I would start practicing every day, and say that I was not going to finish my practice until I felt like I was free on the guitar. It's a hard thing to describe, but that's really the only rule that I had. I would have to feel like I did something each day before I could quit."

"I'd just keep playing and goofing around, and maybe discover some lick or find that I could play something new and could stop. I guess the way to cement that kind of psychology is to have instant gratification, and see the fruits of your labor. And fortunately there was a small coffeehouse where pretty much anyone could play. You wouldn't make any money, but we did it almost every weekend. That really makes a difference." Morse played in several garage bands in high school with bassist Andy West, one of them a Dregs predecessor, The Dixie Grits.

The fledgling guitarist was originally influenced by most of the usual heroes. "Jimmy Page wrote some of the definitive heavy metal guitar stuff and had a great sound. Jeff Beck had a real powerful approach to playing the guitar melodically. And Hendrix was just unique. Clapton always sounded good, no matter what. He would just pick real good blues licks to play in good spots." The rock & rollers had their day with Morse, but hearing a classical guitarist/teacher named Juan Mercadal was enough to make Steve head for the University of Miami to get serious. While there, Morse was shaped by instructors Rene Gonzales, Roger Bogga, Stan Samole, Randall Dollahon, and Mercadal, and began to discover the jazz side of things as well. He began hearing Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock, listening to some Miles, but when he sat inches from John McLaughlin and the Mahavishnu Orchestra on the cafeteria floor at UM one day, that changed things. "I said, 'This is very good, yet it's not simple progressions. This is real compositionally oblique stuff.' I liked it a lot."

"All my jazz listening had to be edited heavily," Morse explains. "I could only listen to certain parts and really relate to it, but I was interested. Take Miles. I liked the ensemble stuff where they were actually playing together, but when they would



**DREG DAYS:** Mark O'Connor and Steve Morse

TOM HILL

do something like *In A Silent Way*, I would have a real hard time with that. And straight bebop was always interesting and revealing about the players, but compositionally it was hard to stay interested. But then Pat Metheny was in one of my classes, and to hear him play straight bebop is *not* boring.

"I just prefer pretty tonal stuff," continues the guitarist. "It's just like Metheny may like some of the stuff that I'm into, and I may like some of the stuff that he's into, and I like the stuff he's into that's more tonal. I mean, everyone should stretch. I like when they do more than one thing. That's one of the reasons that Metheny's one of my favorite people, because he always is stretching this way or that way. I don't consider it any kind of insult to like some things better than others that he does. I definitely go for more of the tonal stuff that is interesting somehow."

You won't catch Morse in the record stores much. He gets his input mostly off the airwaves—whatever he can pick up from his property about 30 miles outside Atlanta—and from live shows. "I listen to a combination of the typical AOR, and a show called 'Jazz Flavors' in Atlanta. Also a classical station, and sometimes a college station that might play something unusual. Occasionally I can find some good country playing. I enjoy the unexpected factor in the radio—the only problem is that sometimes it takes so long to find something that you want to listen to, it can be annoying."

No way Morse spends a lot of time hunting stations. Chances are better that he's hustling a promo spot at some radio station, or home working in the studio he built, or practicing. Rod Morgenstein has been drumming with Morse for over a decade, and hasn't run out of admiration yet. "Steve is incredible in so many different areas—music and outside the music business," says the drummer. "Actually it's great to be in a working relationship with someone like that, because it forces you to be on your toes. You can't let things slide. You can't slouch off and assume that your position is safe. It keeps you working to constantly improve. I'm not nearly as multi-dimensional as he is.

If I can practice an hour a day I think it's been an incredible day, and then I spend the rest of the day screwing around. But with him the practicing comes from midnight to four in the morning—after he's driven his tractor to bale the hay for a couple hours, and ridden his dirt bike through the trails on his property, and maybe taken his Ultralight up for an hour. Then he plugs some things in in his self-made studio and records."

Morse has been known over the years to decline offers from friends and bandmates to catch a bite to eat, go bowling, or hang out and talk after playing a show. The guitarist would often apologize and head back to his hotel room to practice for a couple of hours, after having just blown away several thousand teenage guitar fanatics. "I'm a workaholic anyway," the guitarist says. "My day is just constantly doing stuff, but I don't like to just do one thing all the time. On the road you spend time doing almost everything *but* playing. A typical day on the road is waiting, traveling, waiting to soundcheck, waiting for them to set up, waiting till they finish banging on the drums, checking in for this, having to wait because they screwed up the reservation, waiting for everyone to come down from their room. It's a lot of waiting and traveling, so when you get a chance to practice you've *got* to take it, or else you won't have it. On the road sometimes the only practice you get is the warmup before the gig, which can be anywhere from 45 minutes to 15 minutes before the dressing room is finally cleared out and you get dressed and ready to go onstage. There's that and there's the gig, which really isn't

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61

## STEVE MORSE'S EQUIPMENT

"I have two guitar-synthesizers," says Steve Morse. "One is a custom-made guitar from Music Man that has the Roland card in it, as well as my other pickups. I also have an Ovation acoustic with the Shadow bridge system, which works very well. I'm probably going to add the Shadow system to my Music Man. I use the Music Man through a Roland MIDI convertor. This is definitely a guitar, with the addition of a pickup and a card, as opposed to a guitar-shaped thing that produces MIDI. This has guitar sounds all the time, and you can also put it through an electronic device outboard and get MIDI. The guitar controllers—or MIDI controllers, at least in my definition—go to guitarists that have no guitar sound themselves. I prefer actual guitars that will allow you to play synthesizer too, because most of the time I'm not going to be playing synthesizer.

"Keyboard is still king, but you work out the guitar-synthesizer problems. You pick sounds that don't have instantaneous attacks, and reduce the velocity sensitivity so that certain notes don't squawk out. And you don't play harmonics and expect them to work. You just have to be real careful. Set your sensitivity on the strings as high as you can possibly get away with so that you have to pick as hard as possible to make the sounds come through. If you do all those things, and pick good sounds and play clean and don't make any mistakes, you can do pretty well.

"I use an Ampeg V-4 amp, with JBL speakers and Celestion speakers. Most of my main recording sound is through the JBLs, and I'm experimenting now with other amplifier brains. My effects are Lexicon. I have a PZM 41 for short delay and chorus sound, and a Prime Time for a long slap. I used to use a PX 90 for reverb, but I traded it in for the PZM 60, which does a lot less in terms of numbers of things, but it does the reverb so much better. I also have a PZM 42 for special effects, and it has a very long memory so I use it for stacking cards. And I use these gigantic heavy duty pedals by Ernie Ball. I leave all the effects on and plug them into the pedals, so that when I want the effect I just push down on the pedal and it comes through gradually, rather than turning on the switch and having it explode. And the effects come through a separate amp from the main signal, so they don't distort the original signal. I use Ernie Ball strings, double-wrapped, because they don't stretch as much and they never break. I use their cords too—they're triple-shielded and real flexible.

"Audio Technica makes mics that I use for my guitar sound. I used them on all the solos I did for the Kansas record and my last solo album. I use the Audio Technica Dynamic mics in front of the amps. The Audio Technica 63s are clear, and seem to not color the sound, so you get a much brighter and clearer sound, without being too squeaky. And out of the mics that I've seen in the studios, it's hard to find a mic that will do that for a guitar without breaking up. It's durable."

## STEVE MORSE SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader	with the [Dixie] Dregs
THE INTRODUCTION—Elektra-Musician 60369-1	INDUSTRY STANDARDS—Arista 9588
STAND UP—Elektra 60448-1	UNSUNG HEROES—Arista 9548
	DREGS OF THE EARTH—Arista 9528
with Kansas	NIGHT OF THE LIVING DREGS—Capricorn 0216
POWER—MCA 5838	
with T Lavitz	WHAT IF—Capricorn 0203
STORYTIME—Passport Jazz 88012	FREE FALL—Capricorn 0189

**B**illy's back. Not that Billy Cobham ever disappeared completely from the U.S. since moving to Zurich in 1981.

But with a pair of fine fusion efforts out on GRP Records (*Warning* and *Power Play*) and his first Grammy nomination (*Zanzibar Breeze*, from his latest album, is up for best r&b instrumental performance), the drummer is enjoying his highest profile since his heyday with Miles Davis and the Mahavishnu Orchestra in the early '70s.

That's what helped lure a crowd of more than 500 to The Vic one recent night in Chicago, where Cobham dazzled his faithful—including many local drummers—with his customary precisioned-and-powerful drumming, backed by his current quartet-mates Sa Davis (percussion), Baron Browne (bass), and Gerry Etkins (keyboards).

Cobham's self-penned repertoire—a mix of catchy r&b and burning Mahavishnu-like fusion—served as a launching board for an exuberant display of virtuosity, which included such tricks (gratuitous, had they not been delivered with such élan) as fierce uppercut cymbal crashes, playing with two sticks per hand, and abandoning his drumset for a turn at Davis' timbales.

We spoke to Cobham at the soundcheck for that night's performance. He is an energetic and busy man, as he would have to be with a professional life that includes touring, recording, giving clinics, composing, and studying the electronics that he's implemented in the past couple of years—all this and he's a fitness buff who makes sure he puts in at least an hourlong workout every day, even when stuck in a hotel room. Cobham wastes little time in idle chitchat

but that doesn't mean he won't find time for a friend; while the interview was in progress, former Mahavishnu colleague Jerry Goodman phoned an invitation to his own late-night performance at a club across town, and Cobham promised he'd try to make it.

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**Bill Beuttler:** *The last time we interviewed you, in 1984, you were shunning electronics, and joking about sticking with the drummer's equivalent of the Model T. Now you are using electronics. Why the switch?*

**Billy Cobham:** Well, actually I should clarify that, because what I had done was taken a hiatus, gotten away from electronics because I didn't think they worked too well. Since that interview, a lot



STEVEN GROSS



of things happened in the field that rekindled my interest. So I started to get into it, and have moved up to the point now where my drums are being triggered by Barcus-Berry transducers off the rims, and they're triggering a DX7—quite a turnaround, and it's based on the fact that I can turn the things on and they'll work.

**BB:** *I understand you've got your brother helping you out with the electronics.*

**BC:** Yes, my brother Wayne is involved with the programming.

**BB:** *Is he a musician?*

**BC:** Sure. He's a trumpet player, plays with B.B. King—he's covered pretty much the gamut on the chitlin' circuit. He's worked with Kool and the Gang, on occasion. He's sort of like your lunch-pail trumpet player—plays with a lot of different people, reads well, does the job. But he's really started to shine in the area of computer technology and music technology. He knows the different types of software—Passport, Professional Composer, and Performer—and how to run them on the Macintosh and the IBM PC. He puts ideas together for that kind of stuff.

**BB:** *How about the guys in your band? Where did you find them?*

**BC:** Boston. Sa Davis, New England Conservatory; Baron Browne, Berklee College of Music; Gerry Etkins, Berklee College of Music.

**BB:** *How'd you hear about them?*

**BC:** Through Dean Brown, who went to Berklee and who's no longer with us.

**BB:** *Who's replaced him?*

**BC:** No one. The whole idea is "time for Cobham not to play with guitars any more." I mean, in *my* band. I have a project right

now that I'm kicking around with Kevin Eubanks. But I love the guitar so much that I feel I have to get away from it for a while, in my personal situation.

**BB:** *Besides working with your own band and with Eubanks, are you involved with any other projects?*

**BC:** No, and [the Eubanks collaboration] is really only in the talking stage right now—nothing's solid. I'd like to pursue it as soon as time permits. But right now the most important thing for me is to tour, and to tour as a quartet without a guitar player.

**BB:** *In that same April '84 interview it looked like you were going to play with . . .*

**BC:** The Hahavishnu?

**BB:** *What happened?*

**BC:** The Hahavishnu became a real bad joke. I extended myself to a point with John McLaughlin and his ideas, and I chose to really push it. It became more an obsession for me, in a way, than for anybody else, and I ended up being the one hurt most. It cost me almost a year's setback in work. I had nothing; it was the closest I've ever come to being destitute, because I lost all of the work that I could've had that summer. I made the full commitment, and I lost out because their plans apparently changed and they decided not to tell me.

**BB:** *What sort of a change was there?*

**BC:** The change was that they would use Danny Gottlieb instead of me. But they decided not to tell me that; they just decided to use Danny Gottlieb. At the time, I thought that it was all going to happen, so I extended myself when really I should not have, and they pulled the string.

And then said nothing; about two-three weeks after the tour started I found out from a guy who works at Paiste cymbals that Danny Gottlieb was doing the job. And I said, "Well, it's the first I've ever heard of it." I was still getting ready to go. The last time I spoke to John McLaughlin, he was supposed to get back to me with information on how I was supposed to transport my equipment. And I never heard from him again. To this day I have not spoken to John McLaughlin one note. But I know one thing—I'll never be in that situation again. I'll never play with John McLaughlin again. I can understand now why our paths haven't crossed, and also why musically it would not be to anyone's advantage for us to do anything, because the love for the music that we once had is now blocked by this dark cloud. And I don't think that it can ever be cleared up to the point where we could play and be respectful of each other as musicians again.

**BB:** *You've been living in Europe for . . .*

**BC:** This is my sixth year now.

**BB:** *Is there any special reason that you decided to leave the states?*

**BC:** Oh sure. I wanted to establish myself as an artist in the European theater. I felt that it would be effective for me as a touring artist. Playing in Europe is just as important to me as playing in the United States.

I also felt that I needed to slow down, that I was highly anal-retentive—things went by real fast, I got very, very lonely, and many times I would end up using things, buying material items, to cope with my loneliness. And then I wouldn't have any time to deal with the things that I bought. So I decided to go to Europe, where time is much slower. Things happen at a much slower pace, and I felt like it would be nice to enjoy what I do and what I have—not get any more things, but enjoy what I have already.

I've been fortunate enough to have done some strong tours to build up my clientele there. Now I'm trying to apply the same concept in the United States, because maybe with this four- or five-year hiatus I can adjust myself to a younger generation and really push my concepts.

**BB:** *Do you use the same bands in both touring situations?*

**BC:** Yeah. Since I've moved to Europe I've worked with four different versions of my Glass Menagerie concept. I worked with a small European band for one tour, kind of a Glass Menagerie thing, and that was the end of that, because I learned one lesson there—European musicians are monster players, but to play the kind of music that I play, which is influenced by my environment in the United States, I need to have people who are empathetic and sensitive to what is happening here. There's a lot of things that could not be done by the European players, which I missed, even though we had a real good time. Everything was being emulated. The European players were trying to play like

American players, and I had to go back to American players so we could get the real thing happening. So I ended up with Sa Davis and Dean and Gerry and Barry.

**BB:** *Has living in Europe influenced you as a composer?*

**BC:** Sure. I've been able to sit down, slow down, and take a look at what's going on. Also, with my Macintosh I can hear a lot of things. I am nowhere near a major source of inspiration on keyboard, but with the software I can really listen to the material that I write out. If something's wrong I can change it—takes [snaps fingers] seconds. I often say to myself, "What would it have been like for Mozart or Beethoven to have had this?" Because for me, it's a piece of cake. Things that I could never dream of writing, because I couldn't even hear it all—I would just get a mental block because it would all go by so fast—now I can hear, and I can piece together what I want. The material I'm playing now would've taken me many, many, many months to put together—and a lot of rehearsing, a lot of mistakes. You get mentally tough through those mistakes, but it's a waste of a lot of time. With the computer I'm able to do a lot of this stuff, and I only studied that in Europe; I don't know that I'd have had a chance to do it here in the United States, because my time really was not my own.

One of the things I ran away from was *Saturday Night Live*—after a while it was two days a week of rehearsals, then Saturday the gig started at 10 o'clock in the morning and didn't finish until 1 a.m. Sunday. That's pretty rough when the rest of the week you're doing a concert with somebody, jingles, making a record date here and there—you don't get a chance to really study. Right now that's imperative for many musicians—especially if they want to get out of this fusion thing and step across the abyss to something that is solid. You've got to learn computer technology. You have to know what your machines are going to do, not just play factory sounds but create your own sounds, your own ideas—your personality has to come out in the music. That means you have to sit down and go, "Okay, fine. Now when I hit 'carriage return' what does that mean, and how do I escape out of this?" You should see Chick Corea—all that stuff he's got onstage, he's constantly looking into the manuals.

**BB:** *Do you have a new album coming out after Power Play?*

**BC:** Hopefully, we'll be recording one soon; if it's accepted it'll be coming out on GRP.

**BB:** *Do you have a rough guess as to when?*

**BC:** It probably won't show up in stores before late spring, because GRP has really made a commitment to CDs. CDs take a while, unfortunately, because the rest of the world isn't really geared for it. But I agree that they should come out with the best possible product, and CDs helped me to get the Grammy [nomination]—vinyl records just don't make it anymore.

**BB:** *Just because of the sound quality?*

**BC:** I think so. If *Zanzibar* was just on a vinyl record I don't think it would have been nominated. I think the sound quality has a lot to do with it.

**BB:** *Not your own improvement as a composer?*

**BC:** Oh, I think the music is strong, but I think that it would have been lost in the shuffle.

**BB:** *I've read you do 400 situps a day prior to working out in the gym. What effect does that have on you as a musician?*

**BC:** A great example would've been last night. We played in Boulder, Colorado—over a mile above sea level. We play a very intense set, it's demanding physically—I found that I breathed only a little harder than normal. Normally it takes a few days for anybody to get it together; that's if you're feeling okay—if you smoke a little bit, drink a little bit, but you don't work out. For the two days I was in Boulder—because I'm my own manager and I had so much business—I had to work out in the room. I didn't do 400 situps, but that is not necessarily a requirement to keeping your head together. It is important, I think, to put in a hour a day of something.

**BB:** *What do you do, typically?*

**BC:** I'll do pushups, situps of various types—lower abdominals, upper abdominals—stretch for half-an-hour, and skip rope for about 15-20 minutes.

**BB:** *Do you use weights when you're at home?*

**BC:** Whenever I can. I'll do weights about three-four times a week, and I'll play a lot of squash and racketball.

**BB:** *Do you notice a trend in this among musicians? There's people like Bruce Springsteen, who runs and lifts; the Marsalises like playing basketball; Miles, I've read, swims a lot . . .*

**BC:** He does, and he's always been a boxer. I sure hope it's a trend. It's funny—more musicians are getting into baseball games, basketball games. Look at Huey Lewis, right? Old baseball player, drafted by a couple of major league teams. Musicians go working in Europe, and the first thing they do is to pull out a basketball, get a football. I coach a young football team at home—American football's real big in Europe now.

**BB:** *One last question. The last time we talked to you, you said, "At 41 years old I really have to start going out there and start supporting myself—doing my own projects. I have something valid to say as an artist, and I think I should take that step forward." This was right after Warning came out [Sept. '85]. How far do you think you've succeeded?*

**BC:** Now I've been nominated for a Grammy. That's a very huge step. I don't care if I win, draw, or lose—whatever. Just the acknowledgement is cool, very important. The next step is to continue to build on that. And where I build it is in the marketplace as a touring entity—primarily on my own, without any opening acts or opening for anybody. I like the idea of being

## BILLY COBHAM SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

as a leader

POWER PLAY—GRP 9536  
WARNING—GRP 9528  
SMOKIN'—Elektra Musician 60  
OBSERVATIONS &—Elektra Musician 60123  
BEST OF BILLY COBHAM—Columbia 36404  
B.C.—Columbia 35993  
BEST OF BILLY COBHAM—Atlantic 19238  
INNER CONFLICTS—Atlantic 19174  
SIMPLICITY OF EXPRESSION/DEPTH OF THOUGHT—Columbia 35457  
MAGIC—Columbia 34939  
LIFE AND TIMES—Atlantic 18166  
A FUNKY THIDE OF SINGS—Atlantic 18149  
SHABAZZ—Atlantic 18139  
TOTAL ECLIPSE—Atlantic 18121  
CROSSWINDS—Atlantic 7300  
SPECTRUM—Atlantic 7268

with the Cobham/Duke Band

LIVE ON TOUR IN EUROPE—Atlantic 18194

with George Benson

BLUE BENSON—Polydor 1-6084

GIBLET GRAVY—Verve 68749

with Ron Carter

SPANISH BLUE—CTI 6051

ALL BLUES—CTI 6037

BLUES FARM—CTI 6027

with Stanley Clarke

SCHOOL DAYS—Epic 36975

with Larry Coryell

THE ESSENTIAL LARRY CORYELL—Vanguard 75/76

SPACES—Vanguard 6558

with Bobby & The Midnighters

BOBBY & THE MIDNIGHTS—Arista 9568

with Miles Davis

DIRECTIONS—Columbia KC2 36472

CIRCLE IN THE ROUND—Columbia KC2 36278

GET UP WITH IT—Columbia 33236

BIG FUN—Columbia 32866

ON THE CORNER—Columbia 31906

LIVE-EVIL—Columbia 30954

JACK JOHNSON—Columbia 30455

with Milt Jackson

SUNFLOWER—CTI 8004

with the Mahavishnu Orchestra

BEST OF THE MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA—Columbia

36394

BETWEEN NOTHINGNESS AND ETERNITY—Columbia

32766

BIRDS OF FIRE—Columbia 31966

THE INNER MOUNTING FLAME—Columbia 31067

with John McLaughlin

JOHNNY McLAUGHLIN, ELECTRIC GUITARIST—Co-

lumbia 35326

MY GOAL'S BEYOND—Elektra Musician 60003

with Carlos Santana and

John McLaughlin

LOVE DEVOTION SURRENDER—Columbia 32034

with Horace Silver

YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE A LITTLE LOVE—Blue Note 84309

SERENADE TO A SOUL SISTER—Blue Note 84277

with McCoy Tyner

FLY WITH THE WIND—Milestone 9067

with Grover Washington Jr.

ALL THE KING'S HORSES—Motown M5 '86 VI

## BILLY COBHAM'S EQUIPMENT

Billy Cobham's equipment includes blue Tama drums with Remo heads, Zildjian cymbals (both A's and K's), and Pro Mark sticks. His setup, as always, is bigger than the standard four-piece kit. "Now I'm using two 22-inch bass drums, an eight-by-14-inch snare drum, and six rack toms—two floor toms, and the rack toms are eight, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 18 inches. The five cymbals include 20-inch ride, 20-inch China Boy low, 20-inch crash, 17-inch crash, and 19-inch crash." His electronic gear includes a Yamaha DX7 synthesizer, Barcus-Berry transducers, an E-Mu SP12 drum simulator, a Simmons MTM triggering device, and a Macintosh computer.

able to set up my instruments, go out there, and do my thing. If there's an opening act, hopefully it's a guitar player that sings, or a comedian, or a husband-and-wife knife-throwing act.

db

# JEFF BERLIN:

## *Beyond the Bas(s)ics*

by Bill Milkowski

“N

obody does  
on the bass  
what I do.”

Strong

words. They might have been spoken by Jack Bruce in the late-'60s, by Stanley Clarke in the early-'70s, by Jaco Pastorius in the mid-'70s. Now, in the latter part of the '80s, those words are being spoken by bassist Jeff Berlin.

Arrogant? Perhaps. But all you need do to check out the validity of that boastful statement is drop the needle on *Dixie*, an astounding chordal arrangement of that traditional tune from his *Champion* album on Passport Jazz.

As Berlin says, “I’ve never heard a bass player incorporate chords that way. I’ve never heard a *Dixie*-type thing like that. I’m very proud of that. I mean, in my life I would have loved to have made one statement and felt that it was viable and that no one else did it. I think it’s *Dixie*. No one’s ever done that. So I’ve made my statement. I can now go happy to my grave.”

And there’s lots more to be proud of. Check out Berlin’s chops on Cannonball Adderley’s *Murabi* or his own *20,000 Prayers*, both from *Champion*. Or dig the Bach transcription on his followup LP, last year’s *Pump It!* Or his incredible solo on *Manos De Piedra* from that album. Or his note-for-note cover of Eric Clapton’s solo on *Crossroads*. Too much. Monster chops with uncanny cleanliness of execution. It’s why many bass players today consider Jeff Berlin to be the very best around.

Accolades pour in from both camps—jazz and rock. “The rockers embrace me and the jazzers embrace me,” he begins. “I’m known

CHRIS CUFFARO/ISAGES

by both, and I can't think of anybody else who has this fortunate situation. I've played with the greatest jazz musicians and the greatest rock musicians. And I can play both really well. I can play rock & roll like a great rock bass player and I can play jazz like a legitimately fine jazz bass player, because I love both idioms."

A look at his credits would bear him out. After graduating from the Berklee College of Music in 1977, Berlin went on the road with jazz guitarist Pat Martino. He also has the distinction of being the only electric bass player ever to play with the late Bill Evans. "We were talking about doing an album right before he passed away."

But it's his impressive list of rock gigs that brought Berlin to much wider acclaim—three years and four albums with Bill Bruford's band, followed by a stint with guitar-hero Allan Holdsworth in 1982. And now on his own projects, he's trading licks with some real rock heavyweights—drummer Neil Peart of Rush, guitarist Neal Schon of Journey, not to mention jamming on the West Coast in impromptu sessions with guitar star Eddie Van Halen.

They all talk about his chops, but Berlin knows that chops alone don't make it. "A million guys today have my chops," he says. "I'm not unique in the chops department, but I am unique in the tonality department, the idea department. I think like a soloist, like a person who is unimpinged by his instrument. I declared to myself a long time ago that I wouldn't be held down by the limitations of the bass—the fact that it is a wide-interval instrument, physically. So I've always tried to be totally aware of tonality—to be lyrical on the spot, creative harmonically on the spot, like Cannonball Adderley or Bill Evans or Gary Burton, whom I consider to be the greatest living soloist around today in the sheer tonal sense of things.

"So I woodshed and practiced and transcribed all the great soloists like Cannonball and Bill and Gary. No bass players. I never listened to bass players to learn about tonality because bass players do not know how to solo the way these other guys do. I studied all the greats and then just transferred that right onto electric bass. So now I really don't have a clear-cut style, per se. I'm noted for the notes I choose and the type of lines I play. And I don't think anybody does on bass today what I do—to be totally free in a lyrical sense like that."

Those words again.

**J**eff Berlin grew up on Long Island, New York, and through the influence of his parents became intimately acquainted with classical music at an early age. "My father was an opera singer who sang baritone with the New York City Center Opera Company," he says. "He was a mentor, kind of nursed me along musically. He would constantly have the classical radio station on and would be pointing out things to me. Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, Beethoven's *Third Symphony*, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Debussy. 'Listen to this, Jeff,' my father would say. Nothing but classical music. Rock & roll was out. Jazz was out. Classical was it. That was all there was, as far as I was concerned, from five years old on—until the Beatles came along and shook me up."

Berlin was something of a child prodigy on violin. By age 11 he was playing in the Nassau County Orchestra and making guest appearances at the Long Island String Festival. A promising career lay before him, but he shocked his teachers and family by dropping out of the classical scene altogether at age 15.

"I was supposed to have been a great violinist," he laughs. "Needless to say, my father wasn't too thrilled that after 10 years of study I finally threw it all away. But I just couldn't play anymore. I disappointed a lot of people when I quit violin, but I just didn't like it anymore. Today I can listen to it—Itzhak Perlman or David Oistrakh playing Tchaikovsky. Breathtaking! Phenomenal! I appreciate it, but I don't wanna play it."

He decided to stick with a stringed instrument and chose the bass because it too had four strings like the violin. "I didn't want to play guitar," he recalls. "Six strings, chords, who needs it? I wanted to choose an instrument that I thought would not be a difficult task to learn. The bass had four strings, you played one note at a time—you know, what could be difficult?"

He played in the usual Cream-type cover bands around Long

Island before landing a gig in the pit band of a Broadway show, *The Me Nobody Knows*. During that six-week engagement he picked up pointers from a Wes Montgomery-influenced guitarist playing alongside him in the pit each night. "He would play these great chordal voicings, and I would be amazed at the sounds. Then he told me about the Berklee College of Music."

Berlin enrolled at Berklee and became, as he says, "an intense student. I used to corner Gary Burton and Michael Gibbs and Steve Swallow and barrage them with questions about harmony and soloing and theory. I wanted more than anything to be an intelligent, musical bass player."

His one complaint about Berklee in those days was that they tried to convince him to play the upright instead of the electric bass. "There is an attitude there that if you don't sound like, say, Ron Carter, you'll never make it. And I, like a fool, believed them. So I spent six months dragging this damned instrument around before I adopted the attitude of 'Give me the electric bass or give me death.' And I've never played the upright bass since. It's not for me. I'd rather hear Eddie Gomez or George Mraz play one. I don't want to."

After playing around New York with Pat Martino and Gil Evans and Herbie Mann, establishing something of a reputation among the jazz musicians in town, Berlin landed a gig with drummer Bill Bruford (formerly of Yes and King Crimson). It was a decided departure from his jazzbo days at Berklee and his New York tenure with the local cats. As Berlin puts it, "Playing with Bill was a real education for me in terms of learning about rock & roll. I came into his group as an unknown and I was coming from a jazz background. I really didn't have that much interest in rock at that time. I really wanted to play bass the way Michael Brecker plays sax, and Bruford's very specific rhythmic feel and band idea was very alien to me. So we had to adjust to each other. Allan Holdsworth was the guitarist in the band, and Dave Stewart played keyboards, and I was brought in to Yankee-fy the feel of the group."

From 1977 to '80, Berlin toured with Bruford and played on four highly regarded fusion albums—*Feels Good To Me*, *One Of A Kind*, *The Bruford Tapes*, and *Gradually Going Tornado*. It was during those Bruford years that Berlin became associated with the bombastic composition, *Joe Frazier*, penned during the 1975 heavyweight boxing title match between Frazier and Muhammed Ali—the so-called "Thrilla In Manila."

"Every musician has his anthem," says Berlin, an avid fight fan, "and I guess that's mine." On his latest album as a leader, *Pump It!*, Berlin does a new rendition of that old tune, along with keyboardist Ron Reinhardt, drummer Tris Imboden, and guitarist Frank Gambale, the current members of his band.

Berlin maintains that both *Champion* and *Pump It!* are band albums, though he does get to showcase his impressive soloing technique on several cuts. "The idea is, I don't like to make bass-type albums," he says. "Whenever a drummer or a bass player gets a record deal, they are usually guilty of pushing their particular thing to the max. I can't stand the idea of featuring bass all the time on my records. I play with too many great musicians to do that."

**I**n his early days, Berlin was often compared to Jaco Pastorius and Stanley Clarke, "mainly because we were the only ones at the time who could play fast. I never listened to any of the Weather Report albums when Jaco joined the band, because he was such a strong force. I decided not to get lured into that fretless thing. There's so many fretless wonders around today who all sound the same to me. All these fretless basses with flanging on them. My God, how Jaco-esque can one get? I want to sound like Jeff Berlin, not Jaco. Because I think the most horrendous thing for anyone to ever say to me is, 'Boy, you sure sound like so-and-so.'"

"I always thought the greatest joy is to showcase your own style. That's my credo. As far as I'm concerned, there are three no-nos: 1) Don't play harmonies, 2) Don't slap, 3) Don't play fretless. Those three things are so closely identified with other stylists, so I just avoid that trap. You'll never catch me playing another man's style of bass."

Though Berlin may be forging his own signature style of playing,



CHRIS CUFFAROW/SAGES

there are other bassists he greatly admires, notably Francis Rocco Prestia of Tower Of Power fame. "Rocco is the funkiest bass player in America," says Jeff. "The guy just thrills me. He invented the 16th note staccato bass concept, as far as I'm concerned. And he's proven that you don't have to be a great soloist to be a great bass player. He plays with such conviction. So do Geddy Lee [Rush] and Billy Sheehan [David Lee Roth band]. And that's what I'm trying to do—take a stand on something. make a statement. Like, 'Here I am. You like it? Great. If not, I'm sorry, but that's the way it goes.' Because it's not about chops, it's about conviction."

Berlin tries to convey those same sentiments to his students at the Bass Institute Of Technology in Los Angeles, where he holds court two days a week. "I'm basically there for counseling," he explains. "I don't teach classes, I just sit in a room and play with whoever shows up. It's really a great learning environment for young musicians. All the greatest bass players in the world come through there to give clinics. Jack Bruce, Stanley Clarke, Steve Swallow, Jaco, Rocco, Chuck Rainey—it's like a Who's Who of the electric bass guitar."

Berlin himself travels around the world giving clinics on behalf of

Yamaha, his preferred brand for amplifiers and effects. He recently returned from an extensive tour of France, where he held Yamaha clinics with drummer Alex Acuna and guitarist Joe Walsh of the Eagles. "It was smoking, man! We'd do rock & roll trio tunes, then Alex and I would do jazz duo tunes, then I would do some solo bass stuff. It was great fun."

Berlin's a busy man these days. His second album is climbing the charts and there's another one in the works. He's playing the West Coast with his Vox Humana band, and looking for a more expansive tour this year. He remains a charter member of Players, the all-star aggregation thrown together by Passport Jazz to promote some of their fusion artists (Berlin, T Lavitz, Scott Henderson, Steve Smith). And he recently completed an album and tour of Japan in a power trio setting with guitarist Kazumi Watanabe and former employer Bill Bruford.

Plus, the one-time child prodigy has not completely turned his back on classical music. He hints that there may be a more esoteric project down the road. "I don't know when, but I envision it as a double-album of selected classical works arranged for electric bass. Because I still love that stuff—Prokofiev's *Violin And Piano Sonata in F minor*, Wagner's *Christina's Procession To The Cathedral*, Chopin, Beethoven, Puccini, Debussy. That music will live forever. It is necessary music in this world. There's a lot of stuff out there that is fooling the public today, and radio programmers have decided that this is what you will hear. But classical will outlive that junk. It is eternal music."

And yet, Berlin still intends to keep his hand in the commercial marketplace as well. "I am very record-conscious these days, because it's my business. So my job is to find some way to play the game while maintaining my musical integrity. I've got to get people to listen, so my job now is to introduce myself to a whole lot of folks who have no idea what I do. The truth is, I'm just a bass player to them, and that's really all I am. So I can't think in terms of flaunting bass chops to impress a bunch of musicians. I have to communicate a band concept. I need that vehicle. It's the overall sound and feel of the music that gets over with the public, not any kind of chops you might have."

He adds, "I know I'll never make a platinum album in my life, but it is possible to introduce your music to more people. And that has become my immediate goal now."

db

### JEFF BERLIN'S EQUIPMENT

Jeff Berlin has been playing the same electric bass for the past 13 years, though it's been modified slightly over time. It's a Fender Precision body with a custom neck made for him by Michael Tobias. It has two Bartolini pickups, though he prefers using just the bridge pickup. He swears by Leo Quan Badass bass bridges and is also an advocate of Carl Thompson bass strings (.40, .60 .80, 1.00). All of his electronic equipment is by Yamaha. He is currently using a PB-1 preamp and a PB2200 power amp with 2 x 15 cabinets. He also uses a Yamaha E1010 analog delay.

### JEFF BERLIN SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

#### as a leader

PUMP IT!—Passport Jazz 88017  
CHAMPION—Passport Jazz 88024

#### with Players

PLAYERS—Passport Jazz 88014

#### with Allan Holdsworth

ROAD GAMES—Warner Bros. 23959-1B

#### with Gil Goldstein

PURE AS RAIN—Chiaroscuro 201

#### with Bill Bruford

THE BRUFORD TAPES—Editions EG 106

FEELS GOOD TO ME—EG/Polydor 6149

ONE OF A KIND—EG/Polydor 6205

GRADUALLY GOING TORNADO—EG/  
Polydor 6261

MASTER STROKES 1978-1985—Editions  
EG 67

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There are several techniques Parker has developed and refined over the years that give him his unique sound. One is a form of double-tonguing in which he attacks the reed with his tongue from two directions—above the reed and below it. This allows him to articulate phrases much faster than players with the more traditional technique of using the tongue and throat. It has also made him re-think some basic musical concepts. "Sometimes I think that rhythm is the primary structural element in free improvisation," Parker says. "In more conventional music, rhythm is only useful for articulating pitch. In our music, it's just the other way around. Pitch is only used to articulate rhythm."

Another of Parker's highly developed techniques is multiphonics, achieved through the use of alternate fingerings that break the column of air in unusual places. This allows him to hold two different rhythmic patterns between the left hand and the right and articulate them through the use of overtones. "It gives the illusion of chords. It's a bit like playing the saxophone as if it were a piano," he says. On certain passages, Parker will hold a long, low note that remains uninterrupted while he articulates chirping sounds in the upper registers—an idea, he says, that came to him after listening to Steve Lacy.

Parker is perhaps best known for his extensive use of circular breathing—inhaling through the nose while playing out of the mouth. Parker says this allows him to interrupt a phrase when he *wants* to, not when he *has* to. He developed it after becoming frustrated that he was not able to sustain long phrases against guitar feedback techniques that Derek Bailey was mastering. "That was a clear example where the music demands a technical innovation," says Parker. "On the other hand, there are technical innovations I've got that are sort of waiting for a context in which to be used. That's a case where the music is lagging behind the technique." Rahsaan Roland Kirk is the one most popularly associated with circular breathing, but Parker points out that the technique has also been used by some swing musicians, is commonly employed by oboe players, and that some non-Western cultures consider it a standard device.

Parker clearly does not keep himself limited to European, or even Western, techniques. "At times I've been particularly interested in Scottish bagpipe music," he says. Other influences include Gypsy, Indian, Southeast Asian, Indonesian, Australian, Aborigine, and African music. "At different times I've listened quite extensively to all those things. Music from the global village, you might say."

But when he says influence, he doesn't mean copying. "If I did something and all it made you think of was, 'Oh, why is he trying to play the saxophone like a



ART ILLMAN

bagpipe?" then I would be making a big mistake. But if I learn something and transmute it, push it back out in my music, well, that's something that happens all the time. Musicians are always influenced by other musicians."

The thread that connects all of Parker's explorations is his relentless search for his own sound. "What people used to say about me was, 'He likes to think he sounds like Coltrane, but really he just sounds like Wayne Shorter.'" Parker laughs at this, then a thought suddenly hits him: "Wait a minute, don't use that. It sounds like an insult to Wayne Shorter. What it comes down to is if you've got enough arrogance or ego or sense of yourself, you're not happy with the way it should be done anymore. You want to make the way *you* do it be the way it should be done."

Parker has found, however, that this can create its own set of problems. "Sometimes I have the feeling of being lost in a labyrinth of my own construction. Or trapped in a cage that I've built around myself. That's what style can become for a free improviser. The clearer you have a sense of identity, the less free you are. You just can't afford to become trapped in your own style. On the other hand, if you don't have your own voice, you become this kind of infinitely malleable substance in somebody else's hand."

Still, Parker loves gearing up for the aesthetic and internal battles a free improviser must wage daily. "What appeals to me most about free music is that it grows with me. There are no idiomatic restrictions or limits beyond the limits of the players involved and their attitudes. If those attitudes or capacities grow or shrink, the music changes, too. I like that."

Unlike many musicians who worry about their chops as they get older, Parker is looking forward to what lies ahead. "I've been doing this for about 20 years," he says. "With luck, I may have another 20 to go—after all, it's a fairly physical music. But then again, if I get weaker, maybe the music will get weaker with me."

All of which is a long way from the young man who just wanted to be able to play like Paul Desmond. "It's still the same

## EVAN PARKER'S EQUIPMENT

Evan Parker's soprano saxophone is a middle-period Selmer Mark VI Paris, with a modified Rovna ligature, Selmer Soloist ebonite mouthpiece with an "H" lay, and modified PTD synthetic reeds (medium-hard). On tenor, he alternates between Selmer Mark VI Paris series 8000 and 9000's, with a Vandoren bass clarinet ligature, Berg Larsen ebonite 130/1 mouthpiece, and LaVoz medium-hard reeds.

## EVAN PARKER SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

### as a leader

THE SNAKE DECIDES—Incus 49  
ZANZOU—Jazz + Now (Japan) 001  
HOOK, DRIFT & SHUFFLE—Incus 45  
TRACKS—Incus 42  
SIX OF ONE—Incus 39  
INCISION—SAJ 35  
AT THE FINGER PALACE—Metalanguage/The Beak Doctor 3  
ABRACADABRA—Metalanguage/The Beak Doctor 2  
MONOCEROS—Incus 27  
SAXOPHONE SOLOS—Incus 19

### with Globe Unity

COMPOSITIONS—Japo 60027  
IMPROVISATIONS—Japo 60021  
JAHRMARKT/LOCAL FAIR—Po Torch 2  
PEARLS—FMP 0380  
INTO THE VALLEY—FMP 0270  
EVIDENCE—FMP 0220  
HAMBURG '74—FMP 0650  
LIVE AT WUPPERTAL—FMP 0160

### with Derek Bailey

COMPATIBLES—Incus 50  
COMPANY: FABLES—Incus 36  
COMPANY 6—Incus 29  
COMPANY 5—Incus 28  
COMPANY 1—Incus 21  
THE LONDON CONCERT—Incus 16  
MUSIC IMPROVISATION COMPANY—ECM 1005  
MUSIC IMPROVISATION COMPANY—Incus 17  
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE LUNGS—Incus 1  
SPONTANEOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLE: IN CONCERT—Emanem 311/312  
SPONTANEOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLE: KARYOBIN—Island 9079

### with Steve Lacy

CHIRPS—FMP 53  
SAXOPHONE SPECIAL—Emanem 3310

### with Alexander von Schlippenbach

DETTO FRA DI NOI—Po Torch 10/11  
THE HIDDEN PEAK—FMP 0410  
THREE NAILS LEFT—FMP 0210  
PAKISTANI POMADE—FMP 0110  
WORKSHOP FREI MUSIK—FMP R2

### with John Stevens

THE LONGEST NIGHT VOL. 1—Ogun 120  
THE LONGEST NIGHT VOL. 2—Ogun 420

### with Chris McGregor's Brotherhood Of Breath

UP TO EARTH—Polydor 583072  
PROCESSION—Ogun 524  
LIVE AT WILLISAU—Ogun 100

### with Louis Moholo

SPIRITS REJOICE—Ogun 520

### with Paul Lytton

CIRCADIAN RHYTHM—Incus 33  
RA 1 + 2—Moers Music 01016  
AT THE UNITY THEATRE—Incus 14

### with Kenny Wheeler

AROUND SIX—ECM 1156  
SONG FOR SOMEONE—Incus 10

### with George Lewis

FROM SAXOPHONE & TROMBONE—Incus 35  
IMPROVISORS' SYMPOSIUM—Incus 37

### with Peter Brotzmann

NIPPLES—Calig 30604  
MACHINE GUN—FMP 0090

### with Various Artists

METALANGUAGE FESTIVAL OF IMPROVISED MUSIC  
1980: THE SOCIAL SET—Metalanguage 116  
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1980: THE SCIENCE SET—Metalanguage 117  
LABORATORIO DELLA QUERCIA—Horo 39/40  
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instrument with the same buttons on it," he says with a smile. "It's just a different imagination. Different music from a different time."

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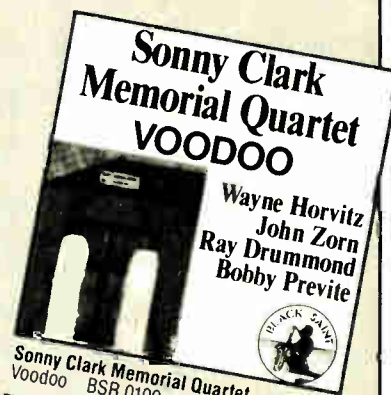
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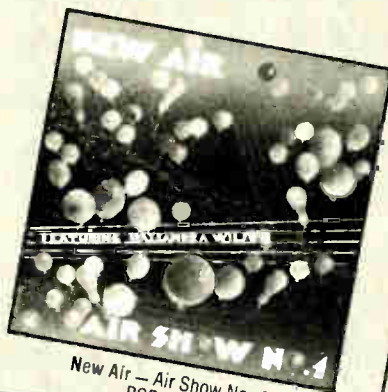
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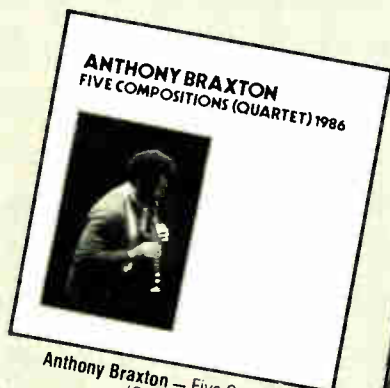
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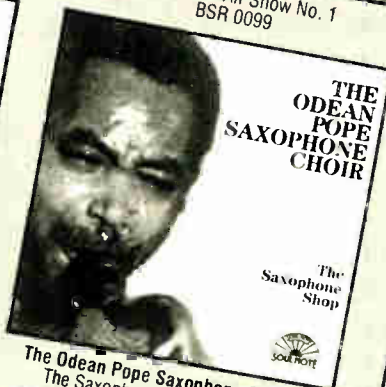
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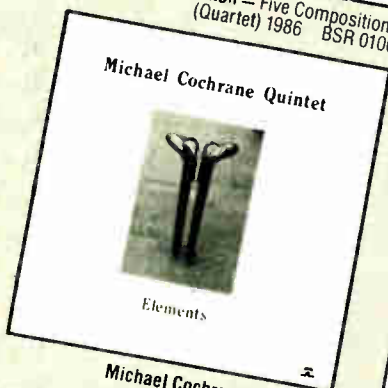
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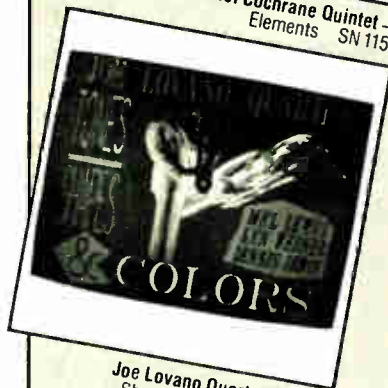
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## LOS LOBOS

**BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON**—Warner Bros. 1-25523: *ONE TIME ONE NIGHT*; *SHAKIN' SHAKIN' SHAKES*; *IS THIS ALL THERE IS?*; *PRENDA DEL ALMA*; *ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS DANCE*; *ROSA LEE*; *HARDEST TIME*; *MY BABY'S GONE*; *RIVER OF FOOLS*; *THE MESS WE'RE IN*; *TEARS OF GOD*.

**Personnel:** David Hidalgo, vocals, guitars, accordion, six-string bass, lap steel, violin, Hidalgueria, percussion; Cesar Rojas, vocals, guitars, bajo sexto, mandolin, vihuela; Conrad Lozano, electric bass, acoustic bass, guitarron, vocals; Louie Perez, drums, guitars, tenor long-necked plectrum, Hidalgueria; Mitchell Froom, keyboards; Steve Berlin, tenor, baritone saxophone, harmonica; Alex Acuna, percussion; T-Bone Burnett, vocals; Mickey Curry, Anton Fier, Ron Tutt, drums.

★★★★★

By now it should be pretty damn clear to anybody with ears that these guys are no novelty act ready to fade back into the barrio once the hype wears off. In fact, what has happened is that Los Lobos have brought their rich musical hybrid, spawned of Tex-Mex music, Western swing, hard-edged r&b, urban blues, folksy psychedelia—you name it—into the mainstream—with a vengeance.

It shouldn't surprise anyone, then, to learn that the music for *By The Light Of The Moon*, their second LP and third release, expertly mixes rock & roll elements from all over while its lyrics cast a jaundiced eye on the state of Reagan's America from somewhere down near the bottom of the pyramidal social structure. As that figure's peak recedes ever further from its widening base, and the illusions of a class in the middle become more and more tenuous, the sad characters inhabiting Los Lobos' songs, crafted so stunningly from such a range of styles and cultures, and forging as they do an undeniable link binding social and personal pain, will speak to, and for, a growing audience whose own goals and hopes are fading all around them.

Thus the portraits that emerge from *By The Light Of The Moon* are arresting as much for their diversity as for the appalling waste of human potential they illustrate time and again. Take the leadoff cut, *One Time One Night*, as an example of how rich a picture these rock & roll refugees can paint. Over a train-evoking shuffle that nods to the glory days of yore, while chattering guitars circle the chugging with a syncopated halo that recalls the bop inflections of Western swing, Dave Hidalgo's nasal tenor relays a series of vignettes that, the lyrics tell us, he first heard from "a wise man . . . a quiet voice." Those tales narrate a set of disap-

pointed expectations: some end in murder and violence, others less dramatically, if no less finally, in the jettisoning of the hope which has, after all, traditionally been America's stock-in-trade ("Another wish unanswered in America").

And so it goes wherever this seasoned group of explorers casts its penetrating gaze. The apocalyptic San Andreas Fault blends into the figure of a sexually bewitching woman over an untempo rave-up (*Shakin' Shakin' Shakes*) while Hidalgo's and Rosas' guitars scream and bellow their overdriven rage through howling bends, squealing sustain, and rheumy billows of raunch. An immigrant worker pauses over a sewing machine, a hungry baby cries into a tin cup while its mother, unable to feed it, sighs to plaintive sax accompaniment and an anguished, stinging guitar solo (*Is This All There Is?*). Or for those who prefer their images more defined, there's this searing juxtaposition of the Band-inspired *The Mess We're In*: "We've got no money/But we've got our lives/A voice that's louder than any picket sign/Don't take away what is ours to keep/This very land that lies beneath our feet. . . . Bombs are bursting in a far-off land/Fire in the sky, a soldier takes his stand/But who is to know about the rules men make/For what honor and for whose sake."

Now, it would be wrong to make this LP seem an unrelieved jeremiad—there are a couple of love songs in the mix, including a beautiful acoustic Mexican lament, a driving garage-band-goes-hi-tech sax showcase, and a gutsy blues. And yet, in the end, those moments too are clearly intended to be framed by the recurrent images of the hungry and homeless and exploited and despairing that crowd these songs with the same haunting urgency that they do our streets.

—gene santoro



## DEXTER GORDON

**ROUND MIDNIGHT**—Columbia 40464: *ROUND MIDNIGHT*; *BODY AND SOUL*; *BÉRANGÈRE'S NIGHTMARE*; *FAIR WEATHER*; *UNA NOCHE CON FRANCIS*; *THE PEACOCKS*; *HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON?*; *RHYTHM-A-NING*; *STILL TIME*; *MINUIT AUX CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES*; *CHAN'S SONG (NEVER SAID)*.

**Personnel:** Gordon, tenor saxophone; Herbie Hancock, Cedar Walton, piano; Pierre Michelot, Ron Carter, bass; Billy Higgins, Tony Williams, drums; Bobby McFerrin, Lonette McKee, vocals; John McLaughlin, guitar; Chet Baker, trumpet, vocal; Wayne Shorter, tenor, soprano saxophone; Freddie Hubbard, trumpet; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes.

★★★★★

**THE OTHER SIDE OF ROUND MIDNIGHT**—Blue Note 85135: *ROUND MIDNIGHT*; *BÉRANGÈRE'S NIGHTMARE #2*; *CALL SHEET BLUES*; *WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE*; *TIVOLI*; *SOCIETY RED*; *AS TIME GOES BY*; *IT'S ONLY A PAPER MOON*; *ROUND MIDNIGHT*.

**Personnel:** Gordon, Wayne Shorter, tenor, soprano saxophone; Freddie Hubbard, Palle Mikkelborg, trumpet; Herbie Hancock, Cedar Walton, piano; Pierre Michelot, Ron Carter, Mads Vinding, bass; Billy Higgins, Tony Williams, drums; Bobby McFerrin, vocal.

★★★★★

Bertrand Tavernier's remarkable feature film, *Round Midnight*, will endure as one of the greatest portrayals of the jazz life. It is sentimental, but avoids sensationalizing the encroaching sleaziness that ensnared Lester Young and Bud Powell, the masters it is dedicated to. And its music allows the viewer a nostalgia for the Blue Note albums of the early '60s, although the musicians never try to duplicate that sound.

We have essentially two volumes on different labels of the same soundtrack; the selections do not follow the sequence in the film, and while the Columbia release seems to hold the major themes, the Blue Note album is not simply leftovers. The first tunes Dexter Gordon's Dale Turner performs at the Blue Note in Paris are *As Time Goes By* and a great staccato blues, *Society Red*. Also, the Blue Note album contains more interludes and pieces from the movie's studio session, produced by Michael Cuscuna (who makes a charming and typically nervous producer's let's-get-back-to-the-session cameo appearance). Licensing and prior production association seem to have determined what selections are on what albums.

Warner Bros., who produced the film, licensed three *Other Side* selections: *Society Red*, Hancock's unaccompanied *Round Midnight* outing, and *Call Sheet Blues*, an impromptu between-segments jam by Wayne Shorter, Hancock, Ron Carter, and Billy Higgins that is not a part of the score. The distinctly melancholy ballad *The Peacocks* has a full outing on the Columbia LP but accompanies a flashback section in the film itself only briefly. One suspects Cuscuna may have helped encourage its inclusion drawn from curious ironies: *The Peacocks* was the title piece for a 1977 Stan Getz album for Columbia "presenting" its composer Jimmy Rowles; that album also includes two Wayne Shorter works, one being *Lester Left Town*; and both of those works originally appeared with an early Shorter edition album of the Jazz Messengers (*The Big Beat*, Blue Note 84029) that also includes *It's Only A Paper Moon*, in turn performed by a Bobby Hutcherson-led quartet in this movie.

Most of these musicians carried Blue Note 25 years ago; the entire rhythm section except Vinding graced many sessions, but here their collective role demands more of the sentimental in texture. Wayne Shorter's soprano tone on *The Other Side's Round Midnight* is large yet shrill; interestingly, his *Society Red* and *Una Noche Con Francis* tenor has him in a definite

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35

## REISSUE BLUES

by Gene Santoro

**Y**ou might recall last year's massive reissue from Atlantic Records, the seven-volume *Atlantic Rhythm & Blues 1947-74*. A vast and rich sampler from that pioneering r&b and soul label, the collection necessarily limited itself to, at most, a handful of tunes by each of Atlantic's major artists while offering some little-known tracks to fill in less-appreciated parts of the overall picture. What picture? The birth and growth of a major branch of rock & roll from its roots, natch.

Big Joe Turner virtually embodied an important aspect of that development in his massive frame. And while his newly released *Rhythm & Blues Years* (Atlantic 81663-1) doesn't include the monster cuts like *Shake, Rattle And Roll* or *Corrina Corrina* that make that statement a truism—those are promised for a soon-to-be-issued *Greatest Hits* package—what it does is present the sweep and full-throated power of the K.C. belter's seminal career as he evolved from blues shouter to r&b recording artist.

That evolution was more a question of backdrop than of any dramatic changes in the vocal approach favored by The Boss Of The Blues, as this two-LP set makes plain. With tunes spanning the years 1951-59, this compilation includes the full array of arrangements attempted at the time by r&b artists: Louis Jordan-ish jump tracks, Guitar Slim-style gutbucket blues, splashy doo-wop, remakes of old blues, and rollicking rock & roll. There are even a couple of period-piece ballads draped in the hovering strings and whiter-than-white background chorales that parallel how Brunswick (mis)handled Jackie Wilson, or how RCA bleached Sam Cooke—or, for that matter, how Atlantic's own Solomon Burke successfully fused his unique gospel-cum-country pop tack. Somehow, through it all, the Big Man's silky-smooth power sails with the same relentless vigor and ease of control he commanded until he died; and this set memorializes his huge, thrilling voice with good-to-excellent sound, via well-done digital transfers. Add in the behind-the-scenes reminiscences by the Ertegun brothers, Jerry Wexler, Herb Abramson, Doc Pomus, and Bob Porter, the handful of cuts never before issued on LP in the U.S., and the fairly extensive discographical info, and you've got a fitting foundation for the monument Big Joe's achievements and memory deserve.

*Atlantic Honkers* (81666-1-F) is another double-album with a mission. Examining the style of sax playing that came to dominate first the r&b, then the rock & roll airwaves of the '50s and early '60s, Bob Porter's notes attempt to trace the honkers' heritage from the Basie band's sax stand-offs between Prez and Herschel Evans, to

Illinois Jacquet's squealing solo with Lionel Hampton on *Flying Home*, and via Hamp to Arnett Cobb (Hamp's tenor man), Joe Morris (his trumpeter), and Johnny Griffin (Morris' tenor player)—all of whom are, not surprisingly, among the players this 28-tune set documents.

That historical line threads the selections here, as they move through straight blues, swing-to-bebop, bebop-to-r&b, sultry Ellingtonia, novelty tunes, Crescent City struts, deep-simmered soul, and almost everything in between. What makes this of more than archival interest, though, are the compelling sounds that tumble out of blast after blast by player after player. If you can hear a language evolving, you can also feel the small hairs on the back of your neck prickle with satisfaction as they're seared time after time.

Especially when one Curtis Ousley, Ornette Coleman's Fort Worth schoolmate, who was also, in some ways, his sonic soul brother, picks up his tenor on side four and blows the sensuous, fullbodied whirlwind that ripped out of so many tunes from the late '50s through the '60s. There was only one King Curtis, and he could—and did—play it all, with a staggering intensity and depth of command that shaped his tone and effects into a swelling, swooping, open-throated voice to be envied by any singer. From Grover Washington Jr. to Lou Marini to Lenny Pickett, from David Sanborn to Clarence Clemons to Steve Berlin, his musical progeny still swagger with his sounds.

Unfortunately, the digital transfers of this collection have imparted a ghostly, tunnel-like echo to many of the tracks, and made the rheumy, raunchy saxes often sound simply phlegmatic or distorted. Then too, some of these cuts feature only a dab of sax—which seems strange when there are so many hit tunes where these players strutted their squawking stuff at greater length. And finally, complete as they are about their thesis, Porter's liner notes curiously avoid mentioning some sax wielders—like Louis Jordan himself, or Junior Walker, or Lee Allen—whose influence on the style was enormous. Still, for what it's dug up from the depths of the vaults, this set deserves your attention.

That verdict also applies to the eight-disc compilation called *Atlantic Blues* (81713-1). Divvied up into double-albums called *Piano* (81694-1), *Guitar* (81695-1), *Vocalists* (81696-1), and *Chicago* (81697-1), which are all available separately, this collection is bound to have folks complaining about what's been left off, or included, or both. But if a survey can't be complete, it can be definitive.

As a survey of its field, each of these four subsets has different strengths and weaknesses. *Piano* balances two much-released Professor Longhair cuts with three previously unissued tracks, one from a 1953 Ray Charles rehearsal tape, and offers compelling performances by Jimmy Yancey, Little Brother Montgomery, Jack

Dupree, Jay McShann, and Meade Lux Lewis, among others, in styles that range from barrelhouse blues to second-line struts. *Guitar* kicks off with the likes of Willie McTell, Fred McDowell, and Stick McGhee, features T-Bone Walker doubling lines with Barney Kessel for a tune, raunches out with Guitar Slim for two tracks, and shifts to Cornell Dupree (leading what had been King Curtis' Kingpins) and his gentler-toned string-twistings for two, boasts one of Mickey Baker's amazing excursions, and proffers two of the hottest cuts from Albert King's out-of-print *Born Under A Bad Sign* collaboration with Stax's kickass rhythm section. On the other hand, it re-issues a Joe Turner tune from his set and pulls a cut from Stevie Ray Vaughan's latest LP.

Though the names on the cover promise much, the *Vocalists* set is spottier—the two tracks by the 84-year-old Sippie Wallace are, at best, of historical interest—and calls into question just what, exactly, the man meant when he said blues. Don't get me wrong: I love Percy Mayfield, think Otis Clay is one of the most underrated soul men ever, grow tingly from Ruth Brown and Esther Phillips, dig Z.Z. Hill, and am grateful to have a previously unreleased cut of Aretha for any reason whatever. I just have trouble imagining a useful descriptive category that would include them as well as Bobby Bland and Jimmy Witherspoon and Johnny Copeland, is all. But whatever you finally call it, *Vocalists* offers a fascinating, if somewhat unfocused, tour of one of Atlantic's strongest areas.

It's not too surprising, then, that the nearly equally unfocused *Chicago* offers some equally terrific sounds—in fact, if you called this one *Guitar II*, you'd be just about right. I'm not sure exactly why T-Bone Walker and Freddie King come under this rubric, for instance, but T-Bone's two and Freddie's four tracks (with the smoking Kingpins as his backup) are welcome indeed for their unparalleled axe exploits from currently out-of-print LPs. The three Buddy Guy/Junior Wells outings, boasting Eric Clapton on bottleneck and rhythm, are plucked from the fantastic—and out-of-print—*Buddy Guy And Junior Wells Play The Blues*; the trio of Otis Rush cuts find that erratic but brilliant bluesman goosed to peak form by the awesome Muscle Shoals section and co-producers Mike Bloomfield and Nick Gravenites; and all the sides from the 1972 Ann Arbor Festival will be savored by those who don't have that o.p. release.

Which, I guess, brings us back to the point about compilations. Introducing new listeners to a particular type of music is really what they're about, in the end; the already converted will inevitably want more of, well, whatever it is they like. It would be criminal if Atlantic, having started off their reissue series so promisingly, failed to live up to that promise and left the deeper, more committed audience hanging by selected tunes on multi-record sets while forcing them to rely on their worn but irreplaceable original LPs for more.

db

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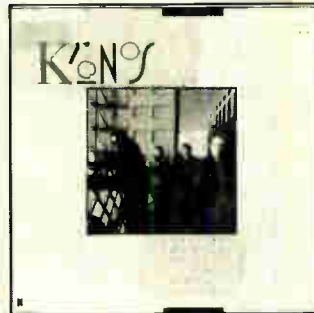
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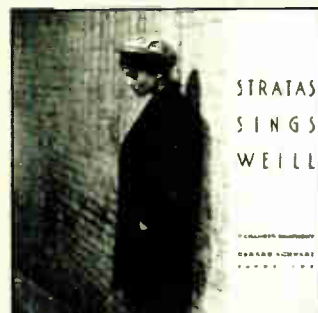
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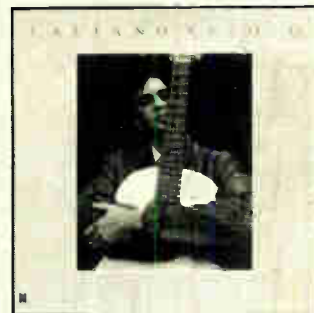
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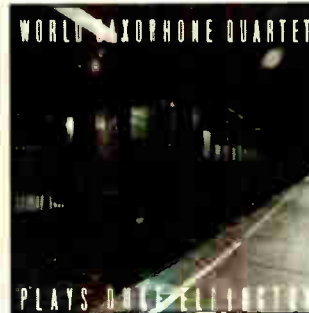
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# NONESUCH RECORDS, CASSETTES, AND COMPACT DISCS.

World Radio History

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## BG SERENADE

by John McDonough

A new marketing mania is taking hold in the twilight of the long playing record era: box sets. But even among the massive tomes currently overflowing the record bins, one could hardly miss *Benny Goodman: The RCA Victor Years* (5704-1-RB). Here is a 16-record compilation of all Goodman's commercial Victor releases from 1935-39, plus some of the more interesting unreleased alternate takes. While some collectors may covet the collection for the sake of acquisition, it actually contains nothing not already out on the eight two-LP *Complete Benny Goodman* volumes, available since 1980. RCA has merely targeted a different market with the identical product—the gift market. Mort Goode's remarkably thorough annotations are collated in a very impressive booklet, and a new introduction by Leonard Feather, a witness to the Goodman era, is added.

Unfortunately, however, a few mastering errors are intact as well. The opening on *Someday Sweetheart*, for example, is carelessly upcut, and Dave Tough's four-bar brush intro is missing from *Dizzy Spells*. This would be acceptable on a basement bootleg, but it's pretty sloppy work for a major label to put its name to.

There are two important things to know about this music. First, this is the body of work that made jazz the popular music of America. It caused a generation of young listeners to pay attention to Ellington as something other than a jungle band. It created a broad climate of acceptance in which such great artists as Shaw and Basie found their audiences. And second, it's the work Goodman himself was proudest of to the end. The reasonable among us can, of course, still argue the merits of other groups or periods. And Goodman's own perceptions of this time were undoubtedly colored with the emotions of youth and first success.

The material can be divided more or less four ways. There are first the great big band jazz classics around which the legends still swirl: *King Porter Stomp*, *Sing Sing Sing* (two takes; an unprecedented jazz performance of many moods and colors beneath the power and dazzle), *Jam Session*, *House Hop*, *Swingtime In The Rockies*, *Big John Special*, *Wrappin' It Up*, *Lullaby In Rhythm*, *Madhouse* (with its above-the-battle Jess Stacy solo) and others. Not all are well remembered. Listen, for instance, to *Smoke House Rhythm* (take 1) for Lionel Hampton's surging ensemble drumming.

Then there are many swing versions of what were already, by the late '30s, oldies-but-goodies: *Always*, *Blue Skies*, *Blue Room* (also two takes, and what a rocking rideout!), *I Want To Be Happy*, *Love Me Or Leave Me*, *Stardust*, *Rose Of Washington Square*, *Dear Old Southland*, and the furious *Farewell*

*Blues*. Goodman was constantly going back to his own boyhood for material; there's a fast, compact Henderson chart of *I Found A New Baby*. And *It Had To Be You* and *Estrelita* are soft, gentle pieces at the moderate tempos Goodman preferred for the band. The first real orchestral masterpiece—*Sometimes I'm Happy*—is virtually a ballad!

About a quarter of the repertoire includes the band's arsenal of contemporary tunes, many of which have since become standards themselves: *These Foolish Things* with the evocative beauty of Helen Ward's vocal, *The Glory Of Love*, *There's A Small Hotel*, *Sing For Your Supper*, *Smoke Dreams*, and *It's Been So Long*. Some were more passing, but fun while they lasted. Johnny Mercer wrote a lot of them and sings on the best of them. A few dared to eschew the vocal refrain; an instrumental of *Here's Love In Your Eyes* quickly rises above its sassy title and is a beautiful chart. But Goodman's instincts as a song picker left much to be desired too. He tended to rely on Tin Pan Alley, where the pickings were often slim. Some of the material (*Oooh-Oh-Boom*) is shockingly demeaning for a band of Goodman's quality to be playing. But incredible surprises spring out of even the most banal of places. Put on *Ti-Pi-Tin*, for instance, and listen to the tenor that comes swooping out of the tail end of Goodman's staccato solo like a condor. It's Lester Young. And even the worst of the songs seem to come out sounding better than they deserve, with Goodman's reed section rounding the jagged edges with burnished chrome speed lines.

Finally, there are the Goodman trios and quartets. Made less for commercial status than the sheer pleasure of performance, the tunes are a mixture of usually fine songs (*The Man I Love*, *Body And Soul*, *More Than You Know*, *Where Or When*) and sturdy improvisational vehicles (*China Boy*, *Avalon*, *Ding Dong Daddy*, *Opus 314*, *Nobody's Sweetheart*). The small group format and abundant solo space often masked the formal sense of structure that most of these performances adhered to: *'S Wonderful*, with its intriguing harmonies, *Body And Soul*, with Teddy Wilson a capella in the bridge, and *Moonglow*, with Hampton at his most lyrical—each proceeded according to its own master plan.

The band, which is undeniably stiff and staccato in the early period, grows looser as 1937 approaches. Gene Krupa's emphasis on the snare drum as timekeeper shifts to his hi-hats. The reeds tend to be a bit more legato. And Harry James never surpassed—and rarely equaled—the power he achieved with Goodman during these years.

Yet, unlike today, records were only one factor in putting over a band. Radio was at least as important, maybe more so. And judging from the almost constant surge and bite of the two-LP set *Air Play* (Doctor Jazz 2-40350), radio may have been the propelling force behind Goodman. Here is the same band playing the same charts, but the

difference between these versions and the presumably definitive Victor treatments is palpable. It may have less to do with musical values than ambience factors. Nevertheless, it's odd that broadcast performances have supplemented the Basie and Ellington records but never really superceded them, while in Goodman's case, it's been the opposite—ever since the Carnegie Hall concert LPs and the Bill Savory airchecks that made up probably the greatest single Goodman collection ever in 1952 (still in the CBS catalog [OSL 180]).

*Air Play* covers two years from late 1936 to late '38, and some of the material (*Moten Swing*, and *Some Of These Days*, which sounds better than on its original MGM issue) has appeared previously. But even when Goodman isn't especially inventive or imaginative in his solos—as on *Chicago* or *You're Driving Me Crazy*—the heat of his intonation and density of his vibrato and sound are electrifying. These performances deliver everything the Victors seem to hold back. Compare the contained RCA *Bumble Bee Stomp* with the explosive performance on *Air Play* (and catch the quote from Benny Carter's *Symphony In Riffs* between Goodman and Bud Freeman).

Even the early 1935 broadcasts, which are collected into one Sunbeam set (*Benny At The Congress Hotel*, Sunbeam 128-132), will offer the novice enough convincing evidence of what all the excitement was about. These are complete half-hour remotes, tempered with conservatism and containing their share of period curiosities (*Transcontinental*, *Dodging A Divorcee*). Goodman's revolution was in the making, but his solos on *Madhouse*, *King Porter Stomp*, and a partial *Honeysuckle Rose* remain powerful statements that rise above much of the for-historians-only material here.

*The Permanent Goodman* (Phontastic 77659-61) is a three-LP box set which attempts a career retrospective. With one critical exception, it's a good representation. From an exciting early trio of *That's A Plenty* (1927), we not only hear an exciting, remarkable, fully formed Benny (at 17), but a clear relationship between '20s Chicago and '30s swing. In addition to such period trademarks as the little jabs at the beginning of a stanza, which stayed with Benny through the later combos, his work has a great instinct for pacing and drama. He consciously pulls in before letting out in order to sharpen his emotional contrasts. The Columbia band pieces outnumber the Victors by two to one, but the choices are generally strong, and offer a few surprises for collector-types. The main weakness, for a set that seems to want to tell the complete Goodman story, is the lack of any band selection just prior to the arrival of Fletcher Henderson. Titles such as *Why Couldn't It Be Poor Little Me*, *Nitwit Serenade*, and *Music Hall Rag* represent the search for a style that brought Goodman to the brink of fame. But nothing here gives us the sense of that first real BG band. **db**

Sonny Rollins groove. The latter is a Bud Powell original, bearing his indelible stamp and his feeling for the latinesque in *Parisian Thorougfare* and *Un Poco Loco*. The soundtrack permits a better hearing of Chet Baker's wistful singing of the gorgeous melody of Bud's *Fair Weather* (miscredited to Kenny Dorham). And one cannot overlook Hancock's interpolation of Powell's *Time Waits* (the title of yet another Blue Note album) to come up with *Still Time*, the tune that makes nearly as many appearances in the movie as *Round Midnight* itself, though you have to be alert to catch it.

The final cut on the soundtrack album is *Chan's Song (Never Said)*. In the film Turner "composed" it for his daughter, though it is in fact a collaboration between Hancock and Stevie Wonder. Here, another packaging quirk is apparent. The tune's unveiling in the movie is by a quintet featuring Gordon and Hubbard; after Dale Turner's death a Hancock-led orchestra that appears to be at Montreux renders a semi-funky version; and at the close of the film while the credits roll up, we have the version on record with Bobby McFerrin with trio in an acoustic but decidedly fusion rendition. If nothing more, when you see the film, you can hear an historical process of the stylistic treatment of this one selection.

One last item: Lonette McKee's one-chorus version of *How Long Has This Been Going On?* is given fully on the soundtrack (but is broken by a flashback on film) and conveys an old-fashioned sensuality missing in so many movies with—or not about—music.

—ron welburn



## PAUL BLEY

**HOT**—Soul Note 1140: *WHEN WILL THE BLUES LEAVE*; *AROUND AGAIN*; *HOW LONG*; *MAZATLAN*; *SYNDROME*.

**Personnel:** Bley, piano; John Scofield, electric guitar; Steve Swallow, electric bass; Barry Altschul, drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**FRAGMENTS**—ECM 1320: *MEMORIES*; *MONICA JANE*; *LINE DOWN*; *SEVEN*; *CLOSER*; *ONCE AROUND THE PARK*; *HAND DANCE*; *FOR THE LOVE OF SARAH*; *NOTHING EVER WAS, ANYWAY*.

**Personnel:** Bley, piano; John Surman, soprano, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Bill Frisell, guitar; Paul Motian, drums.

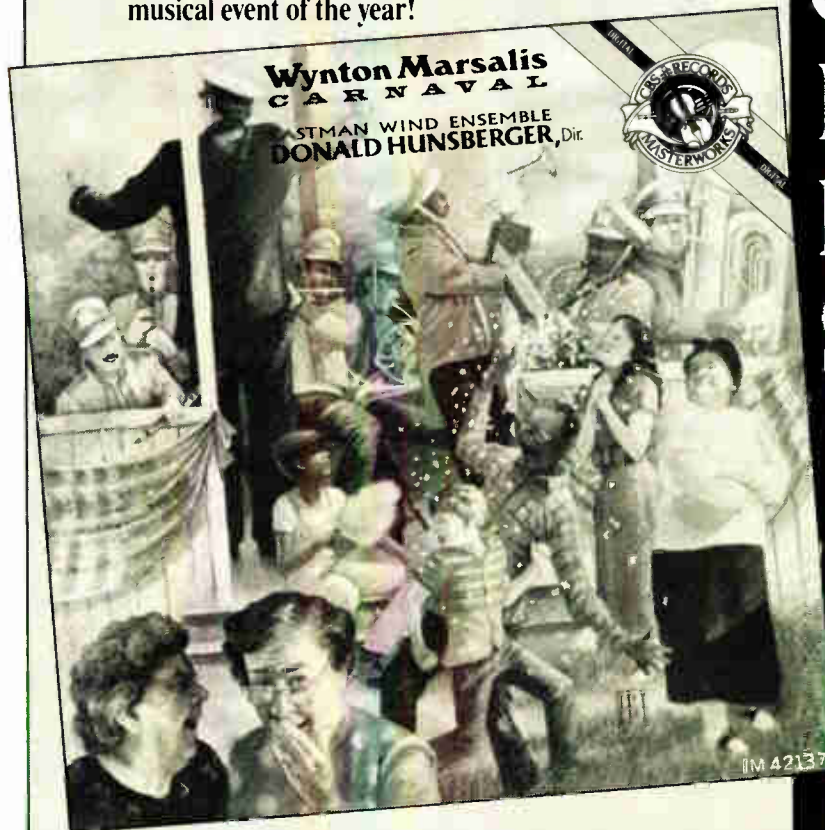
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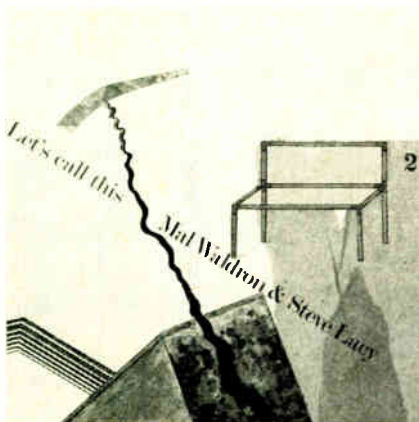
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HAT HUT RECORDS PRESENTS

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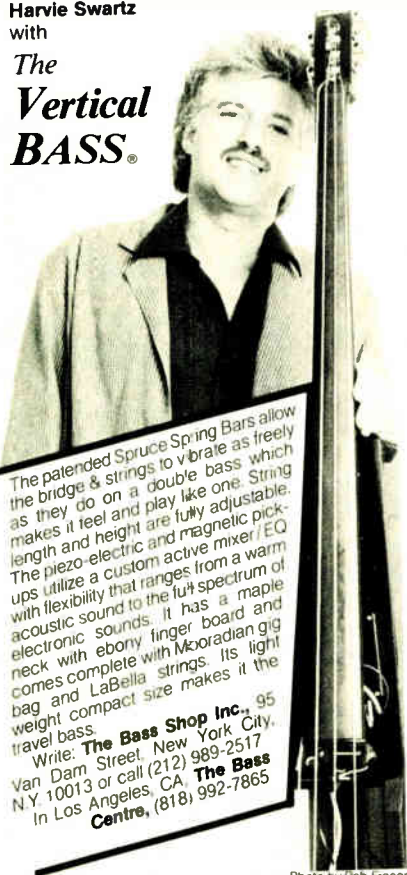
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Photo by Hob Fraser

glisses and variably singing lines. Yet, anti-lyrical deconstruction is just as important to Bley's conception. The pianist invests his improvisations with impromptu pauses, dissonances, and time fluctuations that subvert chord structure. Bley seldom plays from reflex; he's a thinking pianist who experiments with meaning and analyzes material with seemingly casual grace. The same standards, then, should apply to Bley ensembles. The two examples under review show how widely results vary.

Throughout *Hot*, sparks don't just fly—ideas cross and connect. The 1985 club recording crackles live and electric as a Fourth of July sparkler. Its balanced program gives equal time to Bley's lyrical and deconstructionist bents. The tunes range from a revisionist blues by Ornette Coleman and a countrified waltz, to a latin ostinato and a Carla Bley song. Inserted in the middle of this series, *How Long*, one of the leader's personalized ballads, is taken solo.

Lengthy ad libs and inspired dialog from Bley and John Scofield are the real heart of *Hot*. Their instrumental virtuosity and exchanges are best heard on the 12-minute *When Will The Blues Leave*. Paraphrase and retardation of theme form the bases for both their solos. Bley's is a model improvisation—one of those fantasies on conventional structure at which he excels. He initially strikes at the rhythm with clipped phrases; then ignites accelerating linear runs that recede before flaming up again, like an in-heat Sisyphus perpetually jutting one hip into the blues. Scofield exhibits characteristic string-bending and a dramatic use of space, kindling note-packed conflagrations of distributed yet rising intensity. A second Bley solo turns into "one on one" as Scofield's brittle lines set off the pianist's arpeggiated discord. Steve Swallow and Barry Altschul facilitate with intelligent swing this and similar exchanges, and themselves contribute several fine solos.

A technically adept 1986 studio date, *Fragments* illuminates Bley's lyrical side to the detriment of his spontaneous one. Performances sound one-dimensional and uninvolved in this music of polished reflective surfaces that hold no heat. The original compositions mostly flicker into oblivion. Paul Motian's *Once Around The Park*, for example, faintly evokes *Chelsea Bridge* but lacks development. Solos sound thin too, perhaps from fear that more prolonged expression will deviate from the desired mood. The too-brief hard-blown baritone of John Surman on *Line Down* is an event rare to these grooves.

Bley's colleagues shine in other playing situations; here they are confined by a floating, suspended ambience, the smother of invention. The drummer interjects his usual good taste—rustling brushes, ticking rides, and making a virtue of silence when he lays out. Motian's opposite, however, is Bill Frisell whose cloudy guitar chills the music with harmonic washes, a device that gets as predictable as it is ubiquitous.

The ethereal *Fragments* does rise above its limitations on a few tracks. Frisell's hybrid *Monica Jane*, delicately poised and sustained halfway between a lazy blues and a Coltrane tone poem—along with the Carla Bley ballad *Closer*—are among the most fully realized "fragments." But my favorite has to be the

three-minute Bley/Motian duet, *Hand Dance*, whose *joie de vivre* proposes the tensions and the contrasts so absent from *Fragments*.

The titles of these albums accurately describe their contents. It always should be so easy.

—peter kostakis



## FODAY MUSA SUSO

**MANSA BENDUNG**—Flying Fish 380: KULUNKLAN; KUNKUBA; TUTO JARRA; TRAMAKANG; MAMADU BITIKI; DIABA.

**Personnel:** Suso, lead kora; Jarju Kuyateh, rhythm kora; Tamba Suso, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★

## MALAMINI JOBARTEH/ DEMBO KONTE

**JALIYA**—Rounder 5021: SEGOU TUTU; MBASSI; SOLO; BAMBA BOJANG; TUTU JARA; FODE KABA; CHEDDO.

**Personnel:** Jobarteh, Konte, kora, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## JALI NYAMA SUSO

**JALI NYAMA**—FMP 51: JULA DEKARAY; ALPHA YAYA; DEMBO; N'DAMBUNG SALEYA; MALEY SAJO; JALI NYAMA.

**Personnel:** Suso, kora, vocals.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

## MASTER DRUMMERS OF DAGBON

**MASTER DRUMMERS OF DAGBON**—Rounder 5016: GBADA; BABATI ZAMANDUNIYA; DIKALA; THE YORUBA DANCE; GUMBE; ZHIM TAAI KURUGU; TORA; AMAJIRO; LUA; NYAGBOLI; ZUU-WAA; KURUGU KPAA; NAKOHI-WAA.

**Personnel:** Alhaji Ibrahim Abdulai, Adam Iddi, Yakubu Gomba, Abukari Alhassan, Abukari Wumbee, Sayibu Alhassan, Abdulai Fuseini, Zakari Alhassan, Alhassan Abdulai, Alhassan Fuseini, Baba Kalangu, lunga drums; Fuseini Alhassan, Mahamadu Fuseini, Yisifu Alhassan, Abdulai Seidu, gungon drums.

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

African pop music, with its eclectic blend of indigenous and Western styles, has lately established a foothold in the American market. African traditional music has been available in the U.S. for a longer time, but whether it will now attract more than anthropological or novelty interest remains to be seen. Four recent

albums, three of Senegambian harp-lute music and one of Ghanaian drumming, offer a small but savory sample of the tribal idioms that flourish in the region from which many Afro-Americans trace their descent.

The kora, featured in the book and television versions of Alex Haley's *Roots*, is the 21-string harp-lute of the Mandinka tribe, now concentrated in southern Senegal and the Gambia. Kora players belong to a hereditary caste of griots, called Jalis, who perform at various social, political, and religious ceremonies. While plucking complex set pieces and improvisations, they chant tribal history, noble genealogies, personal praise, and proverbial wisdom, all drawn from a vast repertoire dating back more than 700 years to the founding of the celebrated Kingdom of Mali.

Kora music, though highly sophisticated, is delightfully accessible, combining the filigreed delicacy of Renaissance lute playing with bittersweet African melodies, modern-sounding harmonies, and crisp, syncopated rhythms. Despite the theories of some musicologists, it sounds nothing like the blues, but does sometimes suggest old-time banjo picking or ragtime guitar.

Foday Musa Suso, a young griot who appeared in the final televised episode of *Roots*, helped popularize kora music in this country with his own rocked-up band, the Mandingo Griot Society, and on a highly successful duet album with Herbie Hancock, *Village Life* (Columbia 39870). On *Mansa Bendung*, his fourth LP for Flying Fish, he performs in a more traditional context, accompanied by two visiting friends, singer Tamba Suso and kora player Jarju Kuyateh. Tamba Suso's impassioned, coarse-toned vocals animate *Mansa Bendung*'s first side, complementing and contrasting with the stately rhythms and harp-like textures of the intertwining koras. Musa Suso and Jarju Kuyateh play instrumental duets on the second side, embroidering traditional patterns in a style that quickly grows familiar. The final track, *Diaba*, sounds less typical but most familiar of all, as it bears an uncanny resemblance to the hillbilly standard *Cumberland Gap*.

One of the most renowned Jalis, Alhaji Bai Konte, also appeared in the U.S.; his nephew and son, Malamini Jobarteh and Dembo Konte, toured with him before his death and have now recorded a duet album, *Jaliya*, in London. In both music and lyrics, the two Jalis use traditional motifs as a point of departure, improvising verses and mellifluous embellishments. *Bamba Bojang*, a famous song composed by Bai Konte in his youth, movingly mourns the death of Alhaji Bamba Bojang, a nobleman who was known as "the Crocodile." The classic *Cheddo*, commemorating the 19th century war between the Mandinkas and the Fulas, is given a deeply poignant rendering, with tributes to the musician's Gambian and British patrons interspersed among the historical stanzas. The enclosed lyric sheet, printed in Mandinka and English, reveals a poetry as refined and affecting as its instrumental accompaniment.

Another kora master, Jali Nyama Suso, is showcased in a solo performance on the German album *Jali Nyama*, recorded in West Berlin. Although his nasal singing, like that of Malamini Jobarteh and Dembo Konte, lends an earthy touch to the ethereal music, Nyama

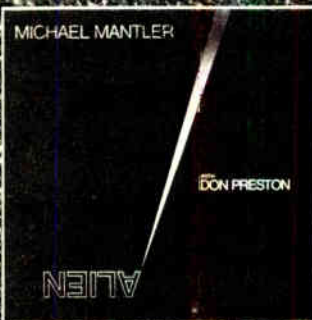
Suso's style is even more elegantly classical. But by the same token it is less viscerally engaging, despite the lambent beauty of the traditional *N'Dambung Saleya* and the spirited folk-rockish chording of the signature composition *Jali Nyama*.

Among the Dagbamba people of northern Ghana, drummers serve much the same function as Mandinka kora players: they chant oral history, genealogies, and praise songs, and supply the proper rhythms for formal rituals and social events. John Miller Cherriff studied Dagbamba drumming at its source and has

recorded a selection of 13 dance beats for the album *Master Drummers Of Dagbon*. The rhythms, performed on a battery of "talking" pressure drums called lungas and large tom-toms called gungons, represent but a tiny fraction of the Dagbamba repertoire. They include dances for butchers, blacksmiths, women and girls, and first-born sons, as well as a proto-highlife beat and a rhythm borrowed from the neighboring Yoruba tribe.

Dagbamba drumming is similar, in sound if not technique, to the Yoruba-derived bata drumming of Cuba, but bears little re-

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semblance to better-known American or Caribbean styles. Its variegated intricacy makes Western rhythms seem primitive by comparison, with each beat conveying its own specific meaning. Abstracted from its social milieu, however, and without melodic accompaniment except for some faintly recorded singing, *Master Drummers Of Dagbon* will likely appeal to few besides scholars and percussionists.

—larry birnbaum



## THE GOLDEN PALOMINOS

**BLAST OF SILENCE**—Celluloid 6127: *I'VE BEEN THE ONE*; *SOMETHING BECOMES NOTHING*; *THE PUSH AND THE SHOVE*; *(SOMETHING ELSE IS)* *WORKING HARDER*; *ANGELS*; *DIAMOND*; *FAITHLESS HEART*; *WORK WAS NEW*; *STRONG, SIMPLE SILENCES*; *BRIDES OF JESUS*.

**Personnel:** Anton Fier, drums; Bill Laswell (cuts 2-4, 6, 7), Tony Coniff (5, 8, 9), Chris Stamey (1, 10), bass; Jody Harris (2-8, 10), Peter Blegvad (1, 2, 4-6, 8-10), Nicky Skopelitis (2, 4), T-Bone Burnett (8, 9), Larry Saltzman (4), Pat Thrall (9), guitar; Bernie Worrell, Hammond organ; Sneaky Pete Kleinow, pedal steel guitar; Lisa Herman (1, 10), Carla Bley (9), piano; Robert Kidney, guitar, vocals (3); Jack Bruce (4), Syd Straw (1, 2, 4-6, 8-10), Matthew Sweet (2), Don Dixon (7), vocals; Ayib Deng, percussion (1).

★ ★ ★ ½

With this third album, the loose aggregation of musicians collectively known as The Golden Palominos has finally established a direction, a sound, an identity. They are The Band of the '80s.

There was a time when ringleader Anton Fier was content to surround himself with wacky noisemakers like John Zorn, Arto Lindsay, Fred Frith, and that whole downtown avant contingent. Now he dismisses that as "a failed experiment." With some reshuffling of personnel, Anton came up with 1985's *Visions Of Excess*, which was carefully calculated to capture the R.E.M. crowd (due in no small part to the presence of R.E.M.'s moody frontman Michael Stipe on a couple of cuts). On *Blast Of Silence*, Fier and company are going for tunes with more memorable melodies. Not exactly Madonna-commercial, but there's definitely some radioplay potential here.

The signature sounds of the current lineup are Bernie Worrell's droning Hammond organ (a la Garth Hudson in The Band), Jody Harris' steady guitar work, Anton's solid and simple drumming, and the strong vocals of Syd Straw, the Patsy Cline of the '80s. If this band gets

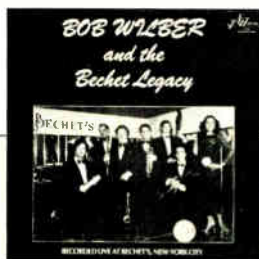
over with the radio and concert market, it'll be because of her.

*I've Been The One*, a dreamy country-folk ballad penned by the late Lowell George of Little Feat, is the perfect vehicle for Straw's heartfelt vocals. She has a great ear for harmony and phrasing and she sings out with conviction. Ayib Deng's distant talking drum adds a warm touch here, as does Sneaky Pete Kleinow's mellow pedal steel. Syd is used less successfully on *Diamond*, a Beatles-type ditty in which she offers her vocal take on The Bangles. But she acquits herself beautifully on another Little Feat number, *Brides Of Jesus*, in which she wails with gospel intensity.

*Faithless Heart* is a basic rocker distinguished by Don Dixon's powerhouse soul vocals, and the dark, forboding (*Something Else Is*) *Working Harder* features some mournful emoting by Jack Bruce. *The Push And The Shove* comes charging out of the gate like Motorhead, though Robert Kidney is no Lemmy Caution in the vocal department. And *Work Was New* is a raunchy Stones-type throwdown, though Peter Blegvad's singing is hardly in the same league with Mick.

This is a solid rock album. No instrumental madness here as in Golden Palomino days of yore (with the exception of Nicky Skopelitis' wild wah-wah solo on *Something Becomes Nothing*). Bandleader Fier subverts his ego on this album. No bashing drum solos or ambitious drum programming, as he displayed on the group's debut album. He's become the ultimate team player, the Ringo or Charlie Watts of a new generation. Solid and steady does it. Leave the rest to the charismatic singers like Straw and Dixon. Good plan, if you're aiming for a larger market. And Anton's already done the avant thing. He's ready for greener pastures.

—bill milkowski



## BOB WILBER/ BECHET LEGACY

**RECORDED LIVE AT BECHET'S, NEW YORK CITY**—Jazzology 141: *DOWN IN HONKY TONK TOWN*; *SI TU VOIS MA MERE*; *STOP SHIMMYING SISTER*; *LAZY BLUES*; *IF I LET YOU GET AWAY WITH IT*; *ROSES OF PICARDY*; *PETITE FLEUR*; *RUE DES CHAMPS ELYSSES*; *CHANT IN THE NIGHT*; *I'M A LITTLE BLACKBIRD*; *KANSAS CITY MAN*; *CHINA BOY*.

**Personnel:** Wilber, soprano saxophone, clarinet; Glenn Zottola, trumpet; Mark Shane, piano; Chris Flory, guitar, banjo; Phil Flanigan, bass; Chuck Riggs, drums; Pug Horton, vocals (cuts 1, 5, 10).

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**ODE TO BECHET**—Jazzology 142: *MARGIE*; *BLUES IN THE AIR*; *I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME*; *I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS*; *THE MOOCHE*; *I AIN'T GONNA GIVE NOBODY NONE OF MY JELLY-ROLL*; *WHEN MY DREAMBOAT COMES HOME*; *ODE TO BECHET*; *QUINCY STREET STOMP*; *A SAILBOAT IN THE MOONLIGHT*; *HIGH SOCIETY*; *BECHET'S FANTASY*; *SHAKE IT AND BREAK IT*.

**Personnel:** Wilber, soprano saxophone; Glenn Zottola, trumpet; Vic Dickenson, trombone, vocal; Mark Shane, piano; Reggie Johnson, bass; Butch Miles, drums; Pug Horton, vocals (4, 6, 10).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Bechet Legacy is a group primarily designed to showcase the many now-obscure, but eminently worthwhile songs written by Sidney Bechet, Bob Wilber's teacher and major influence during the most formative years of his early career. Bechet's music was rich in the varied melodic and rhythmic elements so characteristic of New Orleans music in general, but especially that associated with Creole culture, the social milieu from which Bechet sprang. Vestigial traces of ragtime phrasing and minstrel show song patterns occasionally crop up in Bechet's oeuvre, but by and large the most predominant influences on Bechet, both as composer and improvising jazzman, were, taken collectively, unique to the city of his birth. Thus we find co-existent in his musical compass the impassioned expressiveness of the *bel canto* school of operatic singing; the genteel, lyrical grace of 19th century Romanticism; the lilting rhythmic urgency of Caribbean and Creole dances (themselves direct descendants of West African forms); the concern for orderly structure and contrasting multiparted themes, a sine qua non of Sousa marches; and, of course, the deep emotionality of the spirituals and blues.

Wilber first came under the sway of Bechet while still in his mid-teens. Already a talented clarinetist, he put on the shelf for a time his initial desire to master the Goodman style, and decided instead to dedicate himself to the study of Sidney Bechet. These records were originally released on Bob's own label, Bodeswell, but received limited distribution. Therefore, it is a good thing for all concerned that they now appear on Jazzology, a classic jazz imprimatur that has been in existence since 1949, and which has vastly improved on the tonal qualities and surfaces of the original early '80s Bodeswells.

The higher grade goes to *Ode To Bechet* primarily because of the addition of Vic Dickenson, one of the rare specimens of the true jazzman. Vic was as unalterably himself in his playing as was Bechet, with whom he frequently worked and recorded during the '40s, and Wilber was extremely fortunate to get him for this date.

Wilber's own playing is, as ever, a marvel of effortlessness. Where once he did his level best to sound as much like his mentor as possible, his artistry in this respect now reveals itself in the form of a highly sophisticated and profoundly knowledgeable distillation of the essence of Bechet's style. His sound retains all of the warmth and subtle nuances of his teacher's, but is, at the same time, less fiercely aggressive; and he has also modified the

famous Bechet vibrato into one that should be pleasing to all sensibilities. Rhythmically, Wilber is a swinger all the way. To cite just one example of his flexibility, he will sometimes execute his phrases or cadenza-type runs in such a manner as to barely suggest a feeling of *rubato*, or suspended time; he rarely uses this device for more than a bar or two at a time, but when he does resolve this sought-after tension, the effect is not dissimilar to that achieved by Armstrong and Bechet and, somewhat later, Young and Parker. —jack sohmer



## KELVYNATOR

**FUNK IT UP**—Blue Heron 70201-1: GOOD, GOOD LOVE; FUNK IT UP; ANOTHER TIME AND SPACE; INTER SELF TRAVEL; ON THE ONE; NGOLOWAKE; SAMBA DU FEEL GOOD; METAPHYSICAL PHUNKTION.

**Personnel:** Kelvyn Bell, electric guitar, vocals; Kevin Bents, synthesizer, vocals; Vic Edimo, electric bass; Ronnie Burrage, drums, vocals; Arthur Blythe, alto saxophone (cuts 4, 8); Vincent Henry, tenor saxophone (4, 6).

★ ★

## JEROME HARRIS

**ALGORITHMS**—Minor Music 1011: ALGORITHMS (OF THE HEART); TOPOLOGY; TWICKSTER; THRALL; CANDLES; BABES IN BABYLON; ZOMBA PLATEAU.

**Personnel:** Harris, electric guitar; Marty Ehrlich, alto, soprano saxophone; Ken Werner, synthesizers, piano; Mark Helias, electric bass; Pheeroan akLaff, drums; Annette Linn, percussion (2, 6, 7).

★ ★ ★ ½

Jerome Harris has played with Jump Up and Sonny Rollins, Kelvyn Bell with Defunkt and Arthur Blythe. Like a lot of young musicians, they bridge the worlds of jazz and new funk. But crossing over is never easy—if jazz fans'rown on contemporary dance music, it may be less because it's explicitly commercial than because there's too little happening. Groove riding will only get you so far.

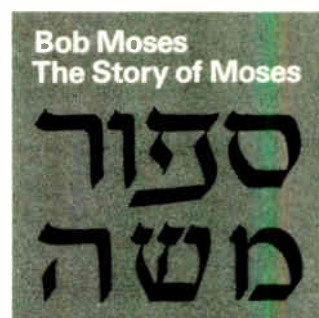
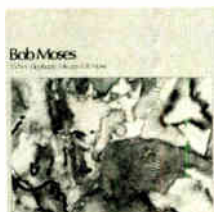
Bell is an adequate singer and axe-wielding front man with the funk-pop Kelvynator. The

rhythm team lays down a solid groove—Edimo's bass swings the pulse one way, Burrage's drums the other. Still, complex as the rhythmic kernels get, the cycles are short and variations few. Repetition breeds monotony. The quartet can pull the beat four ways (*Ngolowake*), and *Phunktion's* in a comfortable 5/4. But too often Kelvynator lays down a great bed for a solo, then forgets the solo. Bell admires Hendrix, but even while singing Jimi didn't keep you waiting for the hot guitar parts—he never let a groove get stale.

Kelvyn's chops are fair. He takes twangy, lyrical strolls (*Samba Du Feel Good*) and snaps off brittle James Brown chords, but the most interesting facet of his style is a vocal, throat-clearing gesture—an emphatic, skyward spiral out of key, to end a line. (It's on loan from gutbucket Blood Ulmer, whom Kelvin replaced with Arthur Blythe.) Blythe's own guest shots show funk's creative constraints; Burrage's thwacked-out beat doesn't challenge Arthur the way Bob Stewart's bobbing tuba did in his own quintet.

Guitarist Harris staves off monotony by casting jazzman/Slickaphonic Mark Helias as his electric bassist; in a Steve Swallow vein, Helias takes funk patterns and stretches them out of metronomic time, or greases the bottom with walking fours. Mark and Pheeroan let the rhythm breathe; *Zomba's* staccato groove proves more elastic than intractable. The leader makes the most of the latitude they give. Like Bell, he's in no hurry, unreeling *Algorithm's*

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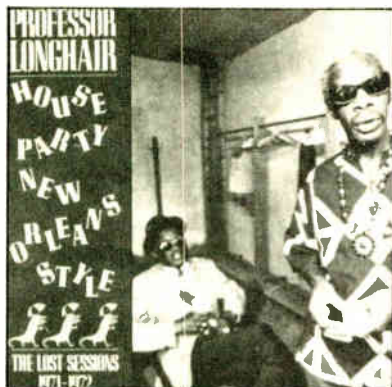
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record reviews

lines with a hand as slow as Peter Frampton's.

Marty Ehrlich's soprano usually sings along sweetly, in tune, but his horn thickens the dissonant chordbanks obscuring *Topology's* modal planes. Jerome and the endlessly versatile Ken Werner favor breezy impressionistic harmonies, wafted over from Lyle Mays and the Police.

Werner gigged in the Caribbean for a while, and Jerome's played Jump Up's Yankee skank, so *Babylon's* island riddim sounds naturally loose. But the borrowing doesn't stop where you might expect. Harris likes Bill Frisell's cowboy chords, too, and an inspired Werner honky-tonks (like Jaki Byard, without a whiff of schtick) on a foxtrotting *Trickster*. Mixing and matching, Harris and band come up with an unexpectedly rich brew—a crossover that's good for ears as well as feet. —*kevin whitehead*



**HENRY JOHNSON**

**YOU'RE THE ONE**—MCA/Impulse 5754:  
*YOU'RE THE ONE; MR. MONTGOMERY; DELILAH; ONLY IN A DAYDREAM; SOMEWHERE; THE WOMAN IN MY LIFE; STRAIGHTFACED; LAKEVIEW LOVE SONG; LEAVE IT BEHIND.*

**Personnel:** Johnson, guitar, vocal (cuts 6, 9); Ramsey Lewis (3, 6), Billy Foster (3, 5, 9), Bill Heid (2, 9), piano; Robert Long (7), Theodis Rodgers (8), synthesizers; Frank Russell (2, 3, 5, 6, 9), Jimmy Allen, bass; Robert Gates, drums; James Perkins (6, 9), saxophone.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Probably not since the early 1950s has there been such a rash of development in jazz guitar, and a wealth of gifted players on the scene as at present. Add to the list of superior younger players Henry Johnson, whose recently issued first album as leader is all but flawless, well documenting his stunning, fiery playing, maturity of conception, considerable writing and arranging abilities—and, were this not enough, impressive production skills as well. The reports of his prowess we've been hearing for the last few years from Chicago have been true, and then some!

This is one of the single finest maiden efforts it's been my pleasure to hear in a long time; in fact, I can't recall being so impressed by a player new to me as I am by this album—and for many reasons. Not only does the 32-year-old Chicago resident have chops to spare, as shown by the numerous strong, focused, idea-filled and impeccably played improvisations scattered throughout the program, but he's got the maturity and seasoning to use them wisely, in aid of the wider contexts of the music and its goals, as well as the generosity of spirit to allow

his fellow players ample space to demonstrate their abilities. As a result, the music always moves forward, constantly engaging one's interest through its alternation of solo passages and the intelligent, handsome orchestrations into which they have been integrated so knowingly.

The great strength of the music is the consistency and seamlessness of its parts which, thanks to Johnson's arrangements and corollary production savvy, cohere into an effortless whole of real substance. His arrangements are clear, uncluttered, and very contemporary in feeling, with a decidedly orchestral character belying the rather small instrumentation. The synthesizer parts complement and add interest to what is essentially a well-conceived program of cohesive, exciting small-group playing. The underlying rhythm section is right on the money, and the contributions of the several keyboard players, including Ramsey Lewis, are outstanding, fully on a par with Johnson's own bristling playing. Time and again he reveals his easy mastery of post-bop modern jazz guitar, with more than occasional references to the work of his chief, but by no means sole influence, Wes Montgomery. And he writes stunning tunes, too.

The only really weak element here is Johnson's rather lackluster singing, on *The Woman In My Life* and *Leave It Behind*, which will hardly challenge George Benson's efforts in this area. Still, they scarcely impede what is a marvelous, immensely satisfying album all the more impressive for its being (a) a first effort and (b) self-produced by a performer of phenomenal promise. With *You're The One*, Henry Johnson's off and running. —*pete welding*



**FRANK ZAPPA**

**JAZZ FROM HELL**—Barking Pumpkin 74205:  
*NIGHT SCHOOL; THE BELTWAY BANDITS; WHILE YOU WERE ART II; JAZZ FROM HELL; G-SPOT TORNADO; DAMP ANKLES; ST. ETIENNE; MASSAGGIO GALORE.*

**Personnel:** Zappa, Synclavier digital music synthesizer (cuts 1-6, 8), guitar (7); Steve Vai, Ray White, guitar (7); Tommy Mars, Bobby Martin, keyboards (7); Ed Mann, percussion (7); Scott Thunes, bass (7); Chad Wackerman, drums (7).

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

This has got to be Frank's favorite album among all 50 or so he's recorded since 1966's *Freak Out*. It sounds so good—crisp, precise, crystalline, executed with sheer perfection by the ultimate music machine of the day, the incredible Synclavier. You can bet this little piece of techno-hardware never misses a beat, blows a note, or flubs one of those tricky Zappa

time signatures. The notoriously fastidious FZ must've been smiling all the way through this project. Imagine—no human error, no egos to deal with, no incompetent, lackluster symphony orchestra musicians with their outrageous union scale. The Synclavier shows up on time, works tirelessly around the clock, and never makes a mistake. Ah, perfection at last!

Zappa has exerted Svengali-like control over his various ensembles through the years (humorously spoofed in the movie *200 Motels*). From *Freak Out* to 1984's *Them Or Us*, Zappa has continually upgraded the quality of his sidemen. Now he's taken the next logical leap by interfacing with the computer. I mean, Ruth Underwood played some pretty mean marimba on *Overnight Sensation*, but she could never handle the intricate marimba-sampled lines here on the bizarre *Beltway Bandits*. And what synth player—no matter how accomplished—could possibly cop the proper rhythmic feel on the surreal *While You Were Art II*, the aural equivalent of a Heir-onymous Bosch painting? No band on this planet could cut this demanding tune to Frank's satisfaction.

For fans of "out" jazz there's the eccentric swing of *Damp Ankles*, with its moody, obtuse horn lines and dissonant melody fragments bubbling on top. Or the ambitious title cut, with its Mingus-like upright bass lines undulating behind George Russell-esque horn arrangements. And fear not, guitar fans. Frank has not forgotten how much you love his extended soloing. For you there is *St. Etienne*, a live band cut that features some six minutes of Zappa at his frenzied finest on a minor blues dirge. Riffs to make your toes curl.

Yes, this is perfect music. Flawlessly executed. Five stars for the craft. Of course, human error has often resulted in some very magical "mistakes." There are none on this album. And there's none of the preachy sarcasm of *Teenage Wind* or *Be In My Video*, none of the outrageous raunch of *Dinah Moe Humm* or *Baby Take Your Teeth Out*, no social commentary like *Who Are The Brain Police*, no novelty numbers like *Valley Girl* or *Goblin Girl*, and no '50s doo-wop numbers like *The Closer You Are* or *Sharleena*. This album is not entirely devoid of humor, however. The wacky *G-Spot Tornado* is an aural riot, with its sampled voices and comical dwarf noises. This one could be a great soundtrack for some insane, animated video (but I'm sure Zappa's already hard at work on something along those lines).

Admittedly, the human element is gone here. That's good and bad. Good because it finally allows Zappa (and the listener) to hear his compositions fully-realized. Bad because I sorta miss the human antics of Jimmy Carl Black, Flo & Eddie, Napoleon Murphy Brock, Johnny Guitar Watson, Adrian Belew, Steve Vai, et al.

—bill milkowski

Next month in db:  
George Benson,  
George Howard,  
and more.

# Waxing On

## DUKE & CO.

**ELLINGTON/MINGUS/ROACH: MONEY JUNGLE** (Blue Note 85129) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**DUKE ELLINGTON: NEW MOOD INDIGO** (Doctor Jazz 40359) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**DUKE ELLINGTON: THE WEBSTER/BLANTON YEARS** (RCA/Bluebird 5659) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**DUKE ELLINGTON: 1943** (Circle 103) ★ ★

**DUKE ELLINGTON: A DATE WITH THE DUKE**, Vols 37, 38, 39 (Merit Recording Society) ★ ★ ★

**BENNY MORTON/JIMMY HAMILTON: THE COMPLETE BLUE NOTE SWINGTETS** (Mosaic 1-115) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**CAT ANDERSON: & THE ELLINGTON ALL-STARS** (DRG/Swing 8412) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**PAUL GONSAIVES/ROY ELDRIDGE: THE MEXICAN BANDIT MEETS THE PITTSBURGH PIRATE** (Fantasy 9646) ★ ★ ★

**CLARK TERRY/RED MITCHELL: TO DUKE AND BASIE** (Enja 5011) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

One of the more interesting subtexts in the long career of **Duke Ellington** was his wonderful habit of dipping into his trunk, pulling out a familiar chestnut, and reincarnating it every few years. My guess is it's relatively easy to invent new music if you happen to be a composer. The real test of creativity just may be taking a proven, settled work—and Ellington had many of them—and finding new perspectives on it, new routes through it.

Nowhere did Ellington do this more radically than on the famous 1962 *Money Jungle* session, an apples-and-oranges combination in which he took on a rhythm section of Max Roach, who plays brilliantly through some rather knotty ensembles, and Charles Mingus, who provides a lot of the knots. The record received five stars when first issued in 1963, and this time it's even better, with four previously unissued cuts added. Although it remains a somewhat controversial LP among Ellingtonites—no doubt because it stripped him of his most essential instrument, his band—it is almost certainly his most intriguing statement as a pianist. Here his Harlem stride origins are stretched to the threshold of the avant garde. Yet the seams never split under the strain, despite the implicit adversarial relationship among the players. Mingus is sometimes aggressive and over-anxious, like a batter determined to tear the cover off the ball—and losing his cool in the process (*Money*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43

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## THEORY AND MUSICIANSHIP FOR THE CREATIVE JAZZ IMPROVISER

by michael longo



## REEDS & DEEDS

by Bill Shoemaker

In a tactical sense, saxophone quartets are to the '80s what solo saxophonists were to the '70s. Yet, in providing the composer/improviser another

contextual alternative, saxophone quartets have potently and permanently expanded the parameters of serious music that has a broad, diverse audience. The World Saxophone Quartet is the archetypal case in point, as it has been at or near the top of every major jazz critics' and readers' poll for most of the 10 years of its existence; it is also one of the shamefully few jazz-oriented ensembles to be featured in the Brooklyn Academy of Music's elitist Next Wave series. The Rova Saxophone Quartet is one of the most popular jazz groups in the USSR; this distinction led to the tour documented in the film *Saxophone Diplomacy*, seen on PBS affiliates. The 29th Street Saxophone Quartet is leading a growing pack of contenders vying for the growing niche saxophone quartets have in the music marketplace.

While the **World Saxophone Quartet's** *Live At The Brooklyn Academy Of Music* (Black Saint 0096) will affirm the quartet's clairvoyant interaction and compositional incisiveness to their present audience, it is *World Saxophone Quartet Plays Duke Ellington* (Nonesuch 79137-1) that may prove to be a watershed, saleswise. From Julius Hemphill's sprinting "A" Train, replete with anthropomorphic heaves and surges, to Hamiet Bluiett's inspired grafting of a *Hattie Wall*-like cadence onto a reverent reading of *Come Sunday*, this record has what it takes to saturate its market. Meanwhile, *Live's* tangy mix of deep-hued ballads (Hemphill's *Open Air* and *Georgia Blue*) and blowing vehicles that range from the buoyant (Oliver Lake's *Kind'a Up*) to the blistering (David Murray's *Great Peace*, featuring the quartet in extended unaccompanied solos) should, in tandem with the Nonesuch disc, provide for some engaging radio programming.

The *Crowd* (hat Art 2032) is the most satisfying documentation of the **Rova Saxophone Quartet's** intentionally dense music to date. There is a sensuousness and swagger one usually does not associate with the Bay Area-based braintrust. It seems that in their collective decade-long grappling with the relationship of the soloist within the ensemble, individual expression is the least restrained that it has ever been. There's still plenty of dizzyingly complex ensemble passages, but the soloists simply soar at times—or, perhaps, soar simply, as does Andrew Voigt's alto on the smoke-tinged opening section of *Terrains*, Bruce Ackley (who has emerged as a world-class soprano specialist) on the dreamily surreal *Rooms*, and tenorist Larry Ochs and Jon Raskin (on alto and baritone) on the



MITCHELL SEIDEL

THE WORLD SAXOPHONE QUARTET: "... clairvoyant interaction, compositional incisiveness."

rhythmically bracing *Knife In The Times*.

The **29 St. Saxophone Quartet** has a more deliberate approach to idioms, hooks, and entertainment value than the more mercurial WSQ. The 29th Streeters utilize well-defined lead and support roles more often than the dovetailing polyphony frequently employed by the WSQ. The improvising vocabularies of altoist Robert Watson and Ed Jackson, tenorist Rich Rothenberg, and baritonist Jim Hartog are engaging and effective, albeit in a prudent manner like a good lawyer, they pose no questions in their solos for which they don't already know the answers. Hence, *Watch Your Step* (New Note 1002) makes a strong case for the foursome; whether delving into funk, latin, or Kansas City-inspired modes, they are convincing.

While Americans are the leading exponents of the saxophone quartet, several European ensembles create strong music—ranging from Position Alpha's transcriptions of Monk and Mingus to the close-order ensemble passages of Kolner Saxophon Mafia and De Zes Winden, and the freely brushed soundscapes of Manfred Schulze's *Blaser Quintett*—that reflects a vital transcontinental dynamic.

On *The Great Sound Of Sound* (Dragon 101/102), **Position Alpha** (Mats Eklof, baritone and bass; Sture Ericson, tenor, alto, and soprano; Thomas Jaderlund, alto, soprano; Jonny Werel, soprano, alto, and tenor; Jonas Akerblom, soprano, alto, and baritone) assume the posture of reverent traditionalists with a mischievous streak. Their approach to jazz standards, tangos, circus music, et al, has a Breuker-esque aura, but their forays into free jazz are straightforward to the point of being contrary.

The humor of **De Zes Winden** (Bill Smith, soprano; Dies Le Duc, soprano; Paul Termos, alto; Jonn Tchicai, tenor; Ad Peijnenburg, baritone; Klaas Hekman, bass) on *Live At The Bim And More* (BVHaast 064) is more wry than Position Alpha's—even Termos' dizzying *56 Beats*, the most baroque example. The jazz tradition is forwarded in a more distilled

manner, personified by Tchicai and his collage-like use of folk materials; Tchicai has also transferred the arid ambience of his alto to tenor.

While the listener is confronted primarily by the audacity of the musical ideas forwarded by the previous pair of quartets, studio technology is the most confrontative element of *Unerhort Stadiklange* (JazzHaus Musik 21), the second outing by **Kolner Saxophon Mafia** (Norbert Stein, soprano, tenor; Armin Tretter, soprano, alto; Wollie Kaiser, soprano, tenor; Joachim Ulrich, soprano, tenor; Gerhard Veeck, soprano, alto; Joachim Zoepf, baritone). Ambient sounds and signal processing play a prominent, if not intrusive, role throughout the program, even though the lyrical and evocative charts could stand on their own.

Still, for unbridled confrontation, *Nummer 12* (FMP 1090) is recommended. **Manfred Schulze's Blaser Quintett** (Schulze, baritone; Manfred Hering and Dietmar Diesner, soprano; Heiner Reinhardt, tenor; Johannes Bauer, trombone) is steeped in the free music orthodoxy that has been diligently documented on FMP—read: passages of piercing intensity alternate with more detailed investigations of texture and dynamics. There are even a few jolting notated passages.

When one has had his/her fill of saxophone quartets, quintets, and sextets, there are clarinet quartets to consider. Besides the two sterling Clarinet Summit recordings on *India Navigation*, **CL-4** (Theo Jorgensmann, Lajos Dudas, Dieter Kuhr, clarinets; Eckhard Koltermann, bass clarinet; guest clarinetist Gerald Doecke) explores a variety of materials without Third Stream pretensions. While the "clarinetology" expressed on *Alte Und Neue Wege* (Konnex 5007) is more akin to Eddie Daniels than John Carter—rich, creamy "correct" tone rather than exploratory techniques—there is a variety of adventurous performances, ranging from a striking *Mood Indigo* to bracing originals with complementing compositional and improvisational elements.

db

*Jungle, Very Special*). Ellington, who never loses his, fights back with intensely percussive rhythmic power. He swings with a backroom abandon on an astonishing *Caravan*, still the session's masterwork. Among the new cuts, *Rem* is a minor blues with some fine side-door piano, but an overall hesitancy as a group effort. *Little Max* is a short drum solo. *Backward* is full of rich, sticky piano chords played against Mingus' big bass lines. And *Switch Blade* is a relaxed slow blues that drifts in a broad weave.

Another new-look-at-old-material case in point is *New Mood Indigo*, the latest in a long line of posthumous albums taken from sessions Ellington salted away when his little Camelot was still intact. This one combines four dates from 1962-66, a peak period in the band's postwar history. And the centerpiece is a flawless *Mood Indigo* that begins with a moody clarinet coda before accelerating to a fast tempo for the familiar theme statement. Solos by Johnny Hodges (especially beautiful), Cat Anderson, and Paul Gonsalves are soft and restrained. This cut is the centerpiece of the album, but it's not the only surprise. A Mercer Ellington session drawn from the 1966 band with Louie Bellson finds a pre-fusion Chick Corea sitting in on piano. The best of these performances is a snappy original by Aaron Bell called *Sassy*. Corea's contribution (*Ugh*) is a somewhat bland piece for himself and Gonsalves. Mercer's *Portrait For Pea* is a pretty Hodges vehicle without much thematic content. But it gives Hodges a chance to play the sort of alto that's just not heard anymore.

The most elegant of the new Ellington packages is RCA/Bluebird's *The Blanton/Webster Years*, a four-record box set-and-booklet package which collects the first two years of the band's Victor period of the '40s. (The small group sides, piano/bass and piano solo sessions are not included.) As a reissue—and that's what I'm reviewing here; the music remains one the richest veins of sound in recorded history—it's attractive and certainly contains the right stuff. But in a way, it's neither fish nor fowl—neither complete nor selected. A complete set of the band's work would have included the valuable alternates on titles like *Koko*, *Dusk*, *Warm Valley*, *Across The Track Blues*. A programmed collection would have skipped a dozen or so severely dated ballads, most of which are crooned by Herb Jeffries. A more exact composite of Ellington's most perfect two years remains the Smithsonian sets or, for the completeniks, the French RCA series.

The third volume of Ellington's 1943 World Transcriptions is out on Circle Records, and catches a slump in the chronology. Eight tracks—some partials and breakdowns—are forgotten pop tunes. Basically, all we get are good single performances of *Caravan*, *Three Cent Stomp*, and *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* in what is probably state-of-the-art sound for 1943. Six more volumes are coming in good time.

If you want to talk volumes, though, let's talk the Duke Ellington Treasury Series, which began in 1981 and now continues with volumes 37, 38, and 39. Each LP in this series contains a single one-hour radio program from *A Date With The Duke*, a series the Treasury Department sponsored during the war to sell war bonds. It ran from April 1945-1946. Some

programs caught Duke on the road, others in the bare walls of a studio. The shows were all music, except for savings bond messages Ellington read. Everything's here, including, on Volume 37, several news bulletins on a rail strike. The material is typical mid-'40s Duke, plus transitory performances of current pop tunes—many Ellington never recorded. Over the course of the series there's a good deal of repetition, though in this May-June 1946 period only *I'm A Lucky So And So* is encored. Sound is consistently excellent, and some of the performances have a nice spontaneity, although this is a series designed for full-time Ellington fans, not the casual ones. (Available by mail only from Meritt Record Society, P.O. Box 156, Hicksville, NY 11802).

Often the individual signatures of Ellington's men were so strong that sessions they did outside the band—and they did many—carry some of Ellington's genetic codes. Here are a few worth noting.

The **Benny Merton and Jimmy Hamilton** *Blue Note Swingtets* from Mosaic make a wonderful LP pairing. The Morton band broods even when it swings on a couple of takes of *Sheik Of Araby*, Ben Webster and Barney Bigard filling out the front line. The Hamilton group, with Ray Nance, Otto Hardwick, Harry Carney, and Henderson Chambers, plays bigger, more lumbering ensembles that sometime sound a bit jittery. But when the soloists step forward, the music flows with a loose, easy swing. Hamilton is fluent and Goodmanesque. And Sid Catlett takes some astounding breaks on *Slapstick*. Only Ray Nance doesn't seem quite up to par. The LP is filled out by four trio sides by pianist Sammy Benskin, who has nothing to do with Ellington, but who's thinking Mel Powell on *The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise*.

A pairing of 1958 and '64 dates on DRG/Swing are a showcase for trumpeter **Cat Anderson**, who emphasizes his plunger sound more than his high-note skills, especially on *Concerto For Cootie*. Trombonist Quentin Jackson was an especially strong Ellington voice in the '50s and combines with Anderson in some characteristic ensembles. Russ Procope's throbbing, low-register clarinet is heard on both dates. But it's Anderson's record, and he's in excellent form throughout.

**Paul Gonsalves'** final session outside the Ellington band was with **Roy Eldridge** in August 1973, and has recently been released on *The Mexican Bandit Meets The Pittsburgh Pirate*. It opens strong, but at the driving tempo of *5400 North Gonsalves'* time often seems slightly out-of-register and his phrasing smudged. There are times when he grasps it, but eight bars later it will slip from his grip ever so slightly. Eldridge is in fine form, though; his sound is solid and rich and his phrasing fiesty and with plenty of crackle.

There aren't many musicians who became important voices in each of the Big Two Bands. **Clark Terry** was one, but the four Ellington tunes on *To Duke And Basie* constitute an intriguing tribute. The format is a very simple and promising one—duets between Terry and bassist **Red Mitchell**. And Terry brings it off well indeed, displaying his usual array of talents on trumpet (mostly muted), flugelhorn, and a knack for carrying on conversations between the two (*C Jam Blues*). It's too bad the planning

isn't quite up to the music. Terry's mumbles schtick is amusing for a few minutes in a club, but holds little on record. There are two versions of *It Don't Mean A Thing*, which suggest an effort to fill out the LP. Two non-Duke/Basie numbers are included, although *Thanks For Everything* strongly resembles Billy Strayhorn's classic *Lotus Blossom*. Despite reservations, the playing is hard to resist.

—john mcdonough

## BRAXTON<sup>8</sup>

**ANTHONY BRAXTON: SEVEN STANDARDS 1985**  
VOLUME 1 (Magenta 0203) ★ ★ ★

**ANTHONY BRAXTON: SEVEN STANDARDS 1985**  
VOLUME 2 (Magenta 0205) ★ ★ ★

**NEIGHBORS: WITH ANTHONY BRAXTON**  
(Neighbors 120754) ★ ★ ★ ½

**ANTHONY BRAXTON: FOUR COMPOSITIONS**  
(QUARTET) 1983 (Black Saint 0066)  
★ ★ ★ ★

**ANTHONY BRAXTON: SIX COMPOSITIONS**  
(QUARTET) 1984 (Black Saint 0086)  
★ ★ ★ ½

**ANTHONY BRAXTON: COMPOSITION 113**  
(Sound Aspects 003) ★ ★ ★ ½

**ANTHONY BRAXTON: 8 KN—(B-12) (Sound**  
Aspects 009) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**MARIANNE SCHROEDER: BRAXTON &**  
**STOCKHAUSEN (hat Art 2030) ★ ★ ★ ★ ½**

This diverse clutch of albums provides an interesting cross-section of Anthony Braxton's artistic endeavours of the past eight years—though all of these LPs were released in the last 12 months. I have not arranged them chronologically, since it appears to me that the general parameters of his music were determined by the mid-'70s, and what we have before us is a fleshing-out of these principles in a variety of genres. In some cases we see apparent advances, in others strangely regressive tendencies surface.

Unfortunately, the most recent recordings (from January 1985) are an example of the latter. Magenta, a subsidiary of Windham Hill, recorded Braxton on alto saxophone only, with a blue-ribbon rhythm section of Hank Jones, Rufus Reid, and Victor Lewis. This is not the support that is needed to meet the task however. Over the years there have been several different approaches taken in the exploration of standards by the avant garde. One is the discovery of novelties of sound and feeling lurking in the nooks and crannies of these familiar tunes; sometimes the elaboration of these threatens to split the seams of the original, revealing a hidden world, as in the work of Albert Ayler. Another is the insistence on certain elements of the song to subvert its normal flow and to drag it, perhaps protesting, into a mirror maze of alternate developments such as those devised by Cecil Taylor. A third is that illustrated by the rare examples of Ornette Coleman, where the artist simply tries to view

the tune as if it were his own melody, accepting as many of its structural restraints as possible. Coleman's *Embraceable You*, Cecil's *This Nearly Was Mine*, and Ayler's *Summertime* stand as pinnacles of this genre and serve as touchstones for the work of others.

It seems that deep respect for the originals, and the players who use them as their basic material, leads Braxton into a compromise which prevents his efforts in this direction from rivaling those touchstones. His solos often seem ill-fitted to the forms, which are allowed to dominate—he simply does not remold them sufficiently to meet his style part way. The result has the aspect of a hyperactive youth in vestments of a more sedate generation.

In his liner notes Braxton states his wish to return at regular intervals to traditional jazz material, and the collector will inevitably compare the recent efforts with the *In The Tradition* (SteepleChase 1015 and 1045) LPs of over a decade ago. I think that in addition to the obviously broader range of instrumentation, the rough edges of the earlier session struck more sparks, and the rhythm section was more responsive to the leader's values. Not that the present albums are without some delightful moments: there is a delicate *Old Folks* in Volume 1, and the second album has a very fine duet with Jones as two types of romanticism feel each other out in *Nica's Dream*. Indeed, Hank Jones is in very good form throughout the sessions, even if he makes no forays into Braxton country. The sound is excellent.

The album with the Austrian trio Neighbours finds the saxophonist sitting in with a somewhat more compatible rhythm section, but the results are mixed—not matching the 1977 *Accents* (MRC IC 066-32854), in which the Austrians encountered Chicagoans Fred Anderson and Bill Brimfield. Oddly the "traditional" track here, *Anthropology*, is one of the better performances, the alto meshing well with both the idiom and the accompanists.

Pianist Dieter Glawischnig's *Lines* is another high point, taking a simple step-figure through a number of tempo shifts, generating some sunny soprano work from Braxton and sparkling double and quadruple time from the composer. Bassist Ewald Oberleitner and drummer John Preiningner negotiate the flexible free play of the piece with suitable élan. Unfortunately, the remaining three items, all composed or arranged by Preiningner, drop the emotional temperature towards ECM cool sentimentalism. Best is *B.O.P.*, which begins with spiky sopranino and develops some rhythmically interesting interplay, while *Meditation* is an uneventful gloss on a romantic scalar line, and the *Erzherzog-Johann-Lied* arrangement is downright weepy. The trio and its American encounters are worth watching, though.

The next two albums find Braxton back on familiar ground, in the context of his own working quartets. Recorded slightly over a year apart, the groups share John Lindberg on bass and drummer Gerry Hemingway. The 1983 date has trombonist George Lewis, while in '84 pianist Marilyn Crispell was on hand. The former is a consistent if not passionate record, which, despite some solos, is very much an ensemble performance. The entire first side is devoted to the kaleidoscopic *105A*. A description of this fine piece may serve to illustrate the method employed throughout the album. It begins with that old Braxton standby, the variant march, which provides a limping promenade to various images to come—in this case, a slow, out-of-tempo glimpse of muted trombone and arco bass, before a return of the drunken march heralds the florid structuralism of the leader's alto. Lewis' growl and mute effects embroil the ensemble in a complex chase passage based on an obsessive form of the march line, each player in turn lending textural variation to the repeated phrase. Considerable momentum is generated, but perhaps the chase exhausts itself before giving

way to a fine, relatively conventional New Music trombone solo. A slow ensemble alternating with sparse drum figures surprisingly draws the curtain on the performance. The march motif returns in frantic state on *64M*, with the soprano part acrobat/part clown, and some good trombone which bows in the direction of Bill Harris amongst more extravagant effects. *69 O* demonstrates once more that beautiful structures can be formed from less-than-wonderful melodies, and *69 Q* closes the album on a somewhat restrained note. Braxton and Lewis prove themselves the dominant contributors throughout, while Lindberg is solid and Hemingway follows well but adds little direction of his own, possibly because of his relative unfamiliarity with the complex dynamics of this quartet music.

Perhaps it is the unfamiliarity of the members that results in the drawing-board character of the music of the 1984 quartet. The six compositions (not four as the album cover mistakenly reads) seem to be sketches for richer works—or is Braxton toying with minimalism here? I would not worry too much about the latter, since the moment he sets himself free of the line nothing can restrain the baroque abstractions of his playing. This happens notably on the opening *114 (+108A)*, a particularly restrictive five-finger exercise in rapid C Major, wherein the leader's clarinet merges to create a largely unrelated solo that is attractive and exciting despite the straitjacket imposed on the rhythm section. Crispell gets her moment of release here in a brief star-spangled outing. More satisfying overall is the sopranino ballad *110C*, one of two on the album Braxton has dedicated to his wife, Nickie, on which a cool floridity prevails. Also noteworthy is *116*, described by the composer as "a multiple sound space structure that establishes an inter-complex of fixed and open moments." In this it seems that bass and drums get the fixed moments in a rather humorous, stuttering piece. The alto solo's rubato threatens to overflow and blur the angular structures, but Braxton improves the rhythmic correlations as he heats up. Later the clarinet and piano duet vivaciously; Crispell, so often under wraps, asserts herself very well in this dialog before having a little stomp on her own, that yields to the sopranino's encounter with the tricky theme. Braxtonites will be interested in the C melody saxophone playing introduced on this record, although I am not sure that the elastic corset of *115* is the best vehicle for what appears to be his only solo on this rare horn (but maybe Hal Russell better watch out). Regardless, it is to be hoped that as he develops the concept of pulse track structures—of which four of the six pieces here are examples—familiarity will permit an increased freedom and flexibility to enter all roles of the ensemble.

For *Composition 113*, the ensemble is reduced to one Eb soprano saxophone (sopranino). The work is a theater piece with some very specific props and a somewhat mystical program (at least it appears so to me), apparently involving the character Ojuwain (fictionalized?) used by Braxton for his "ritual and ceremonial musics and stories." This album has extensive notes by the composer/performer. The piece has six sections and is said to illustrate six character tendencies: humor,



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acceptance, strength, dependability, courage, and belief. The performer must be the "master of many disguises" as he assumes and discards these personality traits. The notes only provide tangential guides to the music, which must of necessity be treated in an abstract sense. And in that sense it is quite an impressive and interesting performance. The material and its elaboration ranges more broadly than on most of the ensemble records discussed above, and the playing is virtuoso in nature, taking advantage of the stereo possibilities of the four microphones.

It is pointless to attempt to describe the detail of these solos; it need only be mentioned that Braxton is near the peak of his game and aficionados can expect to hear many of the things they like in refreshing guise. The sections which close the two sides impressed me particularly: Section 3 with its harmonics, scalding sheets of sound, and poised conclusion, Section 6 for the agile phrases leaping among scorching multiphonics only to end as one was hoping for more. Lively sound, recorded in December 1983.

In contrast, the solo alto pieces on the other Sound Aspects disc are merely interesting fillers to the main dish—two servings of a *piece de resistance* for string quartet, with and without sauce (the chef's alto saxophone). Here (as on the final album under review) we have Braxton in his European classical-influenced role, but on both it is readily apparent what a jazz musician he is, though one who understands as well as any how to create a seemingly classical form to accommodate his democratic content. This is nowhere more apparent than in a comparison of the two string quartet performances. The quartet alone finds considerable substance in Braxton's writing, which is thankfully idiomatic rather than the jazzy display found in some works currently exhibited by the Kronos Quartet. Only in the first of the three movements does it appear that there is a missing ingredient. The other version makes that strikingly clear for, from the moment of entry at the 25-second mark, the alto saxophone turns the piece right side out, dominating the voicings which gliss and pluck about it. The writing is custom-designed to the style of the soloist without condescension, and the performance becomes a true duet, as the Robert Schumann Quartet contribute vividly to the diverse tempos and dynamics that color the work. These recordings date from 1979. Can we hope to hear the companion quartet in the near future? With guest of course.

The hat Art session—one of their diabolical boxes—features classical pianist Marianne Schroeder in two rather diverging contexts: some ultra-rigorous late-'50s solo pieces by Karlheinz Stockhausen and, more relevant to this occasion, Braxton's 1982 *Composition 107*, a trio for wind, brass, and piano. Needless to say, the performance of the trio includes the composer on alto and sopranino, along with Garrett List on trombone—a player previously known to associate with both jazz and classical camps. Unlike the string quartet described above, all participants in the trio appear to be able to contribute to the structural development of the work (dedicated to Bill Dixon, incidentally). Despite notes by the composer, the precise formal design and rules employed elude me. However, what can be heard is an

intricate and constantly shifting network of ensemble balances; no one dominates, though there is the general impression that one of the horns leads and that the saxophone has the greatest degree of freedom. The work has five sections (A to E) with section A repeated in an alternate take at the end of the record, but it is not clear whether this is to imply a serpent-eats-tail structure or simply to demonstrate the mutability potential.

Section A serves therefore as both a playful/lyrical introduction and rather restrained epilog to a sequence of canonical, parallel, or inter-

digitating melodies that frequently demonstrate a strong sense of continuity despite constant passage from one voice to another. The emotional range is narrow, dwelling on elegiac or lyrical moods while maintaining a surprising lightness of timbre. The frequency of changes of voicing, overt tempo, and mood, within the circumscribed limits, defy description in the course of a review. Suffice it to say that there is much to listen to here and most of it rewarding. The digital sound has a slightly harsh edge but that should not deter anyone.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

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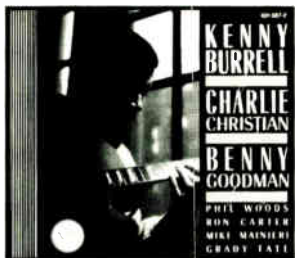
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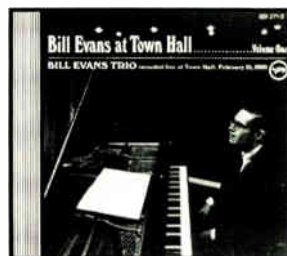


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**1 PAUL BUTTERFIELD BLUES BAND.** *WALKIN' BLUES* (from *EAST-WEST*, Elektra). Butterfield, harmonica, vocal; Mike Bloomfield, Elvin Bishop, guitar; Mark Naftalin, keyboards; Jerome Arnold, bass; Billy Davenport, drums.

That was great to hear again. I was trying to think of when I first heard that record; it was *really* an important record for me—kinda like when I first heard Wes Montgomery—and it opened up so many things. I guess I was about 14 or 15, down at the Denver Folklore Center, and this guy said, "Hey man, Paul Butterfield, *that's* what's happening." He was a real cool-looking guy, so I thought, I better check this out [laughs]. Maybe it's derivative of other things, but whatever it is it turned me on to this whole world of the blues, all these other people like Junior Wells. I remember the first time I heard the harmonica on that I didn't know what it was; I had heard Bob Dylan play the harmonica, but when I heard *that*. . . . And Mike Bloomfield I got *real* into. Why did I get rid of this record?

**2 JIMI HENDRIX.** *RED HOUSE* (from *THE JIMI HENDRIX CONCERTS*, Reprise). Hendrix, guitar, vocal; Billy Cox, bass; Mitch Mitchell, drums.

What can I say about *that*? I've got a tape of that I've been listening to for a long time, and there are things he's doing in there I *still* can't figure out—like little sound things, where he's got feedback going at the same time as he's playing notes. What kills me about it is that it hasn't lost anything over time, it just sounds brand-new. I mean, here I am listening to this, I've listened to him a lot; seems like by this time we should all have *some* idea what he's doing, but there are still these things that escape. And the energy just lifts you up. I could rave about him all night.

**3 JIM HALL.** *ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE* (from *JIM HALL'S THREE*, Concord Jazz). Hall, guitar; Steve LaSpina, bass; Akira Tana, drums.

I've seen that trio play, actually, though I wasn't sure if it's the Canadian trio with Terry Clarke. At least I knew it was Jim Hall. I hate to use words like *the best*, but he's just a total master. Here I keep buying delays and all this stuff trying to get some kind of sound, and with him it doesn't really matter—a little Polytone amp or a little Gibson, no reverb, no nothing, and he gets a sound that money can't buy [laughs]. There's so much to say about him. His rhythmic thing is so strong, he swings so hard. I did a concert with him this past fall; we each played alone, and then we played together. Just listening to him play by himself—well, I won't tell you about all

**BILL FRISELL**  
by Gene Santoro

**B**ill Frisell's eerily haunting voice on guitar has combined with his acute sensitivity and thorough training to make him one of the most in-demand of the younger players on the New York scene. Not just the "jazz" scene—though he can play standards with the best of 'em. Frisell, like most if not all of the folks he works with, has an active dislike of the boundaries implied in that term.

His own musical world knows no such bounds. Paul Motian, Tim Berne, Vernon Reid, John Zorn, Leni Stern, and Jan Garbarek are just some of the people who've loved his trademark sound well enough to want to work with him. In addition, there's his career as a recording artist, which has thus far produced two distinctly different discs, the airy, introspective *In Line* (ECM 1241) and the earthy, brass-band-meets-c&w-on-acid *Rambler* (ECM 25026-1). A new album with his band is scheduled to be recorded soon, and—in his spare time—



MITCHELL SEIDEL

he has also begun writing for films as well.

This was his first Blindfold Test; he was given no information about the records played.

the thoughts I had, like, "What am I gonna play now?" [laughs] He can just stand there and develop whatever tune *on* and *on*. And talking about supporting people as an accompanist, playing with him I never felt such support—every note you play he's so concentrated on it, he really cares about what the people he's playing with are playing. I can't say enough good things about him.

**4 ADRIAN BELEW.** *TANGO ZEBRA* (from *DESIRE CAUGHT BY THE TAIL*, Island). Below, acoustic, electric guitar, guitar-synthesizer, percussion.

I loved that, but I have to guess—I think it was Adrian Bewlew. I never heard him play acoustic guitar before, and I also never heard him play some of those figures. I started getting confused; I thought it must be him, because of the wild imagination and the really strong rhythmic thing he has from being a drummer, but then I heard some things I've heard Robert Fripp do. Now, the way he uses the synthesizer is weird. I have a tendency to try to make it sound like something else, or really let the guitar come through; but the way he uses it is so *blatant* that it has a real human quality. I could hear him in the sound of the whole thing, even though there was no specific sound in this that I associate with the sounds that he normally gets. I could *feel* him in there, which

is really great—his sound still comes out even without him playing his old guitar.

**5 ORNETTE COLEMAN/PAT METHENY.** *SONG X* (from *SONG X*, Geffen). Coleman, alto saxophone; Metheny, guitar-synthesizer; Charlie Haden, bass; Jack DeJohnette, Denardo Coleman, drums.

I love Prime Time, but it was great to hear Ornette in a different context; you could more clearly hear what he's doing. In a way this record is coming more from the things he was doing with Charlie—I hear more of that here than in some of the Prime Time things. And I think it's really great that over the last few years Pat has built up this audience for the music even though they've never heard of Ornette. One of the great things about *this* record is that thousands of people will get to hear Charlie and Ornette. As far as Pat, he's one of the few people on guitar-synth who seems to humanize it somehow—he always seems to keep his own sound, even though he's using Synclavier and sampled saxophone sounds and all that. That's *incredibly* hard to do. I'm not sure how he was doing that guitar and sampled saxophone to double what he was playing with Ornette—it's like he was on both sides of him. And I can't say enough about Charlie; he's another one of those people like Jim Hall or Jimi Hendrix—*nobody* sounds like him. db

## RANDY BERNSEN

WHO IS THIS GUITARIST FROM FLORIDA AND HOW DOES HE GET ALL THOSE ALL-STARS ON HIS ALBUMS?

by Bill Milkowski

Last year a record surfaced from out of nowhere. *Music For Planets, People & Washing Machines* (Zebra 5006) was a curious product, not only for its odd title and bizarre cover art, but for the stellar cast of characters appearing on what amounted to a debut album by a virtual unknown. As the back cover put it, "Thought Of, Organized, and Scribbled by Randy Bernsen." Randy who?

What distinguished this curious disc, on the surface, was the appearance of such heavyweights as Herbie Hancock, Jaco Pastorius, Peter Erskine, Bob James, Urszula Dudziak, and Michal Urbaniak on various cuts. Clearly, this kid from Fort Lauderdale had pulled off the coup of the year. But how did he do it?

"Let's start with Jaco," says the guitarist/composer/arranger. "He's from Fort Lauderdale. I met him when he was 19 and I was 17. Jaco was playing around the area with Ira Sullivan, and his name was just starting to get around. So he's an old friend from way back, and when it came time for me to do a record, he was very cooperative.

"Erskine I met through Jaco. Peter had come down to Florida to do rehearsals on Jaco's *Word Of Mouth* album, which they recorded in Jaco's home with a remote truck. So I called him up, and he agreed to come over and play on a few cuts. And the rest I just called up cold. No connections or anything. Just like anybody else, I thought, 'Boy, it sure would be great to have such and such on my album.' I guess I was thinking big. It's kind of a crazy thing. Sometimes I think, 'Jeez, how in the hell did I do that?' It was just all from scratch, man."

He called Herbie Hancock at a hotel where the jazz great was staying in Chicago and pitched him right out of the blue: "Hi, Herbie? This is Randy Bernsen from Fort Lauderdale. You don't know me but I'm starting this record—I don't have a company yet, but I have an independent investor who is helping me out. . . ."

Hancock was quite cordial to this total stranger calling him from some 1,500 miles away. He asked Bernsen to send him a tape and, amazingly, one month later called back and agreed to do some sessions. "He said he loved the tape and that he'd love to be a part of it," Bernsen recalls. "No bread was discussed. No terms. He just said he was going to be in town a month later and would stop by. I'm still amazed that it happened."



Meanwhile, Bernsen approached singer Urszula Dudziak in the same manner—strictly out of the blue. "I had a tune called *Windsong* that I had written with a singer in mind. I actually wanted to use Flora Purim, but that was just so expensive it was impossible for me. So I called up a producer at Columbia, Jay Chathaway, who had done a lot of work with Bob James on the Tappan Zee label. He suggested Urszula, and was just raving about this album of hers, *Future Talk*, calling it the greatest vocal album ever. So I sent her a tape and she just loved it. A week later she called me and said, 'Let's do it. And, by the way, my husband [Urbaniak] has already learned the melody. Can we both come down?' I couldn't believe it. Everything seemed to work out so good on this project. And it just started from scratch. I was very lucky, I guess."

For his latest release, *Mo' Wasabi* (Zebra 5857), Bernsen managed to corral Jaco, Herbie, Erskine, Urszula and Urbaniak once again, plus such other all-stars as Michael Brecker, Steve Gadd, Marcus Miller, Danny Gottlieb, Wayne Shorter, and Toots Thielemans. But these stellar players aren't doing a charity gig here. They are playing on Bernsen's albums because they genuinely enjoy the material. It's Bernsen's knack for writing appropriate tunes for just the right people that ultimately hooks 'em. Michael Brecker couldn't resist the set of chord changes on *Expo*, for instance. And Toots was taken by Bernsen's elegant jazz waltz, *What Once Was*. Randy's real strength is composing and arranging (and organizing and scribbling). Plus, he's got some pretty wicked guitar chops, as he displays on the Jaco-fueled *Olde Hats* and the wild duet with Erskine on *Steppin'* (both from *Music For Planets* . . .); or on the burning *Swing Thing* (with the great rhythm tandem of Jaco and Erskine again) and the funky title cut from *Mo' Wasabi*.

Bernsen spent two semesters at the Uni-

versity of Miami, studying with Stan Semole. "It was a great guitar class," he recalls. "I got there the semester after Pat Metheny had left, but Steve Morse was still there. So was Hiram Bullock and Mark Egan and Danny Gottlieb and Ross Traut. So we just hung out and played a lot together. It was a great environment to be in."

Around 1982, he hooked up with an eight-track studio in Fort Lauderdale and began producing demo tapes for singers in the area. In retrospect, he sees that period as an invaluable training ground that benefited him later when it came time to do his own album. "These singers would come in not knowing what they wanted, and I would try out all kinds of ideas—strings, horns, anything I could think of. It was totally a trial-and-error situation. And it's where I got to put to use some of the horn arrangement stuff I had learned at the university from Whit Sidener and Peter Graves. We had small budgets for these demos, so I could only afford to deal with three or four horns. But gradually I began building from there, up to nine, then 12 and 14 horns. And working on that eight-track really taught me about mixing and balancing, because you really gotta squeeze all those sounds down when you're only dealing with eight tracks. It was a great training ground, and I highly recommend it to anyone thinking of getting involved with production."

Right now, Bernsen is thinking of touring. He says that cracking into the touring network is as hard or harder than landing a record deal. In Florida his quartet, The Ocean Sound Band (Ray Lyon on keyboards, Rich Loose on bass, Peter Abbott on drums), plays the local club circuit and has opened up for big-name acts like Miles Davis and Spyro Gyra at larger venues, but still no roadwork to speak of.

"It's really a Catch-22," says Bernsen. "People don't want to touch you until you're on the charts, and the touring thing supports chart movement. So I'm trying to find some way to finance a tour on my own, just so that people can see the band and hear what we can do."

Meanwhile, *Mo' Wasabi* continues to creep steadily up the jazz charts. Perhaps the next obstacle in Randy Bernsen's plan for total world domination will fall sometime this year. As for his immediate plans, Bernsen will be writing new material with his Roland GR-700 guitar-synthesizer in mind. "I do my own programming on it, and it's a gas," he says. "It's like a totally new axe, but it's not like having to learn trumpet or something totally foreign to me. The basic technique is the same as a regular guitar, but it makes you play differently, which I like. I'm not thinking guitar lines when I play the guitar-synth—more like sax lines and keyboard lines. There's definitely a different voice coming out of me when I play it. And what it lacks in

tracking it makes up for in pure sounds. The very nature of this instrument is helping me to do things that I would never have done consciously. So that, of course, has greatly affected my composing lately."

Aside from the Roland guitar-synth, Bernsen also plays a '68 Fender Telecaster, a Gibson 335 and a nylon-stringed Chet Atkins model. At home he practices on a fat-bodied Gibson 175 and his Ramirez student model classical guitar. Other techno-toys lying around the house include an Oberheim DX drum machine and a GNS (made in Germany) sequencer, which he uses to work up ideas for demo tapes. But when Bernsen brings in a compositional idea to the studio, he likes to keep things as loose as possible.

"A good song always achieves that balance between composition and improvisation," he says. "I really am concerned with structure, and part of structure is what you leave for improvisation. I look at a composition as a diving board. The higher the diving board, the bigger the leap you can make. So I try to get the composition built up to the point where we can go structurally as high as we can, to make the biggest leap off the composition. I'll take it far enough, right to the point where it doesn't get bogged down in complexity, then ask the soloists to make the big leap." db

## THE KRONOS QUARTET

PLAYING MUSIC FROM BARTOK TO ZAPPA ERASES THE DIVIDING LINES BETWEEN JAZZ, ROCK, AND CLASSICAL MUSIC.

by Brent Wilcox

Think of a string quartet and certain clichés spring to mind. A dry, academic group playing a few selections by Mozart or Beethoven, right? Think again. Consider the Kronos Quartet, a young San Francisco-based ensemble devoted to the entire musical spectrum of the 20th century, from classical to jazz to rock. Nothing dryly academic here. "The normal expectation of a string quartet is sickening to all of us," explains David Harrington, the Quartet's spokesperson. "The string quartet as a musical form is one of the most vital, most important inner resources that this culture has come up with. There's every reason *not* to make it stiff and uninteresting. Some people will try to make whatever they're involved in somewhat less than exciting. We're not that kind of group."

Critically acclaimed and often dubbed "a string quartet for the '80s," Kronos was founded in Seattle in 1973. Their present lineup crystallized after a move to the Bay Area in 1977: John Sherba (violin), David Harrington (violin), Joan Jeanrenaud (cello), and Hank Dutt (viola). They trained at various universities (University of Washington and University of Indiana) and each had plenty of private instruction, but as Harrington puts it, the most important education

was "the school of getting out there and doing it." And they've certainly done it. A sampling of their recordings runs from interpretations of Thelonious Monk and Bill Evans (*Monk Suite*, Landmark 1505 and *Music Of Bill Evans*, Landmark 1510), a double-album of string quartets by Terry Riley (*Cadenza On The Night Plain*, Gramavision 187014), to soundtracks composed by Phillip Glass (*Mishima*, Nonesuch 79113-1) and Patrick Gleeson (*Plague Dogs*,

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Columbia tba), and an appearance on *Glass' Songs From Liquid Days* (Columbia 39564). Their latest album, *Kronos Quartet* (Nonesuch 979111-1F), is a collection of works by Peter Sculthorpe, Aulis Sallinen, Phillip Glass, Conlon Nancarrow, and Jimi Hendrix. They've also produced "Kronos Hour," a 13-part syndicated series for National Public Radio presenting a panorama from Bela Bartok to Frank Zappa. In addition, they tour constantly. This season they're playing 115 dates, including three trips to Europe. They often have to learn new material in hotel rooms so they can perform the works later in the tour.

The Kronos Quartet (the name chosen mostly for its nice alliteration, not as a mythological reference) see themselves as interpreters presenting the string quartet form in as many different contexts as possible. "We did a piece by me once," David recalls, "and it made me so nervous we've never done it again. I think our compositions are the evenings of music we put together, evenings of music we hope will be memorable—totally gripping and involving." The latest Nonesuch release is a fine example of what a Kronos concert can be.

The choice of material comes from the broad tastes of the members, and they enjoy giving exposure to little-known composers. They collect much of the material while on tour. "It's getting to the point where we almost need an extra suitcase just to hold the scores we pick up along the way." Kronos is noted for the professionalism of their performances, but how do they tackle such a diverse selection? "We try to get at the center of each piece, and work very closely with all the composers. I think that's the art of interpretation, to use everything you have—all the evidence, all the clues. The way that composers sing their own music—or the gestures they use—can really influence the way we perform a piece. In the case of someone we're not able to work with, like Bartok or Monk for instance, we try to meet people who knew or worked with them. I've read a lot of biographies."

For the Monk and Evans LPs, they worked from transcriptions of original recordings and arrangements by Tom Darter, and while they've played with many jazz musicians including (to name just a few) Ron Carter, Eddie Gomez, Jim Hall, Max Roach, Anthony Braxton, and the Rova Saxophone Quartet, they play almost exclusively from written scores. So what about improvisation? "In my opinion," Harrington explains, "any fine interpretation of a score is at the moment of performance an improvisation. We listen to what some of the great performers we've worked with do, and try to work that into what we do next. In that sense, we improvise. But in the sense of working from chord changes and things like that, we don't do that—very often. If you're responding in



MICHELE CLEMENT

From top left, David Harrington (violin),  
Hank Dutt (viola), Joan Jeanrenaud (cello),  
and John Sherba (violin).

a fresh way to the note that just happened, the piece won't take the same form it took, say, the night before. The gesture, the dynamic, the way the bass line is worked—it takes on a new life every time. To us, that's improvisation. It's responding to the moment using all the forces and knowledge available."

Of course, in a world of musical purists, diversity can lead to controversy. "There are a lot of turf wars out there in the music world. I think it's possible to be aware of them and still steer clear. We're not anxious to create more strife in the world than there already is, and while we don't espouse any overt political dogma, I feel that idealistically, one of the things we're involved in is proving that the world can work out, that different musics and different peoples can co-exist." And their eclectic repertoire creates some cross-pollination, too. "A lot of times you don't notice it until you're in performance and you add a certain accent to a certain part of a certain measure. If you hadn't heard Monk do the same kind of thing some time, you'd never have thought of doing it then. All the music in our repertoire works more and more together. We try to get at the center of each piece, but there's still that effect."

One of their most controversial recordings is of Jimi Hendrix's *Purple Haze*. Some Hendrix fans love it, some critics dismiss it out of hand. David defends the piece, saying, "What Hendrix was doing as a performer, in terms of his sound, is not unrelated to what Xenakis and other avant garde composers of the '60s were doing: expanding the panorama of musical color. The thing is, I think

*Purple Haze* stands out. There's something about that tune; I think it's something unique in music. Even more important, in the context of a string quartet, it has 'saw-ability.' A lot of rock music doesn't have that." Which doesn't mean the tune will be Kronos' token rock number. Frank Zappa's compositions have long been a part of their repertoire, ex-Velvet Underground'er and one-time Terry Riley collaborator John Cale is working on a piece for them, and David's even looking into composers like Glenn Branca. Recently, they played *Jumpin' Jack Flash* at a San Francisco club date—another tune with "saw-ability."

Finally, not only does their musical selec-

tion defy the string quartet cliché, so do their clothes. Last season they wore colorful clothes with a New Wave cut, this season their look combines Russian peasant tailoring with bright African colors. "Our concerts are the kind of events we like to dress up for. We don't go down to the store to get the music we play, and we don't go to the store to get the clothes we wear in concert. It's part of the same attitude. We've worked with several designers and are constantly experimenting with things."

In the future the Kronos Quartet hopes to tour Australia and the Orient, and to spend more time performing in the American heartland. Next year perhaps they'll make it

to the Soviet Union. Between touring and recording, the individual members haven't much time for outside projects. "We're very tight-knit, and our professional lives are completely tied up in the Quartet. We feel that, musically, it gives us the most in-depth result. In the end you can only do one thing at a time. That's why we work as hard as we do, because there are so many things we'd like to do."

So you can probably toss out the "string quartet for the '80s" label. With their open-minded momentum, the Kronos Quartet will certainly be raising eyebrows and defying expectations long after this decade dissolves. db

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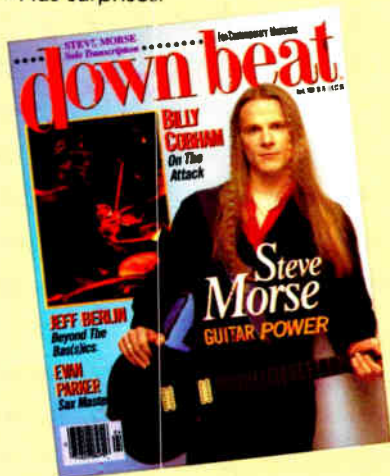
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CBGB'S/NEW YORK

**T**here must be a reason Vernon Reid's kickass band Living Colours hasn't been signed to a record deal yet. But if there is, it's sure eluding the likes of Jeff Beck and Mick Jagger and Phil Ramone, all of whom have turned out to see the ex-Decoding Society guitarslinger torch packed houses at Tramps, at the Lone Star, the Ritz, and the Bottom Line.

Let's take as an example the night Reid & Co. played that erstwhile punkers' Mecca, CBGB's. Brandishing his battered ESP Strat—held together with duct tape and the loopy design graffiti artist Keith Haring spun across it in Switzerland a couple of years back—Reid led Living Colours through a whiplash set that mixed and matched a dazzling array of musical elements from all over to create a unique synthesis that twists your head around while it makes you shake that thing. Punk and funk, outside jazz and heavy metal, reggae and calypso, and good old rock & roll collide and generate the surprising intensity this band has harnessed to drive its onstage show.

As it did that night from its set opener, a thrash-meets-funk anti-drug raveup called *Desperate People* that had Reid bashing out big triads for that metal anthem effect. Next up was *Points Between*, a tune that melds the jagged time sense of art-rockers like Yes

with a heavy Zeppelin-ish bottom, with the barbed wit of *Glamour Boys*, a reggae-powered dance track that features a massive smeary guitar solo, hard on its rollicking heels. Once the punked-out *Even Love* had the over-capacity crowd whipped to a frenzy, the anti-war *Soldier's Blues*, with its odd-time verse and turnaround, inspired the axeman to unleash a psychotic solo strung out along careening bent notes, jagged spurts of gunfire, and clouds of pure raunch.

That was only the opening half of the set, but you get the idea—a night of burning music that, besides offering a great time, made a few points. Like the story about the Cabbage Patch Kids which Reid—a founder of the Black Rock Coalition (a group attempting to change what they call the apartheid-oriented structure of the U.S. music industry, from record companies to radio stations)—related. Seems that two Christmases ago, when the CPKs were scarce-to-nonexistent, a large department store outside Chicago announced that it had received a full shipment of the little buggers. Early, early next morning, lines of cars bearing gift seekers snaked toward said retail outlet, and disgorged their eager occupants to queue up for the store's opening. The doors swung wide, the folks piled in, and suddenly the frontrunners stopped in their tracks: they were white, you see, and all them cuddly Patchers weren't. And with the telling of that true tale finished, the volatile Mr. Reid dove headlong into a raucous delay loop frothing with feedback.

—gene santoro

## IS IT LIVE OR MEMOREX?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Perhaps the finest example of employing backing tapes that I've ever seen came from guitarist/composer Scott Johnson (whose debut album, *John Somebody*, was released on the Icon/Nonesuch label). Performing in the intimate space at the Dance Theatre Workshop in Manhattan, Johnson did two sets with an octet of live musicians. But he also included a solo piece in each set in which he performed with a prepared accompanying tape. Not only did this tape include bass lines, synth fills, drum machine patterns, and guitar parts, but on one piece—the title cut from *John Somebody*—also featured a voice loop Johnson created by excerpting a slice of candid dialog and then painstakingly cutting and splicing the tape into a rhythmic loop, setting the tone for the piece.

This was obviously something that *could*

*not* be performed live, but rather was the result of clever manipulation under laboratory-like studio conditions. Johnson's tapes were intricate and complex, like Morse's, but the sounds were all produced by him and not borrowed from others not present. Johnson's tapes were full of radical time changes, abrupt stops, and various cues that required precision playing, single-minded conviction and intensity just to keep on top of the challenging accompaniment he had set up for himself.

It was clearly a clever, creative, and honest use of taped accompaniment. I applaud Scott Johnson's ingenuity. His tape experiment was a success. Morse, on the other hand, opened up a Pandora's Box with his. I mean, who ever dreamed that Music Minus One concerts would be accepted at Carnegie Hall?

db

# pro session

## STEVE MORSE'S THE WHISTLE— A GUITAR TRANSCRIPTION

by Joe Dennison

Joe Dennison is a graduate teaching assistant at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fl., and works professionally as a guitarist in the Miami area.

Steve Morse's *The Whistle* is from his album *The Introduction* (Elektra 60369-1). The primary melody (bars 1-9) is stated five times, each time as part of a new blend of instruments. Contrast is provided by the bridge of the song, letter B, and the development sections, letters C and D.

Letters A and B are playable as written on guitar, and letters C and D are reductions of the orchestration in those parts. The entire piece is written 8va (transposed for guitar).

A handwritten guitar transcription of Steve Morse's "The Whistle". The score is written on ten staves. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The first staff has a tempo marking "162" and a note "transposed for guitar (8va)". The transcription includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and chords. There are section markers labeled A, B, C, and D. A "D.S. AL CODA" instruction appears after the fourth staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line and the initials "db" in the bottom right corner.



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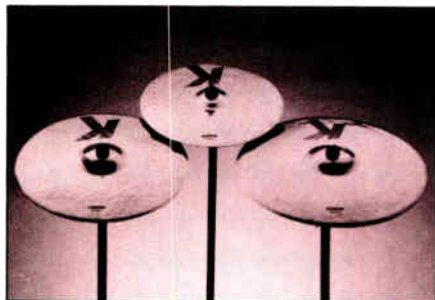
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**ZILDJIAN'S CUSTOM K'S**

AVEDIS ZILDJIAN Co. (Norwell, MA) has announced new K. Custom cymbals, an addition to the company's K. Zildjian line of hand-hammered cymbals. Lennie DiMuzio, Zildjian's Director of Artist Relations, says that the new cymbals evolved from combining the hand-hammered tradition of Zildjians with new control technology of the company's modern plant. "David Weckl, who is currently playing with Chick Corea, provided us with much valuable input," DiMuzio explains. "He took various cymbals on the road and into the studio for evaluation. The result was an instrument of extreme sonic complexity yet tremendous beauty and warmth." Designed for use primarily as a ride cymbal, the K. Custom is available in 16-, 18-, and 20-inch sizes.



**PURECUSSION'S BLACK FINISH RIMS**

PURECUSSION, INC. (Minneapolis, MN), manufacturer of RIMS Suspension Drum Mounts and the RIMS headset, has introduced Black Finish RIMS. Available in standard lug configurations only, the black RIMS offer the sound improvement features of suspension mounting while providing additional visual excitement at no higher cost than that of the original chrome RIMS.

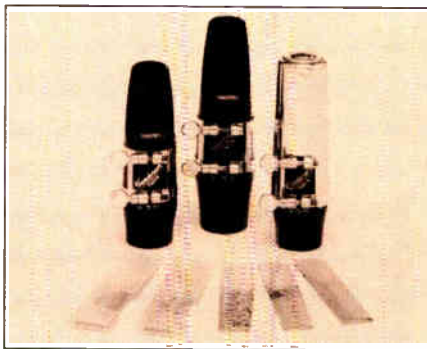
### GUITAR WORLD



**YAIRI'S ANNIVERSARY GUITARS**

ALVAREZ YAIRI (Div. of St. Louis Music, St. Louis, MO) has introduced four new guitars, all with special commemoration plates authenticating them as limited-edition models. The DY77 Herringbone, reissued for '87, is a full dreadnought design with Yairi's best solid-spruce top trimmed in an all-wood herringbone inlay design. Back and sides are rosewood; fingerboard and bridge are ebony; and the fingerboard inlay is a classic pattern done in genuine Mexican Abalone. The DY59 features the Yairi direct-coupled bridge design, which provides more volume and tone than conventional bridges. The DY38 and DY39 are the lowest-priced Yairi guitars; both feature solid-spruce tops with scalloped bracing, die-cast machine heads, and rosewood fingerboards. The DY38's body is mahogany, the DY39's rosewood; both are traditional dreadnought shapes.

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VANDOREN PRODUCTS (distributed exclusively by J. D'Addario and Co., Inc., East Farmingdale, NY) is offering Jumbo Java Mouthpieces for alto and tenor saxophones. The new mouthpieces incorporate substantial changes in the chamber design by reducing the size and shape slightly, as well as raising the baffle—yielding a brighter sound than traditional mouthpieces. The mouthpieces are said to have a sound similar to metal mouthpieces, but with the superior comfort of ebonite construction.

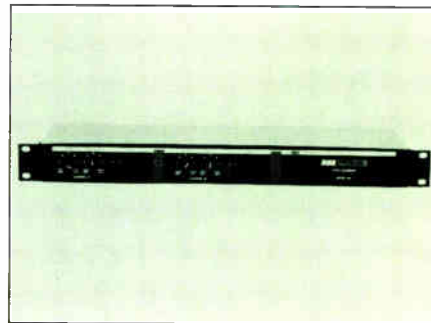
### KEYBOARD COUNTRY



**CASIO'S HT-700**

CASIO, INC. (Fairfield, NJ) has introduced the HT-700, a 49-key eight-note polyphonic home synthesizer, said to bridge the gap between the professional musician and the novice home musician. It has 40 preset and 20 user-programmable voices, and a hybrid digital/analog sound generator with 40-parameter editing controlled by a data entry dial. User-programmable sounds can be stored on a RAM card. Other features include 20 preset and 10 user-programmable PCM rhythms with fill-ins, auto-chording with 10 voice selections, chord sequence memory, and two keyboard split points. The HT-700 has pitch-bend wheel, stereo chorus, and sustain pedal input; MIDI in/out; is multi-timbral when driven by an external sequencer; and is battery-powered with built-in speakers.

### ELECTRONIC GEAR



**BARCUS-BERRY'S BBE 402**

BARCUS-BERRY ELECTRONICS, INC. (Huntington Beach, CA) has introduced the BBE 402 "Maxie" sonic maximizer, designed for home recording studios, small music groups, or small-club sound systems. The BBE 402 is a multi-band program-controlled processor that can add brightness and presence without introducing underside stridency, which often characterizes equalized sound, particularly at peak levels. The BBE 402 increases voice intelligibility by eliminating frequency band masking, and is said to improve overall sonic quality regardless of speaker quality. The BBE 402 weighs five-and-a-half pounds and comes in a 17-inch rack-mounted chassis that occupies one standard EIA space and is five inches deep. db

practice, and then there's your chance to figure out what you did wrong, which is after the gig. And if you write real hard music for yourself, and you screw up a few parts, it can be really frustrating, especially when you're yelling at the other guys, saying, 'Hey, why don't you play that right?' or, 'You were a little sharp on that note.' If you're going to be doing that you should be trying to play those notes right yourself.

"It's really embarrassing to have a mistake happen on your own material. It's frustrating, as if you suddenly have a loss of control," Morse continues. "The best parts of music should come effortlessly. You may strain to do it, but you know that every note is going to be there exactly in the division of time that it needs to. That's all. It doesn't take much practice after the gig to make a big difference. The gig does one thing—it builds up your left and right hand muscles; maybe not your precision, but your muscles have been used. So all you've got to do is refine that a little bit. Instead of letting them go until the next day all wild and out of control, you've just got to say, 'Okay left hand, right hand, let's play together in perfect time for a few minutes, slowly.' If you practice some things slowly after a gig you can really improve your accuracy."

**A**s if he didn't have enough to do around his house with wife Celeste, several horses, dogs, cats, and dirtbikes, Morse built a 24-track studio 50 feet from his house. "We have a bulldozer, and I pushed some trees out of the way and leveled off a little place, and my soundman, Chuck Allen, and I poured a slab of concrete, and he stacked some blocks while I was on tour with John McLaughlin. I came back and put on the roof. It was kind of a labor of labor."

While working on his new solo record for MCA, Morse has often worked entire nights in his studio, quitting around sunrise. Steve likes that time because it's quiet and the phone doesn't ring. "No vocals on my new album, not even experimental, one-track vocals," says Morse with conviction. "There's going to be two sides to the record, musically as well as physically. One side is going to be acoustic, solo-type guitar. It's hard to get the record company interested in doing an entire album of acoustic stuff, but I'm going to do one side. Not all completely solo, but let's say laidback, not hard-charging with drums bashing. The other side is going to be a little more energetic and actually a little more experimental than I usually do. One of the parts is a band piece that has sections of acoustic where it drops down, and things are hopefully a bit more dynamic. And then one piece is super-technical—hard to play, fast guitar all the way through."

The basic brain of all the reference tracks on his new solo record is the Macintosh computer, which sequences everything. Morse seems to be trying to become the ultimate one-man band, flying off to solo gigs in his plane, not having to hire a truck for the equipment. Morse recently toured as a solo opening up on the Joe Zawinul tour. "Now on my solo gigs I play electric classical guitar into a rig with my own mixer that has reverbs and delays to spread out the sound a little bit, but keep that acoustic sound. Then I transition into more weird music. I pick up the electric and do some stuff sampling the guitar live, running it into a delay and bringing that back and playing along with that. Then picking up the steel-stringed acoustic and playing along with acoustic piano accompaniment that comes from the sampler. Then I play some more guitar-synthesizer stuff on the electric guitar, over a tape of some unreleased material."

All of which takes us back to Steve Morse's basic premise—variety. "People want to listen," says the guitarist. "Yawning is involuntary. People don't say, 'I want to yawn.' They just do it, so you've got to keep them from doing it." db

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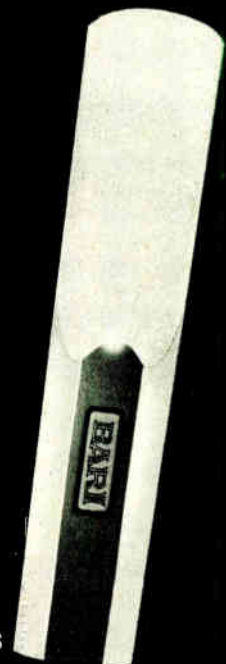
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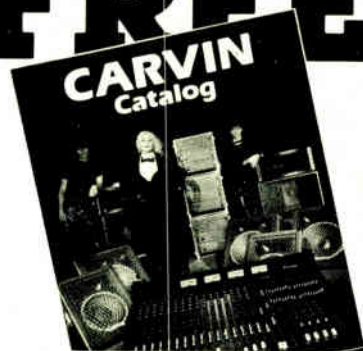
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## CELEBRATING BIRD

by Michael Bourne

"The witness to his death heard a clap of thunder at the moment of Charlie Parker's passing." So begins *Celebrating Bird: The Triumph Of Charlie Parker*, a new book by Gary Giddins about the musical genius everyone calls Bird. Yet, as dramatic—even melodramatic—as Parker's life and death were, Giddins hopes that with his book (and also a 60-minute video he's co-directed) he's illuminated more of the man than the myth of Bird.

"It's an extended essay, things I wanted to say about Parker," Giddins said of the book (Beech Tree/Morrow, \$15.95, hardcover). "To me the key was to try to treat him with the respect that has not occurred in some of the biographies and introductory books about him." Giddins hasn't written a definitive biography of Bird. That, he feels, is yet to come from critic Stanley Crouch (whose research Giddins acknowledges). Rather, the book and video (also called *Celebrating Bird*, a \$29.95 Sony videocassette or a \$24.95 Pioneer laserdisc) look at Parker's music as a parallel to the changes in American culture.

"I've tried to put him in his time," Giddins said, "to talk about him in terms of literature, painting, politics, the whole era, and really assess his significance—the extent to which he sums up a certain period in American history. My argument is that in the years after World War II, Charlie Parker was the most significant artist in the United States. I don't care what novelist or poet or classical figure you want to put up against him, Parker's music has endured. It hasn't dated. That's why it's called *Celebrating Bird*. I want to put into perspective the dope and all the stories and show that ultimately his life was a triumph. By the age of 34 he had created a body of music that 40 years later is as fresh and remarkable as any we have in American music."

Both the book and the video were produced by Toby Byron/Multipriuses. "This is the first of what we're calling 'The Masters of American Music' series," said Byron. "Louis Armstrong will be the next one, which will also be a book and a video." Byron hopes eventually to celebrate as many jazz greats as possible. "These are all being done in conjunction with the estates. I'm paying the Parker estate not only royalties but also an advance. To my knowledge it's the first time since Parker died that his heirs aren't being ripped off."

Co-directed by Giddins and editor Kendrick Simmons, the video includes the first interview on film of Parker's first wife, Rebecca; also, reminiscences from Jay



Charlie Parker (left) accepts his 1950 db Readers Poll award from Leonard Feather.

McShann, Dizzy Gillespie, drummers Roy Porter and Roy Haynes, saxophonist Frank Morgan, Leonard Feather, and Bird's widow Chan. "We have maybe 11-12 minutes of Parker on film," Byron said, "and a lot of footage of surrounding people, people who came before Bird, people Bird played with. We're telling Bird's story as well as the development of this music, going from Armstrong to Basie to Parker—but the Parker story is the focus."

While the video includes footage of Armstrong, Basie, Billy Eckstine, Lucky Millinder, and Jimmy Dorsey (a surprising Parker influence), among others Parker worked with or was inspired by, the only footage of Bird himself is from a tv appearance with Dizzy when they played *Hot House* (after being introduced by the embarrassing Earl Wilson and an enthusiastic Leonard Feather) and silent footage leftover from a Gjon Mili project. They've synched the Mili footage with Bird's Verve recording of *Ballade* and the classic JATP solo on *Lady Be Good*. "When you see it," said Giddins, "you'll almost think he's playing it."

It's a shame there isn't more film of Parker. What there was disappeared or is lost in vaults. "There were three or four television appearances (said to include the Steve Allen show and an early Jerry Lewis telethon)," said Giddins, "but *Hot House* is

the only one we know has survived. Bird lived in between periods of filming jazz musicians. In the '30s and early-'40s a lot of musicians were in Hollywood films, and there were the soundies—but Bird missed all that. Then he didn't live long enough to cash in on the very brief jazz boom in television. He was 34 when he died in 1955. If he had lived another five years probably he would have been on *The Sound Of Jazz* on CBS and been filmed more frequently." Giddins is at least happy to have *Hot House*. "Bird played his ass off."

What the project lacks in actual film of Parker is made up for by the many photographs, especially of the often Buddha-like face of Bird. "The pictures are integral," Giddins said. "Many have never appeared anywhere. They show him in all the different guises his face took. If you flip through the book without even reading the text, it's amazing how he changes."

Though a co-ordinated record package was still in the works as of this writing, one musical rarity was discovered and is heard on the video. "We have something Bird did on tenor when he was 17 or 18," said Byron. "He went down to the pawnshop where they had a discmaker. He cut it right there—*Body And Soul* and *Honeysuckle Rose*—and gave it to his mother as a gift. It's not great sounding, but it's Charlie Parker." db

# auditions

## down beat SPOTLIGHTS YOUNG MUSICIANS DESERVING WIDER RECOGNITION



**IAN FROMAN**, 25-year-old drummer, is a member of Forward Motion, a Boston-based db Student Musician Award-winning combo that has toured Europe the past two years. He is currently a drumset performance instructor at the Berklee College of Music, where he did his undergraduate work before earning a masters degree from the New England Conservatory last year. Froman's other accomplishments include being a member of the conservatory's honors jazz quintet both years of his graduate studies, two Canada Council Grants, being one of 10 students chosen nationally to study with Elvin Jones at Florida's Atlantic Center for the Arts, and scholarships to Berklee and the NEC.

Froman's other achievements include a European tour with the Ahmad Monsour Quartet; performances in Boston with Dave Liebman, John Abercrombie, Mick Goodrick, Miroslav Vitous, and Tiger Okoshi; and assisting Art Farmer and Bill Evans in conducting master classes at the NEC. Froman is an endorser for the Paiste Cymbal Company and Gretsch drums.



**JONATHAN SNEIDER**, 17-year-old trumpeter and pianist, was one of two jazz instrumentalists chosen for a 1987 Arts Recognition and Talent Search grant. A high school senior from Brockton, MA, Sneider played first trumpet in

the 1986 McDonalds All-American High School Band, and he was recently named second trumpet in McDonalds All-American Jazz Band, directed by Robert Curnow. This past March, he performed in Baltimore with the All-Eastern United States Jazz Ensemble, directed by North Texas State Jazz director Neil Slater. Other honors include being chosen for Massachusetts' All-State Jazz Ensemble in 1985 and '86 (he was lead trumpet the second year), and consecutive scholarships to the Summer Youth Music School at the University of New Hampshire, where he played with the honors jazz band.

Sneider is lead trumpet and soloist in his high school jazz ensemble and marching band, and principal trumpet in the school's wind ensemble and honors band. He performs on trumpet and piano around the Brockton area with his brother, Bob, who plays guitar. Sneider has studied trumpet with Vincent Macrina, Greg Hopkins, and Mike Metheny; his influences include Clifford Brown, Dizzy Gillespie, Chet Krooley, Barney Kessel, and Doc Severinsen.



**JESSICA GARRETSON**, 11-year-old guitarist/singer/songwriter, has performed at many events near her home in Tampa, FL, including the Florida State Fair. She has written several songs that she recorded with a local band called Sage, including *The Challenger*, which commemorates the astronauts from the ill-fated Challenger.

Garretson, who attends Temple Heights Christian School, recently appeared as Kate in the Encore Dinner Theater production of *Annie*. An accomplished lead guitarist, she appeared at her second straight Florida State Fair, with her own band, this past February.



**JOHN SIMON**, 27-year-old tenor saxophonist, is a member of Joe Sudler's 17-piece Swing Machine, a Philadelphia ensemble that has featured such guest artists as Phil Woods, Slide Hampton, Buddy DeFranco, Clark Terry, and Stanley Turrentine. Simon has also spent four years playing four nights a week at Gert's Lounge, where he's performed with Hank Mobley, Groove Holmes, Perry Lopez, Philly Joe Jones, and others.

Simon began playing piano at age four, then switched to tenor at 16; one of his teachers was the late Buddy Savitt, who played with Woody Herman in the '50s. Simon recently put together his own trio, which also features keyboardist Don Patterson and drummer Greg McDonald, and he is a faculty member at Philadelphia's Settlement Music School. A graduate of the Philadelphia College of the Performing Arts, Simon's primary influences are Sonny Rollins, Sonny Stitt, and Dexter Gordon.



**GEOFF KEEZER**, 16, is a pianist and composer from Eau Claire, WI. He was one of two pianists selected for the 1987 National Association of Jazz Educators Young Talent Award, performing at the NAJE convention in January; and his trio performed for a regional convention of the Music Educators National Conference in Minneapolis this February.

Keezer won the 1986 Wisconsin Music Teachers

Association auditions (a classical piano competition), and he has been a member of the Wisconsin Honors Jazz Ensemble for the past two years. He won his first award, a national PTA composition contest, at age 12. Keezer has played in various jazz, funk, and commercial bands, and he has studied the past four summers at the Indianhead Center jazz camp in Shell Lake, WI (with Donald Patterson, John Radd, and Dominic Spera among his teachers). His piano influences include Chick Corea, Thelonious Monk, Oscar Peterson, Mulgrew Miller, and McCoy Tyner.



**CHRISTOPHER HUGAN**, 25-year-old guitarist, was the 1985 winner of the Tommy Tedesco Studio Scholarship to the Musicians Institute in Hollywood, CA, from which he graduated last year. Originally from the Cincinnati area, Hukan earned a degree in Chemical Engineering (minoring in Music Performance) at the University of Kentucky before moving west. While at Kentucky he studied classical guitar with Michael Fogler and played in the jazz band, led by trumpeter Vince DiMartino; he also played professionally in country & western swing bands.

Hukan performs regularly in Southern California with the country group Jim Ryland & Sierra, records demos of himself and others, and teaches several students privately. "I've worked hard learning about music and the guitar," he writes, "and the last year-and-a-half has brought my playing to a much more professional level. Now I will continue to work and wait for the results to materialize."

db

Young musicians wishing to be considered for Auditions should send a black & white photograph and a one-page typewritten biography to **down beat**, Auditions, 222 W. Adams St., Chicago, IL 60606.

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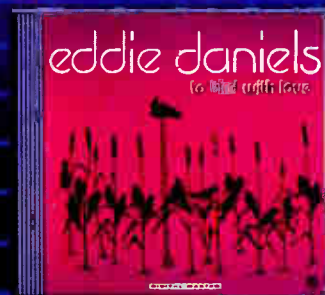
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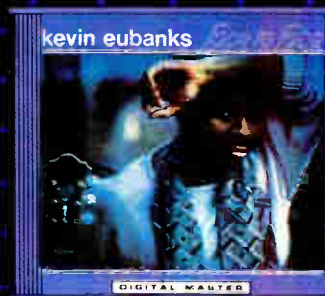
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