buffalo jazz report

DECEMBER '76
issue 34
free

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Stanley Turrentine
Stanley Turrentine

Tenor saxophonist Stanley Turrentine, who long been an extremely popular jazzman, will be appearing at the Statler's Downtown Room for two weeks next month -- January 2 through 16.

Turrentine is a second-generation jazz man; his father, Thomas Turrentine, Sr., was a prominent saxophonist with the famed Savoy Sultans in the late 1930s, a band Dizzy Gillespie said was "the swingingest band I ever heard!" Young Stanley would often come home from school, pick up the cello -- which he played first-put it back down, and pick up his father's sax! Thomas Turrentine became Stanley's first teacher.

In 1951, when Stanley was 17, he joined the Lowell Fulson band, which then included a young and ambitious Ray Charles. Charles eventually started his own band, which Stanley joined. Stanley says of the experience: "Ray was a great influence on me. He took me under his wing, taught me lots and lots of things that I'm still using today. That man truly amazed me because even though he was blind, he was absolutely and totally independent."

When Stanley left the Ray Charles band, he returned home to Pittsburgh, where he played with local musicians. Next he went to Cleveland and joined an ensemble led by the great arranger/composer Tadd Dameron. In 1953, he replaced John Coltrane in the group formed by Earl Bostic, a band that specialized in swinging ballads with a rocking beat.

But Turrentine really came to prominence during 1959-60 as a member of the Max Roach Quintet. During those years, Stanley paid, in full, his dues -- time on the road. By the time Stanley made it to New York and joined Max Roach, after a stint in the army, he was ready for something more strenuous and more sedentary. By the end of 1960, he had cut his first album as a leader, and had started working with organist Shirley Scott, whom he also married. The partnership lasted 11 years. In the early Seventies, Turrentine recorded several albums for CTI Records, including collaborations with Milt Jackson, Deodato, and Freddie Hubbard.

Turrentine signed with Fantasy in 1974 and his first LP, Pieces of Dreams, sold better than any record he had ever made.

Stanley's most recent recorded efforts are commercially accessible without resorting to disco (with one exception). He plays with a big, warm tone, his music is soulful and full of feelings. He's especially good on ballads.

The rest of the Statler's new lineup will be announced next month. Remember those dates for Stanley Turrentine -- January 2-16.

MARK MURPHY AT ST. GEORGE'S

Vocalist Mark Murphy played St. George's Table for the entire month of November. It was a return visit for Murphy, who has a loyal following in these parts.

Murphy's book includes many jazz standards, pop tunes, show tunes and vocal versions of Herbie Hancock tunes such as Maiden Voyage and Cantaloupe Island. He possesses one of the finest voices in the business, and was in top form. His band is good, although the drummer is far too loud, detracting from the overall sound. The bass work of Sabu Adeyola is especially outstanding.

Mark will be at St. George's through December 12. B.W.

Dexter Gordon

Dexter Gordon at the Tralfamadore

Tenor giant Dexter Gordon's three day Buffalo visit was billed as "the jazz event of the decade." It was no hype. Gordon hadn't been in Buffalo since 1944. He remembered the year because it was here that he left Louis Armstrong to go with Billy Eckstine. That was before most of the people in the young audiences (on any of the three sold-out nights) were born, including myself. Obviously he is a legend and everyone wanted to be a part of the historical visit.

Dexter was backed by the local trio of Sabu Adeyola/bass, Jon Weiss/piano and Virgil Day/drums. The rhythm section was a bit shaky at first, but ironed out the kinks as the engagement went on. They had Dex smokin' by Sunday night. Sabu, Jon & Virgil deserve special mention for their work, especially since they went into Friday night cold - no rehearsal with Dexter prior to the gig.

Gordon himself was simply magnificent, drawing wild rounds of applause throughout the nights, each of which ended with a thunderous standing ovation. It seemed that Jeff Simon (BFlo. Evening News), Carroll Hardy, Geo. Beck, John Hunt, Pres Freeland, the Lawson Brothers and many others shared the same reaction - we couldn't believe he was here!

He was here, and a long list of celebrities came down to witness it. Some of them were Phoebe Snow, Donald Byrd, Ray Bryant, the Blackbyrds, Gerry Niewood's whole Quartet, Helen Humes' Band and the country's best known jazz DJ - Harry Abraham (WHAM).

Dexter ended his stay at 2:30 Sunday night with an encore. He sang the blues Jelly, Jelly imitating his former boss, Billy Eckstine - whom (as mentioned earlier) he had joined in Buffalo 32 years ago. His agent has since told me that, if he sang, he really enjoyed it here. Dexter then threw kisses out to the audience before leaving the bandstand.

In the car, en-route to his hotel, Mr. Gordon said "next..."
time somebody mentions Buffalo I'll say Yeah Buffalo-Solid!"
Unfortunately, about three hundred people had to be turned away. If you were one, advance tickets should be strongly considered for future events.
Also, apologies for the over-crowding early Sunday night.

There was a foul-up in ticket accounting and about twenty-five to many were sold, and that's all it takes in a club of that size.

In closing - there is a chance that Dexter will be back, though we don't know when.
B.W.

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SPIDER MARTIN CONCERT - ATTICA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
On Saturday afternoon, November 20th, the Spider Martin Quintet dropped by the Attica Correctional Facility's auditorium and thoroughly entertained the 531 jazz aficionados who attended.

The tenor man was in rare form and the audience was treated to such goodies as "Impressions" "Breezin" "This Masquerade" "Feelings" plus various cuts from Spider's latest album "I'm See Ya."

Backed up tightly by the hard-driving rhythm section consisting of: Richard Felice, drums; Steven Davis, bass; Rusea Taylor, guitar and Joseph Locke, vibes, Spider blew strong, forceful, melodic, creative, artistic, all while swinging like crazy.

The virtuosity of Joe Locke on vibes brought spontaneous applause during the length of the program. This young man (18 yrs.) is phenomenal.

No stranger here, Spider comes to entertain the inmates as many times a year as his busy schedule allows. He also travels to other facilities in the Western NY area.

Guests for this matinee were: jazz disc jockey, Harry Abraham and female companion from radio station WHAM. Mr. David Golden, Correctional Progamme Coordinator for Hospital Audiences, Inc.; Dr. Martin Lindauer and Mr. Steve Ribner also of HAI, passed out Evaluation forms. Present for the facility was: Mr. Michael Morse, Coordinator, Volunteer Services.

AUDIENCE RESPONSE: Excellent.
Our thanks to HAI and Volunteer Services for an afternoon of excellent entertainment and this is also extended to the Administrative personnel who contributed to its success. Oliveros McIloyd
Inmate Entertainment Reviewer
27782 51-11

MUSIC AT THE SHORELINE
THE SHORE COFFEEHOUSE features live entertainment every other Saturday evening (December 1) from 8 to 12 PM at 200 Niagara Street (in the Shoreline Apartment complex).

The coffeehouse provides the opportunity for musicians to perform in an open mike format and for artists and craftsmen to display or sell their works. Located on the West Side near City Hall, the coffeehouse serves the Downtown area and provides a place to meet. "The Shore" is always filled with many different styles of music, poetry, humor, and art. The atmosphere is dependent on those who participate and it is always friendly and accepting with people listening, singing, clapping, and performing together. Everyone is welcome to relax and enjoy coffee, tea, and pastry. Admission is free.

RECORD THEATRE OPENS WITH A BANG
What has been called "the world's largest record store" - Record Theatre at 1800 Main at Lafayette - opened last month with a smash celebration.

Popular music artists, record company executives and area music notables joined together for the part as Lenny Silver unveiled his massive, ultra modern store in the exact center of the city of Buffalo. The amazing part of it all is how much they've done to completely renovate and decorate the old Transcontinent Warehouse Building. What was once an eyesore is now a treat for sore eyes, and the Record Theatre Building totally enhances the appearance of the area.

We're glad that Mr. Silver chose the city for his venture unlike the political forces that put the stadium in Orchard Park and the new campus in Amherst.

This is a huge place -- check it out.

WBF0 ANNOUNCER MOVES TO JAPAN
WBF0's Michael Vaughan Wilson, heard Sunday nights from 3-6 AM on "Progressively Yours" has told us he'll be moving shortly - to Japan.

Wilson has found a job with the Armed Forces radio there, and he should thoroughly enjoy himself in the jazz-crazed country.

We wish him the best of luck.
Jazz from A&M/Horizon - at Record Theatre!

HOLD TIGHT! IT'S A NEW CHUCK MANGIONE!

Main Squeeze
Chuck Mangione again displays his firm grasp of total music. Fronting an East coast meeting of jazz, soul and rock studio minds. A gripping new album!

CHARLIE HADEN
Closeness
The magic of Haden's acoustic bass, in duets with some of the greatest names in jazz.

JIMMY OWENS
Master of style, Jimmy Owens debuts on Horizon with a gripping and dramatic album.

JIM HALL
Commitment
Precision and melodic lyricism made Jim this year's winner of the downbeat Critics Poll.

SONNY FORTUNE
Waves of Dreams
On his second Horizon album, Sonny continues to find musical nourishment for your soul.

GATO BARBIERI
Caliente
The music man behind "Last Tango In Paris" steps out front with his first on A&M.

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GERRY EASTMAN STARTS MUSIC SCHOOL

Special attention needs to be made to the local musicians, playing in and about town, many of whom are every bit as good as many of the "well-known" musicians and singers -- and many of whom have played with the "well-knowns".

Gerry Eastman, familiar to many as the guitar-bassist in many local groups such as Birthright, Spyro-Gyra and others, is not only a musician of merit but is also a teacher and innovator of the Art. He has been playing for over 10 years, working in Ithaca and doing studio work at Motown. He came to Buffalo when his brother Julius was teaching music at the University, and the two became involved in performance and organizing the Creative Associates. Gerry, along with Richard Shulman, Bilal, and Teko were the first jazz group to play at the now famous Trafalgar’s Cafe. Because of the availability of gigs, Gerry feels he has grown a great deal in technique and experience while in Buffalo. 

He appeared on the second Birthright album as well as his newest venture of producing with Curtis Johnson, and selling to a Nashville firm, a new tune to be distributed hopefully on a national level.

Gerry has also started classes and is teaching electric and acoustic bass and guitar. With each lesson classical theory is applied to jazz. Techniques in improvisation are also included. For those interested in such study, Gerry can be contacted at 883-1340.

We are proud Gerry has chosen Buffalo to work and live and wish him much success. Thanks.

P.W.

CAVAGE’S ADDS TWO

Cavage’s Record stores opened two new locations to expand their total number of outlets to twelve.

The store at Elmwood & Forest has been open for about two months now, serving the Buffalo State College area.

A new store will open soon at the Summit Park Mall, Williams Rd. in Niagara Falls. As with the Elmwood & Forest location, Cavage’s Falls store will carry a full line of jazz.

The BJR is available at all Cavage’s locations, including Lockport Mall.

many faces of jazz

an exhibit of drawings of jazz artists by bjr illustrators-

Christine Engla Eber

and Sabrina Mayberry Smith

on display this month at

Trafalgar’s Cafe

2610 main street

STONE ALLIANCE

The exciting, highly energized trio known as Stone Alliance is currently touring South America. What was to be a 60 day concert series for the group, which left New York City in October, looks as though it will be a six month extravaganza as the people of Chile, Argentina, etc. are literally going crazy.

Stone Alliance, consisting of Steve Grossman - saxes, Gene Perla - bass and Don Alias - percussion, played the Trafalgar’s Cafe in February of this year - kicking off the series of concerts with name jazz artists that have taken place in the small Main St. club since.

Reports are that the trio is playing to packed, raving concert hall audiences, doing TV and radio specials, recordings and made the front page in the Santiago newspaper.

While we’re happy for their success, we’re sorry they can’t come back to Buffalo before May. But, good things are worth waiting for.

A new album for Stone Alliance is due out on PM Records before Christmas.

STEEPLECHASE LINE ACQUIRED BY INNER CITY RECORDS

In a major acquisition move, Inner City Records has signed an exclusive manufacturing and distribution deal with SteepleChase Records of Denmark.

Under the terms of the agreement, Inner City will issue SteepleChase product on the Inner City label in the U.S. and Canada. According to I.C.’s Irv Kratka, the entire 54-record SteepleChase line will soon be available at domestic LP prices ($6.98 list).

SteepleChase is a major European label with such artists as Jackie McLean, Dexter Gordon, Andrew Hill, Kenny Drew, Duke Jordan, Tete Montoliu, Mary Lou Williams, Joe Alby, Walt Dickerson, and Lee Konitz, to name a few. In recent years, the line has been acclaimed as a significant source of important jazz releases by critics worldwide.

With the addition of SteepleChase, Inner City moves into the major leagues of the jazz field.

The initial releases in the SteepleChase Series are planned for December.

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    1335 Main Street
    Buffalo, New York 14209
    (716) 883-3909, Ext. 11

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PRINTED IN U.S.A.

RECORDS

GEORGE BENSON - BLUE BENSON - POLYDOR 6084

In light of guitarist Benson’s tidal wave of popularity, every able record company is reissuing records or anthologies to ride the wave in its greatest magnitude. While all of these will be of interest to Benson people, Blue Benson is by far the leader from the artistic standpoint.

Culled from two Circa ’68 Verve discs, this record presents George in a pure, unsweetened fashion four personnel settings, with a quintet including Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Billy Cobham and Johnny Pacheco (congas) receiving the most
I'M A, SEE YA - EDMAR ELPS 1151

Tenor and alto saxophonist Spider Martin is certainly no stranger to the Buffalo Jazz scene. For those that have seen him perform, this has indeed been a long awaited album. I'M A, See Ya is a reflection of years of preparation - trying numerous combinations of musicians in varying musical settings, working towards the point he's at now. Spider's choice of personnel, including former John Coltrane bassist Steve Davis, is a further indication that this first album by Martin as a leader was well worth the wait.

Spider's sound, reminiscent of the late Gene Ammons, is a gutsy, blues-flavored sound which reaches peaks of intensity especially on the title cut. Soloing by the young vibist Joe Locke is fluid and melodic. Tom Rizzo's guitar solo on After Love lets us hear how well he can step out after hearing him provide the tasteful comping for the group on most of the previous selections.

Throughout, I'M A, See Ya maintains a unified, well-controlled sound due in large part to the fact that John "Spider" Martin wrote every composition. Spider's first album states emphatically that there should have been albums from him before and that there will be a demand for more to come.

B.W.

PLAS JOHNSON - POSITIVELY - CONCORD 24

Alto and tenor saxophonist Plas Johnson worked for years in the 50's on rock 'n' roll record dates in Los Angeles. More recently, Johnson has been appearing at the Concord (Calif.) Jazz Festivals, and has been recorded on four Concord albums.

He's a strong R & B style player whose sound here on ten tunes, covering blues, Bossa Novas, ballads and cookers. Of special note are the Gospel/Blues original Dirty Leg Blues, the swingin' Careless Love, the burning title track and Lover Man, the jazz classic with Plas sounding much like the late Ray Brown, as he does elsewhere on the record.

The rhythm section is a fine quintet in itself, with such able people as Ray Brown, Herb Ellis, Mike Melvoin and conga master Bobbye Hall.

A good, balanced album from Mr. Johnson and worth checking into.

B.W.

SIDNEY BECHET AND MEZZ MEZZROW - CLASSIC JAZZ 28

This very bluesy album by the 1st giant of Soprano Saxophone, Sidney Bechet provides a nice double record set of classic New Orleans jazz. Stylistically the music is much in the mode of the recordings of the 20s with Bechet's soprano being supported by Mezz Mezzrow's clarinet and on some tracks Hot Lips Page's trumpet.

Unlike the next man to master the soprano, John Coltrane, Bechet played with heavy vibrato and of course his musical ideas stem from an earlier period of jazz. Most of the material features the collective improvisations with Mezzrow and Bechet playing off each other and creating some very joyous music.

Surely anyone who likes 'Dixieland' will love this set, though there is perhaps better Bechet to be heard on Master Musician (RCA-Bluebird AXY2-5516).

It should also be noted that several tracks are graced by boogie-woogie pianist Sammy Price and vocals by Pleasant Joe (who today is known as Cousin Joe) which should appeal to blues fans.

Ron Weinstock

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DECEMBER IS MONTH AT CAVAGES

M-9072 McCoy Tyner Focal Point
New McCoy w/Joe Ford

M-9070 Flora Purim 500 Miles High
Flora Live at Montreux

F-9519 Stanley Turrentine The Man with the Sad Face
Stanley's latest

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OSCAR PETERSON - OSCAR'S CHOICE - BASF G22010

This is a good sampler album for anyone who likes Oscar Peterson, but not enough to shell out the bucks for the five albums represented here on one.

Regardless of thefact that the pianist seldom plays bad music, these eight tunes are well chosen and a good sampling of his BASF output. There's two outstanding tracks with Sam Jones, Bobby Durham and some of the best guitar work heard from Herb Ellis in some time. Also a quartet tune with Milt Jackson, Ray Brown & Louis Hayes, two trios with Sam Jones & Durham, two with Jiri Mraz & Ray Price and a solo piano version of Give Me The Simple Life. The classic Green Dolphin Street is recorded live.

This is an exceptionally well programed album for the concept and a good introduction to Peterson.

B.W.

NAT ADDERLEY - HUMMIN' - LITTLE DAVID 1012

The opening selection of this album, Hummin', sets the mood with a bluesy, uptempo and slightly funky approach. That's always been cornetist Nat Adderley's forte, though, so this LP comes as no surprise. The presence of John Stubblefield on reeds and flute is felt throughout, contributing some lyrical soloing especially on Midnight Over Memphis. (The background vocals seem tacky on, however, and add nothing). One of the nicest aspects of Stubblefield's playing is that he is making no attempt to sound like Cannonball. There's also some exciting soloing from pianist Onaje Allen Gumbs on several tracks including Hummin' and Theme From M.A.S.H., which points out why he's been getting so much concert and studio work lately. Onaje's tasty, samba-flavored number, Listen To The Rain, reveals the gentler side of Adderley's cornet. Nat's son, Nathaniel E. Aderley, who now leads his own group, provides vocal arrangements and contributes one original composition. Overall, Hummin' provides enjoyable listening.

J.H.

CHET BAKER IN PARIS - BLUE STAR 80.704/05

A total of six sessions are represented on this double record French import. These records were cut for Barclay, along with a third which was the only one released in the United States.

Most of the tunes are done in quartet or quintet settings, with seven from Chet's seven-piece orchestra. Baker, whose had his share of trouble with drugs, plays with one of his favorite pianists on side one - Richard "Dick" Twardzik a Monk disciple who died ten days after the session of an overdose. Two tracks feature tenor man Bobby Jaspar with Chet's Quintet. All of the numerous musicians on these sides are European, including Francy Boland, Eddie De Hase, Jean-Louis Chautemps, Jaspar and Jimmy Bond, who are probably the best known.

Baker, very much in the style of Miles, has always been an excellent trumpeter under the right circumstances, and he sounds good throughout this set of clean, lyrical, laid back and often pretty jazz. All the music was recorded in 1955 & 1956, nd all in a Paris studio. The sound and pressing quality is first rate.

This should be available in major stores. Distributed by Peters Int'l.

B.W.

BLUE BIRD - HAMPTON & GOODMAN

Two new Bluebird re-issues have come out that should be of interest to many folks.

The Complete Lionel Hampton 1937-1941 (AXM6-5536) comes as six record set, but is not as outrageously priced as the Pabo boxed sets are. There are a great number of different dates and personnel listings involved, but some of the better known musicians heard are Charlie Christian, Dizzy Gillespie, Gene Krupa, Sid Catlett, Johnny Hodges, Benny Carter, Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Helen Forrest and Nat "King" Cole.

Hampton is heard on vibes, drums, piano and vocals on several tunes and combinations of these onothers. Very enjoyable music and extremely well recorded for the time period.

More goodies can be heard on The Complete Benny Goodman Volume IV - 1936-1937 (AXM2-5537). Most of the music is done by Goodman orchestras with varied personnel. A standout is a Nine Minute version of Sing, Sing, Sing with Gene Krupa going nuts throughout (you can practically see him). Then there's ten tracks by Benny's quartet, with Lionel Hampton, Teddy Wilson and Krupa.

Again - well recorded. Each package contains liner notes and photos with discography. B.W.

JOHN HANDY & ALI AKBAR KHAN - KARUNA SUPERME - BASF

Saxophonist John Handy teams up here with three Indian musicians to make an album of moving, beautiful music.

Ali Akbar Khan plays an instrument called Sarod, similar in construction and sound to the sitar. Zakir Hussain is heard on tabla, Yogish S. Sahota on tamboura. The music offers Handy playing flowing melodic lines, exchanging solos with Khan - said to be one of the notables of Eastern music.

Jazz & Eastern classical music have been blended many times. The two music forms go extremely well together, and although others, such as Paul Horn, have made fine achievements with the fusion, few have presented a sound as completely satisfying and stimulating, yet tranquil, as these men have.

I've often noticed that others, again Horn comes to mind, sound as though they are simply jazzmen playing Indian music. Here the sound switches from obviously Indian, to obviously jazz to a pure, balanced mixture of the two. In fact, at one point Handy & Khan are heard "alternating fours", and they are often heard in perfect unison.

Definitely something to check out if you're even remotely interested in Eastern music.

B.W.

CHARLES SULLIVAN - GENESIS - INNER CITY 1012

"Genesis is an album of consistently high musicianship. Each member of this group (there are eleven in all playing at one time or another) delivers clean, earnest soloing besides completely solid trumpeter under the right circumstances, and he sounds good throughout this set of clean, lyrical, laid back and often pretty jazz. All the music was recorded in 1955 & 1956, and all in a Paris studio. The sound and pressing quality is first rate.

This should be available in major stores. Distributed by Peters Int'l.

B.W.

SAVOY RE- ISSUES

Savoy's latest batch of reissues continues to document the emergence of modern jazz in the 40s and early 50s.

Black California (SJL 2215) documents the Central Avenue scene in LA and parallels the previously issued Changing Face of the Problem (SJL 2204) in providing a panorama of the jazz scene there. The album opens with a cooking live recording of "Backbreaker" with Sonny Criss, Wardell Gray and Barney Kessel the best known musicians on this track. Slim Gaillard follows with some swinging jive including a hilarious "Dunkin' Bagel". The Roy Porter "Big Band" sides include Eric Dolphy's first solos and there are fahnhits of his later playing in his Birdish sound. Helen Humes' vocals feature nice Dexter Gordon tenor and Harold Land gets four tracks. My favorite tunes have to be Art Pepper's sides with Hampton Hawes on piano, and Hampton's own trio sides. Particularly nice is "These Foolish Things" which has a hint of "Round Midnight" to it. These sides especially are going to receive a lot of wear from me.

Mr. B. and the Blues (SJL 2214) features Milt Jackson and his famous big band. These recordings include Dexter Gordon, Gene Ammons, Wardell Gray, Fats Navarro, Kenny Dorham, Miles Davis and Art Blakey, and of course Mr. B. is present with his mellow singing. This band was a who's who of modern jazz and the times and these sides provide some legacy for it. Dexter has a solo on "Lonesome Lover Blues" with Jug having most of the saxophone parts. "Jelly" is included and among sides with a smaller group "Sophisticated Lady" stands out.

Next we have Gene Ammons and Red Top (SJL 1103) which is a single LP and contains the recordings Gene did for the Chicago based United label as well as Leo Parker's 1947 sides on which Gene was a sideman. The United sides are situated in between those reissued on The Gene Ammons Story: The 78 Era"
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DEC. 17 - GAP
MANGIONE

Poppenberg's is underwriting the cost of live jazz broadcasts from the Downtown room of the Statler.

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(Prestige P-24058). I am slightly prejudiced towards the big little band setting that Jug is mostly heard here in. My favorites are "Big Slam" and "Good Time Blues" and the admirers of Jug’s fat blusy tenor will have great pleasure.

Don Byas, was like Ammons, one of the masters of the tenor and Savoy Jam Party (SJL 2213) features his warm swinging playing. One of the greatest ballad players, as evident on "Danny Boy", as well as a relaxed, swinging player, Byas plays with the boppers while his playing is rooted in the swing era. "Cherokee" provides a nice case of his fluid attack. Trumpeter Charlie Shavers is heard on several tracks with his cool sound. Slam Stewart does his bowing and humming routine on a number of pieces, and Benny Harris is also present on the fine "How High the Moon".

As the case with earlier Savoy issues, these are attractively packaged and contain extensive annotations and complete as possible discographical details. The sound quality is generally quite good and the music is classic.

Ron Weinstock

contrast between the two acoustic models heard on the airy Romantic Descension, and Towners acoustic work mixed with the electronic effects and fuzz tone used by Abercrombie on Elbow Room.

The result is an album of music that changes direction enough to prohibit boredom, from two guitarists who are highly respected on the contemporary jazz scene. Not the best record for either of them, but an excellent duo performance worth your attention.

Good late-night listening.

B. W.

MIROSLAV VITOUS - MAJESTY MUSIC - ARISTA 4099

Majesty Music is a pleasing step forward for Miroslav Vitous from his previous solo release. The former bassist for Weather Report still carries much of that groups feelings with him but with this most recent LP he allows more of his talent to show through, especially on the acoustic bass. See You, November contains a melodic solo from Jaroslav Jaku­bovic on tenor sax, the co-author of several selections, and some fine bow work on the acoustic bass from Vitous, as does Requiem For My Mother. With impetus provided by drummer Lenny White this disc tends to get over funked at times but countering this is percussionist David Earl Johnson who mellows things out whenever possible. The floating, wordless vocals by Rimona Franci seem to act as an additional instrument.

Instead of being bright and vivid, the effect of Majesty Music is of a pastel, synthesized sound in which most of the selections have a similar mood, tone and arrangement.

J. H.

McCOY TYNER - FOCAL POINT - MILESTONE 9072

The people at Fantasy/Prestige/Milestone were kind enough to rush us an advance copy of this album for the benefit of Joe Fords hometown folks. Unfortunately, due to Christmas mail, it arrived too late to review.

Therefore - this is just a notice that it’s out (soon) and a quick spotting divulges the fact that it's more fine McCoy. Birthright’s Joe Ford is indeed here on reeds, along with Ron Bridgewater, Gary Bartz, Charles Fambrough, Guillerme Franco & Eric Gravatt.

An actual review will appear next month.

JEAN-LUC PONTY - IMAGINARY VOYAGE - ATLANTIC SD 18195

The jazz-rock violin of Jean-Luc Ponty requires no introduction to most readers. This latest solo release on Atlantic (his third) is the best from Ponty to date. His style has become well ingrained and the sound of Ponty’s floating violin has become characteristic. With repeaters from his last release, guitarist Stuormer and bassist Fowler, Ponty travels the Imaginary Voyage (Parts I-IV). Allan Zavod on keyboards, and Mark Craney on percussion complete the expedition. The result is a fast-moving yet smooth textured affair. New Country is country. Perhaps the highlight is The Gardens of Babylon with Stuormer’s acoustic guitar and Zadoc’s acoustic piano nicely complimenting Ponty. The album is one of the better jazz-rock efforts.

T. M.

ART BLAKEY’S JAZZ MESSENGERS - RCA/France FXM1 7196

This is a French import, and part of the RCA Black & White Series (Vol. 156 to be exact). This 1957 version of the Messengers features Bill Hardman/trumpet, Johnny Griffin/tenor sax, “Spanky” DeBrest/bass and Sam Dockery/piano; Blakely, of course, on drums.

All six tunes are from Lerner & Lowe’s Broadway musicals My Fair Lady, Paint Your Wagon & Brigadoon. Each selection is taken at medium to fast tempo. Hardman’s bebop trumpet and Griffin’s gruffy tenor get most of the spotlight throughout and make good use of it. Griffin was well known at the time of this date as a saxophonist with just about everyone signed with Riverside Records -- Monk, etc. Hardman, unknown at the time, has since spent a good deal of time with Blakely (off and on) and is currently with the Messengers.

An album with commercial titles but no commercialism in the music. Straight ahead be-bop in an album that should be of interest to Blakeyes fans.

B. W.
WES MONTGOMERY - THE SMALL GROUP RECORDINGS - VERVE 2-2513

Wes Montgomery needs no introduction to jazz listeners. He is quite simply one of THE innovative, legendary masters in the evolution of jazz guitar.

In the years just before his death, he recorded many albums for a producer who preferred to present him in a commercial fashion - strings, horns, short pop tunes and the like. Wes gained widespread popularity, lived comfortably and enjoyed it; and he deserved it all.

No doubt, however, that Wes must have been a bit put out by an atrocious production titled Willow Weep For Me on Verve. An excellent live session with the Wynton Kelly Trio (recorded at the same time as Smokin' At The Halfnote (Verve), was overdubbed with shmaltzy strings and Kelly's excellent piano work was mixed down to practically nothing. This was perhaps the biggest sin any record producer has committed, and Wes' fans were irate.

So much for history.

The double album reviewed here presents three of the four tunes with strings in their original form - straight quartet. They are Willow Weep For Me, Portrait Of Jennie and Misty. It also contains all but one tune from the Smokin' album. Four on Six, originally issued on both, is issued here in the longer version (from Willow).

Two additional tracks find Wes with organist Jimmy Smith, Ray Barretto & Grady Tate. Super music to say the least...

This is an unusually long BJR review of a single twofer re-issue. However, the fact that producer Robert Hurwitz of Polydor chose to "erase" the strings, coupled with the fact that this is some of the best Wes on record justifies every word. Also - the "Willow strings controversy" has long been a pet peeve.

Strongly recommended for a gift or a personal treat. B.W.

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY - MASTERS OF JAZZ!

COLEMAN HAWKINS - MASTERS OF JAZZ 4

These two separate Capitol imports from Peters International offer a good insight to two departed masters of the saxophone.

Each record presents the men in various settings, doing some of their best known tunes. Hawkins does two originals - Stuffy & Rifftide, Ball does Mercy, Merci, Mercy, Merci & Work Song (composed by Joe Zawinul and Nat Adderley).

The music is all well recorded and the records cleanly pressed. One problem, however, is the fact that there are no personnel listings or dates anywhere. There are several questions in that area that I have but can't answer.

All things considered, these are good but confusing partial anthologies. B.W.
Herman Bennett turns in a fine guitar solo on "Pennies From Heaven" — being more jazz flavored than Crayton, and elsewhere plays nice rhythm. A fine album however Benny Green's notes are getting hard to take.  
Ron Weinstock

ALEXANDRE LaGOYA/CLAUDE BOLLING - CONCERTO FOR CLASSIC GUITAR AND JAZZ PIANO - RCA FRL1-10149

An extensive experiment by Claude Bolling, French jazz pianist and composer, in combination with Italian-Greek guitarist Alexandre LaGoya merits praise for the attempt and mores for the outcome. Concerto combines two of the most expressive string instruments and is truly an enjoyable piece of music. For those who think they'd be turned off by this type of offering, the album can be compared with the supremely acclaimed in Memorium by MJQ Michel Gondry on double bass and West Coast Sabiani cowboys provide a tight and reserved background to the light and colorfully textured lines of the two featured artists. All six movements add to the theme of instrumental opposition displaying musical cohesiveness. An excellent album.

T.M.

FATHER TOM VAUGHN - JOYFUL JAZZ - CONCORD 16

This is the eighth album for the priest/pianist who's been involved in jazz circles for over a decade. George Wein "discovered" him as he sat in with Gene Krupa's quartet in 1965, and since then he's been a guest at jazz festivals, TV talk shows, etc.

His trio here consists of bassist Monty Bugwig and drummer John Brown, and two sessions are heard. Side one is live in San Francisco and includes a Bach flavored version of Fly Me To The Moon, and a tasty rendition of Green Dolphin St. Side two, done in a Hollywood studio, contains six shorter tunes, including two originals — Holy Smoke & Prayer For My People.

The father's influences are said to be Art Tatum, Duke Ellington, Oscar Peterson, Bach, Stravinsky and Beethoven. No doubt true, but the main thing here is the music. It's a good trio record — especially the live side.

B.W.

LEONARD FEATHER'S ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JAZZ IN THE SEVENTIES ON RECORDS - RCA APL2-1984

A couple of questions on this one:

Why are all the artists represented signed to RCA records?

Who is Bob Thiele's band heard here and not Phil Woods?

Isn't Phil with RCA?

Whatever the answers, this is more or less an RCA sampler with a clever marketing title and a good way to promote Leonard Feather's new book, which I should get anyway, so I'm glad to know it's out.

Among others, there's tracks from Shelly Manne, Gil Evans, Nina Simone, Buddy Rich, Oliver Nelson, Duke Ellington & Gato Barbieri. I quite enjoy the track from Horace Tapscott with black Arthur Blythe which Leonard gives excuses for in the notes, and there's some nice David Amram sextet music on Waltz From "After the Fall".

I don't know what more to tell you except that again this is an RCA sampler with all tunes and groups listed on the back cover. Its your decision now.

B.W.

GREAT GUITARS - CONCORD 23

The sequel to the original Great Guitars album (a live date at the Concord Jazz Festival in 1974) is a studio recording done this year. Three of jazz' favorite and most accomplished practitioners of the instrument - Charlie Byrd, Barney Kessel and Herb Ellis are joined together for a delightful set of eight tunes. The trio is backed by Charlie Byrds bassist and drummer - Joe Byrd and Wayne Phillips.

All three guitarists get plenty of chances to display their talent here and none are wasted. The most interesting tracks are perhaps the four on which all three men are heard at once. Check out the quick tempo version of Lover for an example.

Makin Whoopee features only Kessel & Ellis (without bass and drums) trading solo and rhythm roles. This one was recorded live in Seattle, Washington.

These solo, duo and trio recordings offer some fine moments, especially of interest to jazz guitar fans.

B W.
HERB ELLIS - RAY BROWN SEXTET - HOT TRACKS - CONCORD 12
If you’re looking for some music that swings, check this one out. In addition to Ellis & Brown, you’ll find Plas Johnson, Harry “Sweets” Edison, Jake Hanna & Mike Melvoin.

Co-leaders Brown & Ellis play up to their usual high standards. Ray’s soloing is heard throughout. Beautiful, with light support from Ellis & Hanna. However, it’s not the leaders who deserve all of the special attention here. The work of Sweets and Plas is an important ingredient of the music (see Plas Johnson’s record review in this issue).

All those musicians are frequent visitors to recording studios and the polished, easy going sound here is a result of years of such experience. Another worthy addition to the growing Concord Jazz catalogue. B.W.

MIKE LONGO - TALK WITH THE SPIRITS - PABLO 2310-769
Having been quite satisfied with earlier albums by this former Dizzy Gillespie pianist, Mike Longo, I rather looked forward to hearing this new one. I’m still listening to it, but not hearing much.

The personnel is certainly good enough - Longo, Harold Vick, Virgil Jones, Mickey Roker and all - Dizzy even plays congas. But the music just sort of “hangs loose” throughout both sides, just doesn’t go anywhere. Sounds almost as though they couldn’t wait for the session to end so they could take a collective nap. I hope Longo isn’t into this on club dates as well.

Mike is a good piano player but there are better examples available and probably more to come. B.W.

ART LANDE - RUBISA PATROL - ECM 1081
Pianist Art Lande did a previous album for ECM entitled Red Lanta. When reviewing it I noted that the music sounded good, but like an imitation of Keith Jarrett. Rubisa Patrol draws the same conclusion, but perhaps the Jarrett sound shouldn’t be looked at as so bad. After all, Jarrett copied Paul Bley, didn’t he?

Nonetheless, this is good music from a talented quartet. Mark Isham doubles on trumpet and soprano sax; Bill Douglass does the same with bass and flute; Glenn Cronkhite is heard on drums and percussion. Beautiful melodies prevail throughout the album, comprised of originals, except for a traditional Chinese song and a Bulgarian folk song. The band has a European flavor heard on many ECM discs. In fact, at times (I hate to say it) it almost sounds like a European Jarrett quartet with trumpet replacing the tenor.

I’ve gone this far, so maybe I should add that with all the people he’s directly or indirectly influenced, Paul Bley might someday be widely accepted as a piano giant. I hope so. B.W.

NEW EXPLORATIONS

ROSWell RUDD - INSIDE JOB - ARISTA FREEDOM 1029
I have been interested in Roswell Rudd’s playing and music since the mid-’60s when I first heard him with Archie Shepp. I think he’s as well as then, that Roswell is a most original player, and possesses one of the most beautiful tones on his instrument that I have ever heard. He is one of the masters of the bone (trombone) who still goes unrecognized by the general public.

His “Sacred Song”, which opens side 1, is exactly that, a beautiful piece that captures the feel and essence of a deep spiritual emotion and carried through by the excellent bowed bass work of Stafford James. The group gives a respectful performance of Thelonious Monk’s Mysterioso. Dave Burrell, another Shepp Alumnus comps in typical Monk fashion and never lets anyone forget just who this tune belongs to. As you close your eyes visions of the High Priest appear, smiling his approval. Inside Job covers all of side II and is masterfully done from the pen of Rudd. The piece is a metamorphosis of several idioms. There are freely structured movements, blues, a little bop, and some New Orleans. The music moves with ease, from one area to another, without imitation. However, when it comes to Enrico Rava’s trumpet playing on freely structured parts, he depends heavily upon Don Cherry and Lester Bowie. Harold White, the drummer gives quality support to all the music.

This is a very good album by Roswell Rudd, recorded live at Sam Rivers studio, Rivbea. One of his best efforts in a while. P.S.

WALTER STEFFENS - HEINER STADLER - ECSTACY - LABOR LRS 7003
HEINER STADLER - JAZZ ALCHEMY (six pieces for trumpet, bass and drums) - LABOR LRS 7006
Ecstacy provides the listening audience a rare opportunity to hear both contemporary classical music, performed by classical musicians, and music of the contemporary jazz idiom.

Side one offers three compositions by Steffens. One for
THE JIMMY DAWKINS BAND - BLISTERSTRING - DELMARK DS-41

Jimmy Dawkins is one of the most original and important blues artists to emerge in the past few years. His first album Fast Fingers (Delmark DS-623) won the Grand Prix du Disque de Jazz awarded by the Hot Club of France, sort of like winning a Grammy, and his second album All For Business (DS-634) with Otis Rush, among the musicians has to be one of the best blues albums of the 1970s. Jimmy’s third Delmark album is good, of not up to the level of the first two and a much better modern blues album than the Albert King album reviewed elsewhere.

This is Jimmy’s first album with his working band and where he can control over production along with Delmark’s Steve Thomashafsky. One main problem is that a few sides drag a little long, and Jimmy’s playing, hard and driving as ever gets repetitious at points. I found it difficult sitting through this whole album, a problem I didn’t have with the earlier two. Still there is some great music here, my favorite track being the closer Welfare Line with great lyrics and Jimmy making good use of both rhythmic and tonal effects in his playing. Also outstanding is a cooking version of Kenny Burrell’s Chitlins Con Carne and Blue Monday an old New Orleans R’n’B tune associated with Fats Domino and Smiley Lewis which is partially a tribute to them.

One other problem with the album is a somewhat distant quality to the recording. I don’t like how the drummer was recorded. Still Jimmy Dawkins deserves your attention as a serious artist who is as the Downbeat Critics voted in 1974 Talent Deserving Wider Recognition.

R.W.

BLUES - RON WEINSTOCK

Clifton Chenier is the undisputed master of zydeco music, a hybrid form which mixes the Cajun music of the French speaking population of Southwest Louisiana with blues. His latest album on Arhoolie, Bogalus Boogie (1076), is his seventh for the label. It is as usual a thoroughly ingratiating set as Clifton’s mastery of the accordion, his warm good humored vocals (most of which are in Cajun French) and a tight band, which features his brother Cleveland on accordion and trumpet, saxophone of John Skinniew and a musical gumbo that is one of his best sets. Highlights include “Je Me Reveiller Ce Matin”, a French version of B.B. King with Clifton’s accordion playing King’s guitar part, “One Step at a Time” where Clifton adds Jimmy Reedish harmonica and the stomping instrumental “Ride ‘Em Cowboy”. Clifton is about to have a double album not released on Utopia and it can’t wait for it. One warning about this music - exposure to Clifton’s good time music can be addicting and his output for Arhoolie is uniformly high though this set is especially fine.

Arhoolie is one of the finest labels of blues and folk music. J.C. Burris’ One of These Mornings (1075) features the bluesy vocals and harmonica of Sonny Terry’s nephew whose music is the dominant influence. This is a warm set which includes a couple of pieces where J.C. plays the bones. A highlight on this album, which was recorded live, is “Inflation Blues” - J.C. is unaccompanied.

Blues Classics is subsidiary of Arhoolie and has a catalog of excellent reissues. The latest release When Women Sang the Blues is a valuable reissue of women singing down-home, or rural, blues, as opposed to the vaudeville blues of Bessie Smith, Ida Cox and others. Excellent performances by Lilian Glenn, Chippie Hill with excellent accompaniment from Georgia Tom Dorsey and Tampa Red, Memphis Minnie and Willie B. Huff are included. There are also two excellent collections of Memphis Minnie on the Blues Classics.

Nighthawk Records is a new label that apparently will be specializing in reissues of rare postwar blues recordings. Their initial release of four albums are of a uniformly high standard and produce many cases of the rural flavor city blues so popular among enthusiasts. As they are all fine issues I will simply describe their contents and mention some of the performers heard. Windy City Blues: The Transition (101)

These two albums prove Stadler to be a composer of multi-dimensional talents, whether the music be on the light side or of a more thought evoking nature. After several listenings, I found myself in the local record shops checking the S bends, in search of more evidence of what Stadler and his Labor Record label have been up to the past few years.

P.S.
features one side of pre-World War 2 recordings including Pinetop Sparks’ “Everyday I Have the Blues”, (the first recording of the song) Washboard Sam, Sonny Boy Williamson and Robert Jr. Lockwood. The second side includes Lockwood, Tampa Red, and Tony Hollins in post-war recordings.

Chicago Slicers: 1948-1953 (102) features more classic Chicago postwar blues including Johnny Shines’ classic “Ramblin”, and rare performances by Little Walter, Floyd Jones and Homesick James among others. These two Chicago anthologies nicely complement Chicago Blues, The Early 50s (Blues Classics BC 8) and On the Road Again (Muskadine 100) two classic anthologies of Chicago Blues.

Lowdown Memphis Harmonica Jam (103) features Hot Shot Love’s wild “Harmonica Jam”, six tunes by the great one-man band Joe Hill Louis, Walter Horton and Willie Nix (with a young James Cotton) that boogie up a storm. Detroit Ghetto Blues (104) includes Louisiana Red (as Playboy Fuller and Rocky Fuller), Baby Boy Warren (whose “Hello Stranger” is a remake of Sonny Boy Williamson I’s “Mattie Mae” and has Sonny Boy 2 on harmonica) Walter Mitchell, L.C. Green and other generally obscure names in a set of blues that reflects the influence of Sonny Boy I in the reworking of his songs, and in the various harmonica players who appear on these sides. Albums on the Blues Classics label incidentally complement these issues also.

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Mon.: John Miller
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Saturday
3am-6am “Pulse” - Paul Wandel
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